


 CHOMBEC
News

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Centre for the History of Music in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth

CHOMBEC is based at the Department of Music, University of Bristol

Herbert Murrill Centenary

2009 marks the centenary of the birth of Herbert Henry John Murrill, an English composer with a distinctive and versatile voice, wide-ranging musical sympathies and a far greater output than the tiny amount currently available in print and on CD might suggest. His untimely death from cancer led to that inevitable neglect during the latter half of the 20th century, though recent research and publications by Michael Barlow and Relf Clark¹ have helped to rehabilitate Murrill's reputation. He is one of that select group of British composers who – through war or ill-health – died far too young: Browne, Butterworth, Coles, Farrar, Hurlstone, Kelly and Whitlock, to name but a few.

Murrill was born on 11th May 1909 at 19 Fircroft Road, Upper Tooting, London, the eldest of three children born to Kate Arnold and Herbert Walter Murrill (b 1884).² The birth certificate describes Murrill's father's occupation as 'cork merchant's clerk'.³ Herbert junior's second middle name was presumably given in honour of his grandfather, Henry William Murrill (1850-1922), a publisher's warehouseman.

From 1920-25 Murrill attended Haberdasher's Aske's School in Hatcham before his musical talents won him a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music. He gained a similar award to the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied for three years with York

Bowen (for piano), Alan Bush (for harmony) and Stanley Marchant (for organ and choir-training). During his time at the RAM Murrill served as the

organist of St Nicholas's, Chiswick, an Anglo-Catholic church, designed by John Loughborough Pearson in the 1880s. In 1928 Murrill went up to Worcester College, Oxford as organ scholar, where he read for a pass degree, as well as for the BMus. Several early songs survive from his Oxford period. He took a full part in the musical life of the University becoming President of the University Musical Club.⁴

On leaving Oxford he served as organist of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate and St Thomas's Church, Regent Street, London.

1933 was a significant year for Murrill: he joined the staff of the Royal Academy of Music, as a professor of composition - a position he was to hold until his death – and he married the pianist Alice Margaret Good (1906-2000).⁵ She was three years older than Murrill and made her professional debut at the Wigmore Hall in 1931, where – in the same year - Murrill had

promoted a concert of his own compositions.

During the mid 1930s he worked with the Group Theatre Company, collaborating with W H



¹ M Barlow: *A Dictionary-Catalog of Modern British Composers*; R Clark: *RCO Journal* 2009 (Vol 3).

² A sister, Doris, was born in 1912 and a brother, Kenneth, in 1917.

³ The 1901 census describes him as 'Post Office Boy'.

⁴ On 1 February 1931 he appeared as pianist at an Oxford Symphony Orchestra concert.

⁵ In 1942 Margaret Good married the cellist William Pleeth (1916-99). Their son, Anthony Pleeth (b 1948), is a distinguished cellist in his own right. On 21 February 1940 Margaret Good and William Pleeth joined the violinist Harry Blech for a piano trio concert as part of the National Gallery series in London.

Auden and Benjamin Britten.⁶ He also dipped his toe into the world of film documentary, penning the scores for the GPO's *The Daily Round* and *And So To Work*, two early films directed by Richard Massingham, and both starring the Scottish actor, Russell Waters.

In 1936 Murrill joined the BBC Music Department, helping to plan radio programmes. On 25 October 1937 he and his wife were at Alexandra Palace playing at two pianos for a live evening broadcast before the tv cameras of *Full Moon*, a 'revue for television', written by Archie Harradine, produced by Eric Crozier with Murrill supplying the music.

In addition to his composing and BBC and RAM work, Murrill also found time to arrange six numbers from Walton's *Façade* for two pianos as well as the whole of Walton's B flat minor Symphony. At OUP's behest, *Crown Imperial* was also arranged for piano duet and organ solo. Murrill's three organ pieces were also published by OUP after the war.

The immediate pre-war period seems to have been a time of personal turmoil, judging by the emotional outpouring of Murrill's four-movement String Quartet (1939). The opening *Allegramente* is cast in A minor. It chugs along in a manner reminiscent of the first movement of Moeran's G minor Symphony. The heart of the work is the sinewy slow movement, marked at its climax *con intensità*.⁷ Is it any coincidence that the Quartet is dedicated to the Leighton Quartet? Its cellist was Vera Canning⁸ whom Murrill married on 25 July 1941 at Westminster Register Office. Their daughter, Carolyn Jane Murrill, was born on 6 July 1942. By this time the Murrills were living at Blunham Rectory in Bedfordshire. In 1942 Murrill joined the Intelligence Corps and worked at Bletchley Park. In September 1944 'Sergeant' Murrill conducted the Bletchley Park Musical Society in four performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Having an eye (and ear) for authenticity, Murrill brought over especially a harpsichord from Cambridge.



Victor Hely-Hutchinson

In 1946 Murrill became Assistant Director (Head) of Music at the BBC, first to Victor Hely-Hutchinson and secondly to Stuart Wilson, who succeeded Hely-Hutchinson, following the latter's untimely death from pneumonia in March 1947.⁹ When Wilson left to become Deputy General Administrator of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Murrill moved to the top job in 1950. Alas, his tenure was all too brief. His health started to deteriorate and he was particularly

⁶ In 1935 Murrill conducted Britten's incidental music for *Timon of Athens* at the Westminster Theatre, London.

⁷ Murrill requested in his Will that this movement be played at his funeral.

⁸ Veronica C Canning, born in Glasgow. Arthur Bliss was one of the witnesses to the marriage.

⁹ Murrill composed a heartfelt setting of *The Souls of the Righteous* in memory of Hely-Hutchinson. Murrill's *Handelian Fragment*, 'Humpty Dumpty', owes a good deal to Hely-Hutchinson's earlier song 'Old Mother Hubbard'.

troubled by his dealings with that vainest of *maestri*, Sir Malcolm Sargent, Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Murrill's last major composition was the rhapsodic, one-movement, fantasia-like Second Cello Concerto, dedicated to Pablo Casals, and based on Casal's favourite Catalan folksong, 'El cant dels ocells' ('The Song of the Birds'). Vera Canning gave the first performance in 1951.¹⁰

As might be expected from a composer growing up in the 1920s, Murrill's idiom owes a great deal to French models. In his piano-writing Ravel is never far away, though Murrill's hands were considerably larger than those of the Frenchman. Stretches of a tenth are quite common in both hands.

The Suite Française for harpsichord (June-July 1938) is dedicated to Marcelle de Lacour (1896-1997), a pupil of Wanda Landowska. The two piano



Marcelle de Lacour

Impromptus of 1933 pay homage to Chopin and Poulenc respectively. Murrill's vocal writing is more akin to the English madrigalists (e.g., *Love Not Me for Comely Grace*) and Peter Warlock. The 1929 setting of 'Sleep' is subtitled 'Hommage à Peter Warlock' and the two songs from *Twelfth Night* were dedicated 'to the memory of Peter Warlock'. The deliciously varied Country Dances of 1945 nod affectionately at Warlock's *Capriol Suite*. Walton's influence also rubbed off: the witty and piquant Three Hornpipes for orchestra carrying on where Walton's *Portsmouth Point* left off.

A curiosity among Murrill's *oeuvre* was his harmonisation and orchestration (in collaboration with Norman Richardson) in 1950 of the Indian National Anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana' ('Lord of the Heart of the People') for which he received £500, a substantial sum in those days!

Murrill died in 25 July 1952 aged 43. He was cremated at Marylebone Crematorium on 29 July.

Malcolm Riley

¹⁰ Raphael Wallfisch with the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by Vernon Handley, for the ASV Sanctuary label, has recorded this work. Among his manuscripts Murrill left an unfinished violin concerto.

SELECTED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF COMPOSITIONS,
Herbert Murrill (1909-1952)

	Date of Composition	Publisher/Date
<i>Picnic</i> – Ballet	1927	
Three Little Dances	1927	
'Cello Rhapsody	1920s	
Sleep	May 1929	Modus Music 2001
Roister Doister	1929	Modus Music 2001
Three Carols for high voice & oboe	1929	Modus Music 2002
1. Rosa Mystica		
2. Cradle Song		
3. The Falcon		
Bourée for Clavichord	c1930	
<i>Man in Cage</i> (opera, Geoffrey Dunn)	1930	
Funeral Tango in D minor (from <i>Man in Cage</i>)	1930	
Passacaille & Gigue in D	1930	
The Batchelor	1930	
<i>Missa Sanctae Margaritae</i>	c1931	Bodleian Library
Four Studies	1931	
<i>Love Not Me for Comely Grace</i> SATB unaccomp.	Jan 1932	OUP 1935
Capriccio for 'cello & piano		Augener 1932
Prelude, Cadenza and Fugue for Clarinet		OUP 1933
Two Impromptus for piano		Augener 1933
1. <i>Hommage à Frederic Chopin</i>		
2. <i>Hommage à Francis Poulenc</i>		
<i>The Dance of Death</i> (play, Auden)	1933	
<i>The Dog Beneath the Skin</i> (play, Auden)	1935	
Cello Concerto No 1	1935	
<i>And So To Work</i> (film, Massingham)	1936	
Fantasia	1936	
Sonatina for Piano	1936	OUP 1953
Presto alla giga for piano		Winthrop Rogers 1937
<i>The Daily Round</i> (film, dir Cavalcanti)	1937	GPO
<i>No More Peace</i> (Toller trans Auden, Gate Theatre)	1936	John Lane
<i>Play for Pleasure</i> (4 Easy Pieces) for piano		OUP 1937
<i>Full Moon</i> (revue by Archie Harradine)	1937	BBC
Suite Française for harpsichord	1938	OUP 1940
Three Dances for orchestra	c1938	
Canzona for piano		Winthrop Rogers 1939
Toccatina for piano		Winthrop Rogers 1939
String Quartet	May 1939	OUP 1940
Caprice on Two Norfolk Folk-Tunes for piano		OUP 1941
Brother Petroc's Carol		OUP 1942
Four French Nursery Songs for viola or 'cello & piano		Chester 1942
Two Songs from <i>Twelfth Night</i> for SATB	1943	OUP 1944
1. <i>Come Away, Death</i>		
2. <i>O Mistress Mine</i>		
<i>In Youth Is Pleasure</i> for SATB	1943	OUP 1944
Country Dances arr for string orchestra		OUP 1945
Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis in E for SATB & organ	1946	OUP 1947
Carillon for organ	1947	OUP 1949
<i>The Souls of the Righteous</i> SATB		Stainer & Bell 1949
Three Hornpipes for orchestra	1949	OUP 1952
Postlude on a Ground for organ		OUP 1949
Fantasia on 'Wareham' for organ		OUP 1950
<i>Humpy Dumpty</i> – A Handelian Fragment		Chappell 1950
Sonata for Treble Recorder & harpsichord	1950	OUP 1951
		(Peacock Press)
'Cello Concerto No 2	1950	OUP 1951
<i>Piece for My Friends</i> for 2 descant recorders & piano	1950	Universal Edition 1950
Dance on Portuguese Folk-Tunes for 2 pianos		Joseph Williams 1951
		(Stainer & Bell)
Two Herrick Songs		OUP 1953
1. <i>To Music, to Becaln His Fever</i>		
2. <i>A Thanksgiving to God For His House</i>		
Sarabande - <i>A Christmas Greeting for Pau Casals</i> 'cello		OUP 1953
Nine Carols arr for SSA and SSAA unaccomp		OUP 1953
Five Songs for solo voice & piano		Thames 1989
Overture to a Puppet Play for 2 pianos		
ARRANGEMENTS		
Bach: <i>Was Gott thut, das ist wohlgethan</i> arr piano		OUP 1932
Bach: <i>Mein Herze glaubt</i> arr piano		OUP 1932
Walton: <i>Valse (Façade)</i> arr 2 pianos		OUP 1934
Walton: <i>Symphony</i> [No 1] arr piano duet		OUP 1937
Walton: <i>Crown Imperial</i> arr organ		OUP 1937
Hely-Hutchinson: <i>Andante (Symphony)</i> for piano		Paterson 1948
Walton: <i>Polka</i> from <i>Façade</i> arr 2 pianos		OUP 1949
Walton: <i>Crown Imperial</i> arr for piano duet		OUP 1949
Walton: <i>Swiss Jodelling Song (Façade)</i> arr 2 pianos		OUP 1949
Walton: <i>Old Sir Faulk (Façade)</i>		OUP 1949
Walton: <i>Tarantella Sevillana (Façade)</i> arr 2 pianos		OUP 1950
Indian National Anthem: <i>Jana Gana Mana</i>		1950 Boosey & Hawkes
Hymn Tunes: <i>Arnold, Carolyn</i>		

Welcome from the new Director

John Pickard

Welcome to this latest edition of CHOMBEC News.

The past few months have seen some significant changes to CHOMBEC's Board of Management. After three years at the helm, Stephen Banfield, our Founding Director, has stepped aside to concentrate on other projects, notably *Music in the British Empire: a documentary history through the general press, 1765-1965*, for which he has received a University of Bristol Research Fellowship. This takes him on research leave throughout the 2009-10 academic year. Upon his return, he will turn his talents in an altogether different direction as he moves the role of Head of the School of Arts. In wishing him well in both these tasks, I know that we would all like to thank him for the enthusiasm, energy and vision he has brought to the role of Director of CHOMBEC during the past three years. I am personally delighted that Stephen will remain a member of the Board of Management and that we will all continue to benefit from his unparalleled knowledge and experience.

We also say farewell to Ronald Hutton as a member of the Board of Management. Ronald has also served on the Board since its foundation in 2006 and we have benefited on many occasions from his wise counsel and constructive criticism. Thank-you, Ronald: we wish you the best of luck in your new role as Head of Subject in the Department of Historical Studies.

John Irving leaves us too, as he begins his exciting new job as Director of the Institute of Musical Research at the University of London. In thanking John for all he has done for CHOMBEC and wishing him well in this important post, we are well-aware that this is not so much an end as a new beginning: we look forward to strengthening ties with the IMR in the near future.

It is a great pleasure to welcome Kirsty Reid as a new member of the Board. Much of Kirsty's recent research at Bristol's Department of Historical Studies has focussed on convict transportation to Australian penal colonies during the nineteenth century; her ongoing work on transportation ballads brings a new and compelling line of musical research to CHOMBEC's evolving list of specialisms.

The principal CHOMBEC-related event for the first half of 2009 took the form of a concert. This is, of course, Mendelssohn year and in March we celebrated in style with a performance by Bristol University forces of his magnum opus, *Elijah*. With four distinguished soloists, all of them Bristol alumni who have gone on to professional careers, and a chorus and orchestra of over 250 performers, we performed the work, *uncut*, to a packed house – a long but rewarding evening for all involved.

On the scholarship front, the proceedings from last November's highly successful Study Day, *The Sounds of Stonehenge* are currently being edited and are due to be published toward the end of the year as a British Archaeological Report.

Looking ahead to the forthcoming year, we plan a series of CHOMBEC Lectures on a range of topics of interest to our membership. These are expected to take place late in the afternoon on four Wednesdays throughout the year. They will be open to the public and a special drinks reception will be held after each lecture for Friends of CHOMBEC to socialise and to meet the guest speaker. We will distribute more information to Friends as soon as it is available.

British music will, as ever, be well represented in the Music Department's series of research seminars, its regular Wednesday lunchtime concerts and also in the concert I shall be conducting with the University Symphony Orchestra on Saturday 28 November. This will include Elgar's First Symphony, together with my own *Channel Firing*.

Thank-you to all Friends of CHOMBEC for your continuing support. I look forward to meeting many of you personally at events during the coming year.

CHOMBEC News and Events

1. Monash University's British Music Research Cluster

Paul Watt

The Research Cluster on British Music in the School of Music at Monash University came about more by accident than design. In the last few years, a number of higher degree theses were written (or commenced) on British topics; two performance staff were already promoting British music and most of us were members of the Australian Study Group for British Music, which Sue Cole (University of Melbourne) and Paul Watt established a few years ago. So the timing was right to pool our collective interests and to create a new Research Cluster within the School. The School's other clusters concentrate on Australian, East European and Jewish music.

Our Cluster's aims are not only to promote British music principally through performance and publication, but also to advocate British repertory to the general public. In 2009, for example, Katrina Dowling has been invited to present a radio broadcast on British recorder music. Katrina will also be finishing her MA, which is a style analysis of the music of Gordon Jacob, Edmund Rubbra, Malcolm Arnold, Lennox Berkeley, Arnold Cooke and Alan Ridout. Having given the Australian premiere of George Benjamin's Violin Sonata in 2008, Elizabeth Sellars (violin) and Kenji Fujimura (piano) are currently planning a world-first recording of this work in the second half of 2009. Paul Watt is continuing his work on an intellectual biography of Ernest Newman and Julie Waters is in the final year of her PhD on Alan Bush. In 2010 the Monash Academy is sponsoring a Symposium-Festival of British Music to be held on Campus utilising our marvellous recital venues such as Robert Blackwood Hall and the School's Auditorium.

- Paul is also co-editing a book on Joseph Holbrooke with Anne-Marie Forbes (University of Tasmania).
- Julie Waters has also collaborated with other School staff on a special issue of *Music and Politics*:

<http://www.music.ucsb.edu/projects/musicandpolitics/>

In time we'd like to perform, record and publish editions of neglected British works, but much of this depends on securing the appropriate funding, which is a struggle, especially recently since one of the Australian peak funding bodies for music no longer funds recording projects. In our favour, however, is the Grainger Museum, located in Melbourne, which is home to hundreds (if not thousands) of scores by neglected British composers so there is, in theory, no shortage of material we can draw on to resurrect.

If you should find yourself in Melbourne for work or leisure, please contact us.

2. Recital of English and Bristol-related Songs

Christopher Redwood

The tenor Gordon Pullin, a new Friend of CHOMBEC, delightfully chose to include several composers with Bristol connections in his lunchtime recital in St Stephen's Church, Bristol, on 7 January 2009. He opened with R L Pearsall's setting of Sir Walter Scott, 'Proud Maisie in the Wood', followed by Cyril Rootham's 'South Wind' to words by Siegfried Sassoon, and then 'The Earl of Digby's Farewell' by C W Orr, who lived for many years at nearby Painswick in Gloucestershire. All were sung well and were of particular interest to those unfamiliar with them.

Raymond Warren's 'At the Buca di Bacco', was particularly attractive: a suitably sleazy-sounding night-club ditty (surely the composer was not sending-up the late Peter Pears in his vocal line?). It would be good to hear the rest of the cycle from which it comes. David Bedford, one of the brave-new-world composers when I was an undergraduate, also lives in Bristol, and we heard his 'Because he liked to be at home', by no means outlandishly modern-sounding.

Gordon was accompanied by Philip Wilby and who composed a setting of Hardy's 'A Man of Character', a song accompanied only by occasional interjections from a small bell and a gavel, each operated by the singer himself. 'A piece to give the accompanist a break, instead of the usual one for the singer', we were told! My only disappointment came from two Housman songs by Graham Peel, which have always seemed to me so inferior to many other settings of the poet. 'In Summertime on Bredon' tells of the unexpected death of a young man's fiancé: how could that be set in a major key throughout?

A worthwhile event, despite the disappointingly small audience. If the elderly ladies who made up most of it were seeking refuge from the cold they were disappointed, for it was little warmer in the church than outside!

Don't Forget to Look at
News and Events on
CHOMBEC's Website,
Updated Regularly!!
www.bris.ac.uk/chombec

British Music Studies in North America: a brief history of NABMSA

Dorothy de Val



The study of British music is thriving! This year marks the 25th anniversary of the annual Conference on Music in 18th-century Britain, and the seventh of the biennial conference devoted to British music of the 19th century. Six years ago, at the fourth 19th-century conference at the University of Leeds, the sweltering summer heat drove a clutch of visiting American scholars to search for cold beer and air conditioning. Finding neither, they gazed at the hydrangeas, bemoaned the cost of transatlantic airfares, and wondered what it would be like to have a conference devoted to the study of *all* British music – and based in North America.

By the close of the Leeds conference, this idea had begun to gel. Unlike the British model, the North American version would be an actual Association, complete with a Constitution, a President and other officers, bylaws, a Board. Conferences would be held in alternate years, therefore not conflicting with the British activities, and the first would be in Ohio, home state of instigators Charles McGuire (who became Vice-President) and Christina Fuhrmann (who became Treasurer). Deborah Heckert took on the role of Secretary, and Jennifer Oates took on the website. The stage was set.

Enter Nicholas Temperley. Long the doyen of British music studies, Professor Temperley had been the inspiration for English and North American scholars alike. He was also the obvious first choice as President of the newly formed society, which now had a name and an unpronounceable acronym: the North American British Music Studies Association, or NABMSA for short. Feverish activity began in organizing the first conference – a fetching logo designed, board members elected, and a program committee established.

The first conference, held in June 2004 at the Oberlin College Conservatory, featured over thirty papers, one lecture recital and two evening recitals. Topics ranged from the early modern period to Vaughan Williams and the BBC, uniting contributions from established and emerging scholars. Oberlin proved to be a pleasant college town featuring a campus with manicured lawns and a main street straight out of a film set. The conference and other events provided ample material for a newsletter, edited by Kendra Leonard, who also eventually took over as Webmaster.

The conference maintained its rural profile in 2006, when it was held at St Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. Organised by the indefatigable Nathaniel Lew, it introduced members to English country dancing and featured a highly entertaining keynote paper on Victorian domestic music by

Christina Bashford, who had recently arrived at the University of Illinois from Oxford. Ashgate, with offices in nearby Burlington, lent its support. Nicholas Temperley provided funds to establish a prize in his name for the best student paper, which went to Amber Youell-Fingleton for her stunning presentation on the singer Anne Bracegirdle, which formed part of a trio of superb graduate-student papers on the theme of madness in 18th-century song. Again blessed with superb weather, delegates were able to sample lobster and beautiful scenery on a cruise on Lake Champlain, and as well as exotic compositions of ice cream by Ben and Jerry on a Sunday morning excursion.

By late 2007, with the Association established and gaining momentum, Nicholas Temperley decided to stand down as President and was succeeded by the noted Elgar scholar Byron Adams (who with Allan Atlas had already served as Vice-President), and Eric Saylor became Secretary. Change was afoot: the third conference would move to a more urban location north of the border at York University in Toronto, which offered state-of-the-art facilities, a verdant modern campus and a willing cohort of graduate-student volunteers. Noting current strengths in 19th- and 20th-century music, the organisers led by Dorothy de Val decided to feature music of the early modern period and invited Linda Phyllis Austern of Northwestern University to be the keynote speaker; NABMSA has now welcomed her as a Board member, and early modern scholar Candace Bailey is now Vice-President. A panel on the Stuart masque was organised by Austern and Amanda Eubanks Winkler, and a concert downtown on Friday evening (held after an al fresco pub dinner) featured lute song from the local "Musicians in Ordinary" as well as a cappella Victorian choral music conducted by York University professor Stephanie Martin. Delegates renewed their acquaintance with English country dancing complete with live band to round off the conference. With over 50 papers (including two lecture recitals) and 90 people attending, this conference featured a mix of papers from all periods from graduate students and established scholars, with a number of delegates travelling from England and the Continent to attend. Once again, Ashgate lent its support and kindly co-sponsored the opening reception.

It is gratifying to look back over the past quarter century and see how British music studies have thrived since the early days of the 18th-century music conference. Both Canada and the US have offered a rich environment for the sharing of this work with our British and European colleagues, embracing everything from the Elizabethans to Queen. NABMSA looks forward to its next conference at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa in 2010 and invites interested parties to share their research with us at this event, amid air conditioning and a plentiful supply of cold beer.

[Do take the time to look at NABMSA's excellent website: www.nabmsa.org - ed.]

Research Reports

1. Jeremy Maritz

British organ-building in South Africa

South Africa has had a very mixed history, both politically and musically. This has come about due to the country alternating between English and Dutch rule and played a further role once the country became independent of Britain in 1961.

The first reference to an organ in South Africa is in the records of the *Grote Kerk* (Great Church) in Cape Town, built between 1678 and 1704. The organ was installed in 1720 but was purchased from the Netherlands. It was not until the 19th century that English organs began to appear in South Africa, and only in very limited number. The earliest record of an English organ is one bought by Henry Somerset, son of Lord Charles Somerset, for his wife. It is not known exactly when the organ was built, but it is believed to be between 1832-1837, and by the English firm of William Hill.

William Hill's name re-appears in 1890 with his installation of an organ in the old St George's Cathedral, Cape Town, and again in 1909 with the installation of an organ in the new St George's Cathedral. Other early builders of that time making an occasional appearance are Bevington, Vowles and Thomas Bates.

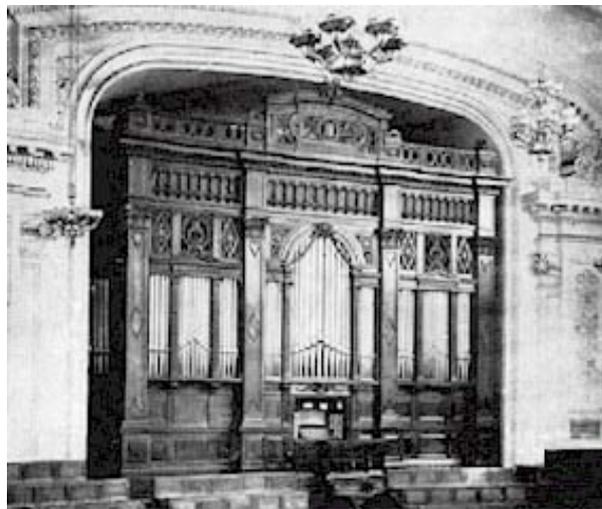
The Vowles organs formed part of what are known as the Sophie Grey churches - she was the wife of Bishop Grey, South Africa's first Anglican bishop. Mrs Grey designed many churches for her husband, overseeing their construction and furnishing them with the help of catalogues.

English organ building, however, only started to make a real impression in 1897 with the arrival of William Charles Cooper from the company of J J Binns. He came to the Cape to install a Binns organ in the Worcester Dutch Reformed Church and at the same time managed to secure orders for more Binns organs. Cooper returned to South Africa in 1902 to install the organs, and finding that there was scope for expansion, he established his own company in the Cape. Another Binns man, Harold Gill, had gone to Transvaal and after a short while was working in the Cape and Cooper was working in Transvaal. The two entered into partnership and established the company of Cooper and Gill in 1904.

In 1905, Alfred Maberley Fellowes Tomkins arrived in the Cape to install the organ that Norman and Beard had built for the City Hall. He also found that there was much demand in a growing economy and stayed behind in the Cape. With their increasing workload, Cooper & Gill approached Tomkins and the company of Cooper, Gill and Tomkins was established.

In 1912 the company secured the agency for Norman and Beard and during this period there were more organs exported by Norman and Beard to South Africa than to any other country before or after. A total of thirty-eight Norman and Beard organs were installed

in South Africa, notably Cape Town City Hall (1905) and Johannesburg City Hall (1916). The Cape Town organ still stands as built by Norman and Beard, a testament to their quality.



*Norman and Beard organ at the City Hall,
Johannesburg, ca 1917*

This partnership remained until Cooper's return to England as Managing Director of Rushworth and Dreaper in 1927. With this connection many Rushworth organs were exported to South Africa, the largest at St Mary's Cathedral, Johannesburg.

Notable consultants active during this time included Sir George Martin, organist of St Paul's Cathedral, and the blind concert organist Alfred Hollins.

Other English organ builders active in South Africa in the mid-20th century included Conacher, Brindley & Foster, Walker and Willis.

By 1935 it was no longer financially viable for Cooper, Gill & Tomkins to import English organs, and the agency rights for Wurlitzer were acquired along with organs from other American builders: Wicks, Estey and M.P.Moller. This changed again in the early 1950s when the German company of Lauckhuff became a majority shareholder in the company.

Although Cooper was no longer primarily sourcing English organs, they were still employing English organ builders, mostly from Hill, Norman & Beard, which continued until 1977 when political unrest started to take a foothold in South Africa and it was felt that it was not safe to move to South Africa from England.

Although new organs are no longer built in South Africa, the company of Cooper, Gill & Tomkins remains active in its current guise as THE organ builders, maintaining the instruments that their successors in business installed over a century ago.

Jeremy Maritz, a native of South Africa, currently works for Harrison & Harrison, organ builders in Durham.

2. Matthew Thomas

William Wrenn: Bristol's Forgotten Flute-Player

Bristol, the City of Churches, was probably better known in the Georgian era for its many celebrated prizefighters, one of whom, John Gully, became the MP for Pontefract, and for its literary associations (Wordsworth, Pope and Johnson trod its streets; Coleridge and Southey were married at the church of St Mary Redcliffe, the haunt of the 'marvellous boy', Thomas Chatterton),¹ than for its performers and composers. In fact, musical performances abounded and thirty professors of music are listed in *Mathews' Directory* for 1825. One of these was William Wrenn, who was born in Gloucester in 1791 and who was based in Bristol by 1818. A flute player, violinist, composer and teacher, Wrenn was for forty years one of the city's most prominent musicians.

Wrenn may have been present at the Prince Street Musick Room on 24 February 1820, when Andrew Ashe and Charles Nicholson, Britain's two greatest pre-20th century flute players, made a very rare concert appearance together.² A Gloucestershire man, who appears never to have married, Wrenn may, in forging his career in the merchant city, have had to overcome the aloofness and distrust of the tramontane, which have long been seen as Bristol characteristics.³ He is listed in *Mathews'* as a professor of flute and violin every year from 1818 until 1833, when he removed his name. An injury sustained in 1841 may have ended his violin-playing career, as after 1844, when he reappears in *Mathews'*, he is listed only as a professor of flute. We know that he played a flute with at least six keys, the standard instrument of English professionals at the time, as the sophisticated flute part in his 1817 *Divertimento*, a polished three-movement work, descends to middle C. Wrenn asked his colleague, Thomas Howell, listed in *Mathews'* as a pianist and violinist, to compose the *Divertimento's* piano accompaniment: his keyboard facility may have been limited and it is possible he had help transcribing his Clifton Quadrilles, dedicated to Clifton's ladies of fashion, for flute and piano. The original orchestral parts appear to have been lost, but the cover of the Quadrilles (reproduced), which announces Wrenn's



appointment as 'Leader of the Quadrille Band', testifies to his all-round abilities. There seems to be no record of Wrenn's band's performances at Francis Greenway's Assembly Rooms, which replaced the old Hotwell Room as the venue for Clifton's balls after 1806, and where one of the elegant gatherings was painted by the artist Rolinda Sharples.⁴

Throughout his life Wrenn probably derived a large part of his income from teaching. In the days before the mass-production of pianos, flute playing, at that time an exclusively male pursuit, was extremely fashionable: it was estimated that one in ten men played the flute,⁵ and contemporary magazines such as the *Flutonic* and *Flutist's Magazine* testify to its popularity. As a performer of his flute works, he was regularly and conspicuously before the public. For many years he was associated with the Mechanics' Institute, which hosted many of his performances. It is surprising, in view of their popularity in Wrenn's day (there were 610 in Britain by 1849),⁶ that the Institutes' work is so poorly documented. Bristol's opened in Prince Street, near the Musick Room, in 1825, two years after London's and Glasgow's. From the outset, there was a strong middle-class involvement,⁷ reflecting the city's unique social composition: a move to Corn Street failed to attract the skilled tradespeople who were seen as its natural clientele, and it soon merged with the Bristol Athenaeum.⁸

There was a widespread practice at the time of rewarding performers through benefit concerts, rather than through formal remuneration. The year 1837, which included two such concerts, must have been profitable for Wrenn. The first was held at 'The Theatre' on 12 June 1837 and was made memorable by Ole Bull, the celebrated Norwegian violinist, who 'electrified the audience' with three concertos.⁹ On December 4th he had another benefit at the Mechanics' Institute, where he played Drouet's variations on *Rule Britannia*,¹⁰ and later in the month he played four times at the Clifton Assembly Rooms, apparently illustrating a series of lectures on music given by Mr. Lacy.¹¹ At the end of 1840, Wrenn was

⁴ Rolinda Sharples, *The Cloakroom, Clifton Assembly Rooms* <http://www.myartprints.co.uk/a/bristol-city-museum-and-a.html#p=70>.

⁵ *The Athenaeum*, 19 August 1829.

⁶ H J Price: 'Adult education in Bristol in the 19th century', MA thesis, Univ. of Bristol, 1964: 121.

⁷ Op.cit., 124.

⁸ Op.cit., 126.

⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 17 June 1837 (hereafter *BM*).

¹⁰ *BM*, 2 Dec 1837.

¹¹ *BM*, 9 Dec 1837.

¹ Arthur Salmon: *Literary Rambles in the West of England* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906): 319.

² *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 11 Feb 1820 (hereafter *FF*).

³ Keith Brace: *Portrait of Bristol* (London: Robert Hale & Co., 1971): 132.

advertising his *New Instruction Book for the Flute*: it would shortly be on sale at 10s per copy. We cannot be certain it was printed. Gentlemen wishing to take lessons were invited to apply to him at 2 Upper Wells-Street.¹² Another benefit concert for Wrenn was planned for 20th December 1841, when he intended to introduce his ten-year old pupil, Master Ralph Snell.¹³ In a cruel twist of fate, Wrenn fell and broke his collar-bone two days before, and was unable to perform at the concert.¹⁴ By August 1842 he had recovered sufficiently to take part in a 'Grand Morning Concert' (commencing at 1.30) at the Victoria Rooms, which had opened the previous year.¹⁵

In December 1844, Wrenn, who was 'long and favourably known in Bristol as a teacher of the flute', performed at the Prince Street Musick Room, billed as a 'Professor of the Flute.' The programme included a flute quartet and Berbiguier's Double Concerto, which Wrenn played with 'a Gentleman, a pupil'. This concert received a very favourable report, the numerous encores detaining the audience 'until a very late hour'.¹⁶ The last of his concerts to be advertised in the *Bristol Mercury* took place in December 1847, at the Royal Albert Rooms, College Green, where the Infant Pianist, Sebastian Bach Mills, had performed earlier in the year:¹⁷ Wrenn introduced two new *Fantasias*.¹⁸ By now society was changing very rapidly; in *Felix Farley's Journal* advertisements for railway services had replaced notices of coach travel and prizefights. (The same year the Victoria Rooms - the future Bristol University Music Department - was hosting Richardson's 'Rock Band and Steel Band',¹⁹ and the public was being warned of the instability of the Northern Banks²⁰ - *le plus ça change...*) The flute was evolving rapidly too, but we do not know if Wrenn experimented with Boehm's new instrument before his death on 19th January 1855. His special contribution to the city's music has yet to be fully recognised.

EXTANT COMPOSITIONS

Divertimento, in C, fl. and piano: *Andante, Larghetto, Allegro Moderato* (1817)

Clifton Quadrilles 1, 3 and 4, transcr. Wrenn for piano with fl. acc., London: Goulding, d'Almaine & Co (1820-24)

UNTRACED FLUTE COMPOSITIONS

Fantasia on *Kelvin Grove* (1829)

Grand Polonaise, fl. and piano acc., (1840): price 3s 'to be had only of Mr Wrenn'²¹

German Polka (piano) by J Churchill, fl. acc. by Wrenn (1847)

Carnival of Venice: the violinist Ernst's arrangement, transposed and expanded by Wrenn (1847)

Two fantasias, one entitled *Recollections of Wales*, on *Codiad yr Ehedydd* and *Ap Shenkyn* (1847)

¹² *BM*, 14 Nov 1840.

¹³ *BM*, 18 Dec 1841.

¹⁴ *BM*, 25 Dec 1841.

¹⁵ *BM*, 27 Aug 1842.

¹⁶ *BM*, 21 Dec 1844.

¹⁷ *FF*, 24 July 1847.

¹⁸ *FF*, 11 Dec 1847.

¹⁹ *FF*, 27 Feb 1847.

²⁰ *FF*, 30 Oct 1847.

²¹ *BM*, 14 Nov 1840.

Variations, on *Gramachree* (1837) and on *O Twine a Wreath* (1841) may be his.

..New Instruction Book for the Flute (1840)

3. Jonathan James Small and Martin J. Crossley Evans

Ernest Bryant Crampton M.A. (1881-1941) – The Man and his Music

Fifteen years ago, a small collection of music by E B Crampton, including songs printed by Boosey and Hawkes, playsets, sketchbooks and scripts were discovered in a Bristol bookseller's. This has enabled a short study of his life and work.

Ernest Bryant Crampton was born at Sawston in Cambridgeshire on 13th April 1881, the ninth child of John Crampton, J.P., (died 1910), and his wife Jane Eliza Bryant, formerly of Deal in Kent. His father was a man of substance in the area, a Radical in politics, who demanded better living conditions for low-paid workers. A member of the Linton Board of Guardians, he sank artesian wells and established a business for the production of mineral waters; he was a founder of the Sawston Cooperative Society and a founder and chairman of the local tannery. His main commercial interests, however, were printing stationery, selling patent medicines and acting as the local dental surgeon.

In 1885, when Ernest was four, John Crampton moved to Huntington House where he diversified his interests by purchasing a number of farms. Crampton spent his childhood here, the experiences and perceptions of which appear to be captured in a selection of his music. *Five Songs of a Lonely Farm* (1917) is one of Crampton's song cycles, which he also wrote the words for. Despite what the title suggests, the text is upbeat and charming:

The farmstead yonder – lonely? Well it might be now and then,
But think how lonely you can feel midst multitudes of men:
Upon a farm, you've strength to take Life firmly by the hand,
And hold him tight till he has taught you how to understand.

It is apparent from these words that Crampton does not refer to a melancholic loneliness. When one considers that he was the youngest in the family, and that many of his elder siblings were sisters, it seems likely that any loneliness he experienced was mostly based on childlike boredom, or the peace associated with a rural life. The metre of each song is an unvarying but sprightly 6/8, which, if intended by Crampton, may allude to a statement on the general monotony of his surroundings, although this is not necessarily a negative view. The words of the second song paint a positive picture of Crampton's perception of working life on a farm:

Four o'clock in the morning, and the cock begins to crow,
It's kind of him to wake me up, for he knows that I must go
To give my horses breakfast, and my lazy pigs to rouse...
...I do wish I could send them some bracing country air.

If taken at face value, this first-person impression implies that Crampton worked on the farms in his formative years, embracing the pastoral elements of his family's lifestyle. A sense of pride is evident in the question 'Could the Nightclubs up in London make you long to dance as soon, As the call of the early morning, on a farm in May or June?'

After schooling at the Leys, Crampton entered Clare College, Cambridge in the autumn of 1899, where he wrote the lyrics of a two-act light musical called an *English Girl*, which was produced in Sawston. In November 1900 he sang tenor in the chorus of the university's Greek play, the *Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, the incidental music of which had been written by Sir Hubert Parry, who was one of the conductors. Amongst the cast was A A Milne, who dutifully signed Crampton's programme.

Financially secure due to his interests in the family businesses, Crampton, who took his BA in 1903, formed his own theatrical concert parties, *The Cigarettes* and *The Curios* which toured the seaside holiday resorts on the east and the south coasts, and included a number of artists who later became 'top of the bill' in the West End including Stanley Holloway, Claude and Jack Hulbert, Denis Noble and Enid Trevor.

Some of the songs written for *The Cigarettes* exhibit a similar pastoral tone as Crampton's *Five Songs*, reiterating the importance of his upbringing with his regular references to the rural. His mention of Susan in 'I'm in love wi' Susan' as 'a bonny buxom dairy maid from the farm across the lea' is paired with his self-description as 'Lollipop Joe, the farmer's boy'.

His 'light entertaining songs' and revues were stated after his death to have little 'box office value', implying that the simplicity of his songs stemmed from a lack of originality or complexity in his composition. In many ways, simplicity seems to be Crampton's intention for his music, writing light-hearted songs to appeal to country folk. On the other hand, it may be that his music did not lack technical merit or originality, but that it simply did not appease the palate of the commercial music scene.

Crampton's work was interrupted in the Great War when he served as a lieutenant in the RFC, and continued into the 1920s effectively ending in 1928/9 when he became managing director of the family firm of printers, Messrs Crampton and Sons Ltd., although Crampton continued to write and to publish music throughout the 1930s, some of which was performed by the BBC on the wireless.

Crampton had a flat at the works and lived there during the Second World War, serving as a fire watcher and air-raid warden. His apartments were described as having 'an attractive old world atmosphere, where he had collected old prints, old antiques and bric a brac of all kinds'. *En bonne point*, a bachelor and an Anglo-Catholic, Crampton's last years were hampered by diabetes, coronary fibulation and heart disease from which he died at 92, High Street,

Sawston, close to his birthplace, on 24th June 1941, aged 60. Interestingly, Crampton specified that there should be three tests of death performed on his body before it was either cremated or buried.

From Our Corresponding Members

1. The Ethel Smyth Symposium, Detmold, September 2008

Susan Wollenberg

The British composer Ethel Smyth (1858–1944) pursued her musical training and a significant part of her subsequent career in Germany, beginning with her studies at the Leipzig Conservatorium and then privately with Heinrich von Herzogenberg; she moved in circles that included Brahms, and she went on to promote



Susan Wollenberg at Detmold (courtesy of Liana Serbescu)

performances of her stage works in some of the leading German opera houses. So it was fitting that a major international symposium, 'Rock blaster, bridge maker, road paver: The English Composer Ethel Smyth' (taking its title from the words of Virginia Woolf on Smyth in 1931), together with a series of concerts and an exhibition devoted to the composer, should have taken place in Germany to mark the 150th anniversary of Smyth's birth. The sponsors of the events were the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and the Mariann Steegmann Foundation, Zürich, supported by the University of Paderborn and the Hochschule für Musik, Detmold as host institutions.

The organizers, Cornelia Bartsch, Rebecca Grotjahn (both of the University of Paderborn and the Hochschule für Musik, Detmold), Pavel Jiracek (Hochschule für Musik, Cologne) and Melanie Unseld (Carl von Ossietzky University, Oldenburg) are to be congratulated on the stimulating and wide-ranging conference programme they put together, with student and staff participation, in Detmold from 6 to 9 November 2008. This was a large-scale celebration of Smyth (forming part of the larger Ethel Smyth Festival) and enabled us to consider her life and work in its context, as well as hearing rarely performed songs and chamber music by Smyth. A lecture-recital (on the subject of love and death in Smyth's piano works) was given by Liana Serbescu, a specialist in this repertoire. The whole experience was extremely stimulating.

A further opportunity to discuss Smyth and her music was provided by the one-day conference 'twinned' with the German event, held at the Faculty of Music, University of Oxford (where Smyth had been awarded an honorary D. Mus. in 1926), later in the same month. For the Oxford symposium (29 November 2008), which covered a variety of topics focussing particularly on Smyth's music, Sophie Fuller in her keynote address placed Smyth in the context of her female British contemporaries. Two of the Detmold conference organizers, Cornelia Bartsch and Pavel Jiracek, contributed papers on Smyth as a European composer and on the 'exotic' influences on her work, respectively. Other speakers included Liana Serbescu, whose lecture-recital for the Oxford symposium featured Smyth's (highly accomplished) early piano pieces; Barbara Eichner, with an illuminating study of Smyth's *Three Moods of the Sea*; and Christian Leitmeier, offering a searching reassessment of Smyth's Mass in D.

The Detmold conference was built round a number of broader themes; these included the women's movement and gender discourse around 1900; the creation of a composer's 'image'; and female homosexuality in the 19th century. The final session, 'Between Germany and England', beamed the spotlight on Smyth's music and included papers by Aidan Thomson on *Der Wald* and Jürgen Schaarwächter on *The Prison*; this was complemented by a concluding panel discussion on the question of how to get a female composer 'back into the music scene'.

Among the twenty or so papers at Detmold, we heard from the historian Gunilla Budde in her keynote address with a comparison of women's upbringing and lives in pre-suffragette England and Germany; Rebecca Grotjahn on misogynistic writings around the turn of the century; Amanda Harris on feminist politics (and Smyth's involvement); and Pavel Jiracek on Smyth's encounters with the East (the *Four Songs for Mezzo Soprano* he used as an illustration showed Smyth's dramatic evocation of local colour in an example of 'an Orientalism that displayed itself musically as well as thematically' in her works). Aspects of Empire and postcolonial perspectives were vividly portrayed in this paper. Elizabeth Wood's paper, delivered in her absence by Pavel Jiracek, and enthusiastically received, brought new perspectives to bear on the implications of Smyth's deteriorating hearing in the 1920s; this was an extract from a longer work on deafness and creativity.

A particular highlight was Cornelia Bartsch's introduction to the extensive correspondence between Smyth and her editor at Universal Edition in Vienna, Emil Hertzka, a remarkable recent find. Copies of some of the letters featured in the attractive exhibition at the Lippische Landesbibliothek prepared by Dr Bartsch and her students. Two concerts held at the Sommertheater, Detmold during the conference allowed us to appreciate the beauties of Smyth's music in some fine, committed performances by the cellist Xenia Jankovic and her colleagues (programming her Sonata no 2 in G, op. 36 alongside Brahms and Grieg), and the soprano Sabine Ritterbusch, accompanied by Heidi Komerell, in a selection of German Lieder and

English settings from different periods of Smyth's career.

The conference programme allowed space for the exchange of general information in the area of women's studies; we heard about a number of recent and forthcoming publications, including the new *Jahrbuch Musik und Gender*, introduced by Rebecca Grotjahn together with her colleagues on the editorial team. The stimulus to research provided by the Detmold conference is now being channelled into plans for further projects. May they thrive!

2. British Music in Chicago: two recent concerts

Karl Kroeger

It would be misleading even to suggest that Chicago, Illinois, might be a Mecca for British music. It is not. Although our world-class orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, may occasionally programme music by Britten, Vaughan Williams, or Elgar (usually their most popular and accessible pieces), often whole concert seasons pass without a British composer having been heard. (American composers, by the way, fare only slightly better.) Similarly, the Chicago Lyric Opera, touted by some to rank nationally in esteem just behind New York's Metropolitan Opera, sporadically schedules a Britten opera in its season devoted largely to Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, and Wagner. You're more likely to hear a Britten opera at the more adventuresome Chicago Opera Theater, whose three-production season in the spring of each year has offered five of them over the past decade, including this year's presentation of *Owen Wingrave*.



Bella Voce ensemble of Chicago

Two areas where British music often claims the spotlight in Chicago, however, are in the spheres of choral music and early-music ensembles. There are many fine choruses, both professional and amateur, in the Chicago area, and Britain's strong choral tradition has produced many fine works that often find their way on to the programmes of these groups. Similarly,

Chicago is blessed with several fine early-music ensembles in whose repertory the music of English Renaissance and Baroque masters is usually well represented. Recent concerts by two of Chicago's most distinguished ensembles, one choral, one early music, presented well selected, well performed, and emotionally moving surveys of British contributions to these areas.

The professional twenty-four-member a cappella vocal ensemble, *Bella Voce*, is one of Chicago's best. Founded in 1982 as His Majesty's Clerkes, the chorus has over the years presented stirring performances of some of the most demanding a cappella music in the choral repertory, from Renaissance masses and motets to ultramodern choral meditations by Pärt, Rautavaara, and others. On April 26th, May 2nd and 3rd 2009, directed by Andrew Lewis, *Bella Voce* presented 'Silence and Music', a concert of English choral music mostly from the 17th and 20th centuries. Although focussing on Vaughan Williams (six of his works were programmed, including the *Three Shakespeare Songs*), the highlight of the concert was a beautifully nuanced reading of Britten's *Hymn to St. Cecilia*. Anthems and motets by Orlando Gibbons, William Byrd, and Henry Purcell contrasted with similar works by Herbert Howells, Gerald Finzi, and John Tavener. Unusual and welcome were two fine choruses by Charles Villiers Stanford, *The Blue Bird* and *Beati Quorum Via*. Both were unknown to me. A smallish but enthusiastic audience at the Saturday evening concert greeted the singers' efforts with a well-deserved standing ovation.

A concert of early English music, entitled 'Arcadia Revisited: A Garden of Earthly Delights', was given by the Newberry Consort on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd 2009. The consort, currently led by Baroque violinist David Douglass and affiliated with Chicago's well-known Newberry Library, was founded in 1982 by gambist Mary Springfels. Over the years it has distinguished itself in the field of early-music performance and is widely recognised as one of the leading early-music ensembles in the United States. Its programme focused on English pastoral traditions in the Baroque era, featuring music by Henry Purcell, John Wilson, William Lawes, Nicholas Lanier, Martin Parker, John Bannister, and that most prolific of all composers: Anonymous. An insightful and dramatic performance by soprano Ellen Hargis of Lanier's *Hero and Leander* and a suite of ensemble music from several masques by Lawes were highlights of a wide-ranging and entertaining programme. Lutenist Paul O'Dette gave a sensitive reading of Wilson's astonishingly chromatic *Fantasia No 26 in C sharp minor*. And Hargis was also featured in a hilarious presentation of Parker's *A Bill of Fare* (to the tune of *Millfield*), a fanciful and farcical depiction of epicurean excess. The Newberry Consort, with a large and devoted following in the Chicago area, thoroughly delighted the audience with this unusual and varied musical offering.

British music may not loom large in Chicago's orchestral and operatic venues, but it seems to be thriving in the more intimate halls and churches that

offer performance space to Chicago's choirs and consorts.

CHOMBEC's current corresponding members are:

- Yu Lee An (University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand)
- Richard Barnard (City of Bath)
- Kate Bowan (Australian National University, Canberra)
- Suzanne Cole (University of Melbourne)
- Alisabeth Concord (Victoria BC, Canada)
- Morag Grant (Scotland)
- Roe-Min Kok (McGill University, Montreal)
- Karl Kroeger (USA)
- Stephanus Muller (DOMUS, Stellenbosch, South Africa)
- Paul Watt (Monash University, Melbourne)
- Susan Wollenberg (University of Oxford)
- Litong Zhu (People's Republic of China)

If you would like to enhance CHOMBEC's representation by becoming a corresponding member for your base in Britain or overseas, please contact the editors. The duties are pleasant: to report from time to time on yourself, your background and work, your environment, your colleagues, and events in your part of the world in relation to their 'British world' history or identity.

Research Students: 7

1. Who Took the Singing out of Popular Song? The Demise of the People's Song in England and the Empire, 1800-1850

Nick Nourse

So, who did take the singing out of popular song? Did anyone? First of all one has to agree at least with the basic concept, one put forward by Nicholas Temperley some years ago, that in 1800 the labouring classes made their own music, but by 1914 popular music was produced by a professional industry. Dave Russell (*Popular Music in England, 1840-1914*) broadly agrees but baulks at the difficulties in proving just what it was that 'the people' played or sang for themselves. This alone is one of the challenges that need addressing. By choosing my university's home city, Bristol, as my primary case study (and England's second city at the start of the 19th century) it is hoped to show in detail some of what was popularly sung and produced, where, and by whom, throughout a fifty-year period.

These aims actually represent chapters 2 and 3 of my thesis which are, provisionally: 1. The state of song in England in 1800; 2. Free music in Bristol; 3. Paid-for music in Bristol; 4. Case study: Charles Dibdin; 5. Case study: Australia; 6. From participation to consumer. Clearly I am working within a much tighter framework than either Temperley or Russell was referring to, but the evidence thus far from Bristol would suggest that the process of the commodification of popular music was taking hold by 1850. For example, in Bristol in 1846 the first of the tavern music halls opened as two of the city's pleasure gardens disappeared. The pleasure gardens, a phenomenon generally seen as belonging in the 18th century, were surprisingly prominent in Bristol's history in the first half of the 19th century and beyond. In fact the concentration of students and academics with direct or peripheral interests in this particular field has recently led to the proposal that the University of Bristol departments of music, drama, and archaeology form an interdisciplinary sub-group to investigate their presence in our region.

Bristol's pleasure gardens, fairs, and circuses are, I hope, good starting points for the detail that Dave Russell struggles to identify. Perversely, they are also examples of both a resistance to and a positive move towards the business of popular music making. In their resistance they can also be read with surprising accuracy against Ben Wilson's *Decency and Disorder: the age of cant 1789-1837* (2007). This sometimes overly long account of the attacks on popular culture has been a recent impetus to my work, but it does help highlight that neither popular music (nor any other music) should be seen in isolation, and the influences and pressures put upon it can be a help in finding those nuggets of information that fill the holes of an as-yet incomplete canvas. It also amply illustrates the point that popular song, particularly street music, was probably not solely driven off by an increasingly organised music industry but also by politics and officialdom. The who, what, and why of these issues represent an intriguing opportunity to burrow into some potentially lost music and sounds of the past.

Wilson's work also avoids the need to defend the 'popular'. I am coming to the conclusion that any discussion of the qualitative assessment of what popular music was in 1800 should be kept to a bare minimum. Far too often it feels like a defence against some ill-defined establishment accusation. It needn't be. To counter this to some extent my research aims to draw on statistical evidence in the form of a database of what was sung and where (and by whom). At the very least the quantitative answer to 'what does popular mean, when and where?' can thus be answered.

So far, so home-grown, but what about the Empire? CHOMBEC has established many links around

the world since it was formed, a number of them in Australia, and this is where I hope to build a comparative case study to compare with Bristol's music. The last copy of *CHOMBEC News* carried an article by fellow-researcher and colleague, Esmeralda Rocha, of UWA (the University of Western Australia, Perth). Esmeralda's work on Victorian theatre in the Empire and the fact that much of the popular songs of the 19th century were from the stage suggests that our researches should work in tandem wherever possible.

To that end Australia aims to be my Empire case study. And from my studies last year as part of Bristol's MA in Music, British Music Pathway, it suggests that I might well find different cultural values in the music of the expatriate communities (or should this be transported individuals who were forced to make up a community?) of Australia compared to England. Finally, the proposed case study of Charles Dibdin aims to tie many of these strands together: his songs on stage, on broadside ballads, and in the popular imagination both at home and abroad.

In closing I should like to acknowledge my funder, the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Do contact me at n.nourse@bristol.ac.uk

Illustration: Title and lithograph heading of a broadside ballad in Bristol Ballads, Broad-sides & etc. (Weare Coll.) Folio No14 [now two volumes], Bristol Central Library (shelf mark: SR 22361)



2. Bath in Peril

Andrew Clarke

Kenneth James's seminal work, *Concert life in eighteenth-century Bath*, published in 1987, analysed musical activity for the city of Bath over a period of one hundred years. He gathered the information over ten years, meticulously searching the three local papers (*Bath Chronicle*, *Bath Journal* and *Bath Herald*) in the old city Reference Library and manually recording his findings. The local studies librarian tells me that his thesis is still widely consulted. His was not the first attempt. The Bath city librarian, Wright, had copied music articles during the 1920s and these manuscripts, though incomplete, are retained in the library's archives. The limitation of manual transcription – often difficult to read and search – is apparent today. In the forty years since James began his thesis, while technology has advanced, the source material so essential for music research has continued to decay or become fragmented.

In Bath, this loss dates from the 1940s when items, typically programmes, deposited in the British Library for safe keeping, were lost to bomb damage during the war. During the 1960s many manuscripts (music and associated correspondence) stored in the basement of the Bath library were destroyed in flooding. Jon Gillespie did much to document that which remained.¹ The creation of the County of Avon first centralised and then, on its demise, dispersed material across the region. As a result certain ephemera, collected by the Bristol librarian Emmanuel Green,² was deemed not worth retaining although the catalogue still exists. For

¹ Jon A. Gillespie: *The catalogue of music in the Bath Reference Library* (1986).

² Emmanuel Green: *Bibliotheca Somersetensis: a catalogue of books, pamphlets, single sheets and broad sides in some way connected with the County of Somerset* (1902).

example, there are references to concert programmes in the Assembly Rooms.

Today access to historical local papers is largely restricted to microfilm which itself is becoming torn and scratched. Fortunately the original negatives are retained by the local authority in a secure location. Many of the original papers in the local library are disintegrating and no longer available for consultation. A project to integrate and rationalise these physical papers with the archives of the *Bath Chronicle* is in progress. A scheme to digitise the 18th-century newspapers with the support of the British Library is under review but will necessitate funding. Notwithstanding there is an extensive collection of newspapers from the Bath locality on microfilm at the

British Library in Colindale, north London.

Six years ago Dr Straughan, with a team of volunteers, started to index manually the *Bath*

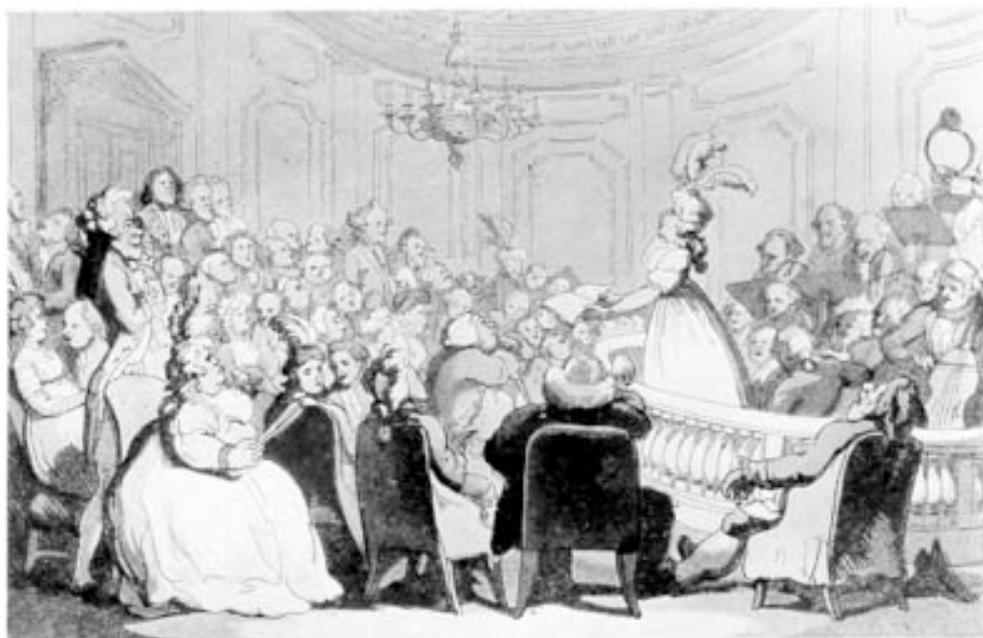
Chronicle between 1770 and 1800. To date the Bath Chronicle Georgian Newspaper Project³ has surveyed 60% of the target collection. An attempt is being made to complete this

project, temporarily stalled due to lack of resources. Dr Matthew Spring from Bath Spa University is intending to catalogue all printed music in the city library. The Bath Theatre archivist Christine Bayliss is completing a catalogue of all performances at the theatre during the 20th century. There is no general catalogue of the theatre playbills that are held in the library and elsewhere;⁴ many of these playbills include musical content.

Therefore to protect the heritage that still exists I have started to collect and register all musical activity in Bath in the late Georgian period 1800-1837 with the intention of continuing this exercise for the

³ <http://www.batharchives.co.uk/>

⁴ I have identified major Bath Theatre playbill collections at the British Library, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Harvard and Princeton University libraries but they too remain uncatalogued.



remainder of the century if funding permits. The data is being collected in Microsoft Excel and is sourced from the local newspapers, playbills and related ephemera in the local library. Additional material from other collections is included where relevant.⁵

Excel, better known as a desktop spreadsheet, can double as a free-form database. Being available on most personal computers, it lends itself as a vehicle on which to distribute a shared knowledge base of information at low cost. It offers a number of advantages over a conventional database, such as Microsoft Access. The database structure does not have to be defined before data input. This allows capture of data whose structure may change or develop during the research process. The inherent memory of words or phrases means repeated data does not have to be typed in its entirety. There are a number of utilities e.g., Find, Sort, Filter, etc., which allow the researcher both to search and browse the knowledge base. Macros can be developed to enhance the search process. The lack of any structural restrictions, e.g., number of rows, number of sheets, cell size, etc., allows 'nuggets' of information to far exceed their visual presentation. Cells can 'bleed' across boundaries. The Hyperlink capability allows access to more detailed articles that can be presented in their original format (digital photo) or transcribed into Microsoft Word.

Inevitably it is a matter for debate what is retained and what is discarded. Currently the Excel database holds concert details about data source, venue, date, time, performers, ticketing, certain logistics and other selected comments. In general it does not hold full programme details. It ignores advertised and reviewed concerts that take place outside the city of Bath, although local musicians were often involved. When the extent and quality are appropriate it is intended to make the Excel database available to other researchers.

Finally the author would like to hear about other appropriate primary sources that would add to the quality of the information currently being collected.

Illustration from 'The Comforts of Bath' by Thomas Rowlandson, 1798. Private collection.

⁵ In addition, the Bath Directories and Guides dating from the late 18th century provide invaluable information about musicians' trades and these are being correlated in a supplementary spreadsheet.

From the Newspapers A Century Ago

From *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Saturday 22nd January 1910.

SINGER AND CRITIC

MADAME BUTT'S HUSBAND APOLOGISES.

CHARGE OF ASSAULT WITHDRAWN.

(From our Special Correspondent)

London, December 17, 1909.

Mr. Kennerley Rumford, the husband of Madame Clara Butt, has apologised for striking the musical critic of the *Times* and the incident is now closed. Mr Colles, the critic, withdrawing the charge of assault at the Marlborough Street Police Court this week.

Mr Bodkin, for the prosecution, said that Mr Colles had written a criticism of a concert at which Madame Butt sang. Mr Kennerley Rumford had a great admiration for his wife's gifts and musical attainments, and he seemed to have thought on reading the article that it contained some passages, which were a personal reflection on Madame Clara Butt. In that state of mind he went to the Queen's Hall on November 30, and a message was sent through the manager of the hall from Mr Kennerley Rumford to Mr Colles. Mr Kennerley Rumford asked Mr Colles, "Do you think your criticism of last Saturday's concert a fair one?" Mr Colles replied, "Certainly I do, or I should not have sent it in for publication." Then Mr Kennerley Rumford began to speak in a violent way. Mr Colles said, "If you have any complaint to make about the article you had better communicate with the editor of the *Times*." Mr Kennerley Rumford said, "That is no good, I have come to deal with you" and he so far forgot himself as to give Mr Colles one or two blows[...]

Mr Bodkin, continuing, said that the criticism, in the first part, dealt with the symphony [by Dukas]. It was a new work, and as its movement required a certain degree of musical training to appreciate, it was received with some apathy. The article proceeded:

"No doubt the apathy of its reception was partly due to the fact that the audience was largely made up of the admirers of Madame Clara Butt, who are not generally interested in symphonies or other forms of serious music. Her performance of some of Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, two songs by Beethoven, with, of course, Donizetti's 'Il Segreto,' as an encore, apparently satisfied them."

With regard to that paragraph it was clear to any impartial person that the writer was dealing with different forms of music, one of which required a certain amount of musical training to appreciate, while the other did not require so much[...]. The lighter side was that in which Madame Clara Butt was engaged, and because of her great attractiveness the majority of the audience were there to see and hear her, and those in the minority were those who went to hear the symphony.

Mr Kennerley Rumford had left himself in his (counsel's) hand, and it only remained to state that that gentleman extremely regretted what he had done, as his attack on Mr Colles had been a course pursued under a mistaken idea. Mr Kennerley Rumford accepted the statements of Mr Bodkin, and he might rest assured that there was no intention in the article as he thought. He desired to express his regret for committing this "technical assault," and he tendered an expression of regret and apology to the court. If that would avoid the necessity for going fully into the matter, that would probably be the course desired by Mr Colles.

The magistrate said that a person in the wrong could not by any human power make himself right. He could, however, do the next best thing - apologise for being wrong. What had been done had been done handsomely.

The summons was withdrawn accordingly.

SPECIAL BOOK OFFER

CHOMBEC has been donated a large stock of new copies of Edgar Hunt's book on Robert Lucas Pearsall, privately published in 1977. We offer them for sale at £7.50 each. Secure your order with a cheque payable to the University of Bristol, adding £2.50 for each copy that needs to be mailed. (Copies will be sent surface mail to territories beyond Europe.) Proceeds will offset CHOMBEC's general expenditure. Send your cheque and order to CHOMBEC, Department of Music, University of Bristol, Victoria Rooms, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1SA, UK.

Forthcoming Events Relating to Music in Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth

Events listed in boxes are organised by or with CHOMBEC

6-9 August 2009 Celebrating Haydn: His Times and Legacy. An international conference to commemorate the bicentenary of Joseph Haydn's death. York University, Toronto, Canada.

8-9 September 2009 Worship, Liturgy and Music in Early Modern England. University of Durham. Interdisciplinary conference sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. www.dur.ac.uk/worship.network/wlm/

18 September 2009 Setting Agendas: text-setting and the libretto in contemporary British music. Conference at Chawton House, Alton, Hants. Organised by the School of Humanities, University of Southampton. www.soton.ac.uk/english

26-29 September 2009 Musicological Society of Australia 32nd National Conference. University of Newcastle, NSW. www.msa.org.au/conferences_events

17 October 2009 onwards Birmingham Early Music Festival. The theme of this year's BEMF is Handel and Purcell. www.birminghamearlymusicfestival.org.uk

24 October 2009 The Influence of Louis Spohr on the Music of his Time. Music Department of the University of Kassel. www.louis-spohr.de

7 November 2009 Taking Pleasure Seriously: Theorising Pleasure and Music, the annual one-day conference of the British Forum of Ethnomusicology. King's College, London.

12-15 November 2009 Transatlantic Connections. American Musicological Society annual meeting, Philadelphia. RMA-sponsored session. <http://www.ams-net.org/Philadelphia>

19-21 November 2009 Purcell, Handel & Literature. The Music and English Departments of the Open University in association with the OU Literature and Music Research Group, the Handel Institute, and the Purcell Society, convene this conference as one of the concluding events in the year marking the anniversaries of Henry Purcell's birth in 1658 or 1659, and Handel's death in 1759. www.music.sas.ac.uk

26 November 2009 Inspiring Decadence: The Viennese Anglomania during the late Eighteenth Century: Da Ponte, Mozart, Haydn. Herbert Lachmayer (Da Ponte Institute, Vienna). Music department, King's College, London. www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/depts/music/news/colloquia.html

28 November 2009 Bristol University Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Pickard. Victoria Rooms, Bristol. Programme to include Elgar Symphony No 1, and Pickard *Channel Firing*. www.bris.ac.uk/music

7-9 January 2010 Royal Musical Association Research Students' Conference. University of York. <http://www.rma.ac.uk/conferences>

14-16 April 2010 20th-century Music and Politics. RMA-sponsored event at the University of Bristol. www.rma.ac.uk/conferences

24 April 2010 Musica Scotica's annual conference that brings together researchers working on any aspect of Scottish music. Venue to be confirmed. www.musicascotica.org.uk

LOOKING AHEAD

1-3 July 2010 The Symphony Orchestra as Cultural Phenomenon. Institute of Musical Research, Senate House, University of London. www.music.sas.ac.uk

8-11 July 2010 16th Biennial Conference on 19th-Century Music. University of Southampton. www.soton.ac.uk/music

12-15 July 2010 20th-century Music and Politics. RMA-sponsored event at the University of Bristol. www.rma.ac.uk/conferences

14-17 July 2010 Royal Musical Association Annual Conference. Institute of Musical Research, Senate House, University of London.

REMEMBER TO KEEP AN EYE ON CHOMBEC'S WEBSITE FOR LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS:

WWW.BRIS.AC.UK/MUSIC/CHOMBEC