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ABSTRACT

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The English Musical Renaissance flourished at the beginning of the twentieth century because it satisfied an urgent political and cultural need for a National Music. Its influential composers and their circle (the 'Gentlemen') quietly ostracised the few musicians who did not subscribe to their ethos, especially those (the 'Players') whose esoteric beliefs and cosmopolitan musical style alienated them from the Renaissance mainstream. Warlock and Holst, as closet Players, were circumspect in their absorption in Western hermeticism or Hindu philosophy respectively and were therefore accepted, but the overt occult publicists, Cyril Scott and John Foulds, were deliberately ignored despite their enormous, but temporary, popularity with the public.

The originality and quality of much of the Players' music makes their subsequent relegation puzzling, therefore there must be hidden reasons for their neglect. Nature-mysticism and Christian agnosticism, central beliefs of the Gentlemen, were threatened by the Players' brand of esoteric and occult mysticism. The Players' cosmopolitan awareness and occasional use of the popular Oriental style threatened the establishment of a definitive English musical style. Though there were some similarities in musical vocabulary in both teams' attempts to express mysticism in music, the Players also shared a recognizable style which differed in source and expression from that of the Gentlemen.

The BBC Archives at Caversham proved invaluable in tracing the gradual fading of the Players' music from the scene due to the BBC's musical policy. The Gentlemanly music selectors' verdicts when rejecting Scott, suppressing Foulds's *World Requiem* and condemning Holst's later works ensured neglect, and this attitude was reflected in the descent from initial enthusiasm to hostility in the contemporary musical press.

Despite the Players' apparent irrelevance to the musical needs of the first part of the twentieth century, their works should be reconsidered as an aspect of the more recent embracing of other cultures than that of the West. Maybe the more varied picture which would have resulted from a combination of Players with Gentlemen might have ensured the musical recognition in Europe that was unsuccessfully sought by the English Renaissance.

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PROLOGUE: THE STATE OF THE WICKET

In the history of English music, the first forty years of the twentieth century are generally considered to be the time of the establishment of the so-called English Musical Renaissance, which was at its most influential during the inter-war years. Until the recent deconstruction of this period, notably by Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes in their book *The English Musical Renaissance* (1993), most English critics and the musical public felt that the only indigenous music of any worth was written by composers whose ideals, sources of inspiration and style of writing corresponded with those established by the Renaissance fraternity, and in particular those composers whose style can be loosely and simplistically termed 'pastoral'. The bulk of the remaining music has been ignored or rarely performed because of the ostracisation of composers not subscribing to the Renaissance ethos, including the small number whose spiritual beliefs looked to the East.

Before examining the reasons for this neglect, it is worth focusing briefly on some aspects of the socio-cultural and historic background of all early twentieth century English music. The turn of the century marked the fading of British Imperialism, and the Boer War underlined a growing loss of confidence in England's supremacy as an international power. Kipling, initially an imperial celebrant, expressed England's fears in his poem *Recessional:*

> Far-called, our navies melt away;
> On dune and headland sinks the fire:
> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
> Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
> Lest we forget - lest we forget!

Late Victorian music had produced vigorous native stirrings in the shape of Parry and Stanford, culminating in the major figure of Elgar. It is generally accepted that in the music of these composers national strength was still implied, along with acceptance of Victorian class divisions and traditional moral stances in a form barely modified by the growth of Marxism, the activities of the Fabians and the utopian socialism of William Morris: it was not until the next generation that composers and writers seemed to reflect Kipling's fears.

A distrust of industry and a wariness of money-grubbing grew along with the decline in British exports, so that the true Englishman began to be symbolised either by those who were 'above' money, that is the aristocrat or man of private means, or the simple countryman who could never be rich. This distrust led to exaggerated conservationism, as fears grew that a valuable heritage of landscape and an essentially rural tradition was becoming endangered: hence the success and influence, still pervasive today, of William Morris's Arts and Crafts movement, and the pastoral element of the English Musical Renaissance. Politicians stressed that this heritage was supportive of England's greatness, to the extent that Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin stated in his 1933 radio talk on National Character that 'The country [i.e. rural England] represents the eternal values and the eternal traditions from which we must never allow ourselves to be separated' (quoted in Wiener 1985: 46): the implication was that such a separation could weaken England politically and socially. Therefore this determination to conserve the vanishing rural past became one of the most pervasive strands in both English culture and politics during the inter-war years.

Other fundamental certainties had also been shaken along with the undermining of imperial pride and belief in the unshakeability of England's economic strength. Darwin's theory of evolution had weakened the simple sturdiness of Victorian Christian belief: many believed, as Bernard Shaw said in his challenging preface to *Back to Methusalah*, that 'evolution was a heresy that involved the destruction of Christianity.' (Shaw 1921: xxviii) Many felt too that a modification and sophistication of the beleaguered English Church, or even an alternative religion, was needed to continue the nourishment of the spiritual needs of the public in general and music in particular. The work of the great thinkers of the latter half of the nineteenth and the turn of the twentieth century, such as Darwin, Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, all led directly or indirectly to an undermining of conventional Christianity as untenable or at best spiritually limiting.

Some alternative religious possibilities grew directly from the new awareness of Indian religions and philosophies arising from the growth of a British imperial presence in India during the nineteenth century. The Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London in 1886 was

followed by the Indian Empire Exhibition in 1895, and Queen Victoria as Empress of India admired Indian arts and crafts to the extent of having a Durbar room at Osborne. However, the received and superficial perception of the Orient as mysterious or glamorous and yet somehow inferior dissipated any genuine interest or understanding of religious and aesthetic values so different from those of Britain. To the Hindu, for instance, Man was merely a part of the All in an impersonal concept of Nature and the Universe. This was incomprehensible to the average late Victorian Englishman: acceptance would presuppose adjustment to the fact that maybe he did not really matter very much in the universal scheme - that he was a microcosm in the macrocosm of the Universe. The combination of the messages of Darwinism and Hinduism was disturbingly heady stuff.

Yoga and meditation became popular as a direct result of the visit to the West of the Swami Vivekananda. He represented Hinduism at the World Parliament of Religions in the 1893 Chicago Exhibition, and spread a new understanding that was not coloured by Christian missionary attitudes, preaching acceptance rather than adoption of oriental religions by the West. He became the blueprint of the line of Indian gurus that was continued by the Theosophist leader Krishnamurti and the poet Rabindranath Tagore in the 1920s (dubbed 'Stupendranath Begorr' by Bernard Shaw)[1] through to the Beatles' Maharishi Mahesh Yoga of the 1960s, and continues even today with a surfeit of Swamis. It was as a direct result of his encounter with Vivekananda's work that the young English composer Cyril Scott embraced Vedanta philosophy. Buddhism too had become popular amongst the English literati. Conan Doyle, for instance, had experimented with Buddhism (along with telepathy and hypnotism and general occultism) and ended up believing in table-turning. Clifford Bax, brother of Arnold and a prominent literary figure, was an ardent Buddhist whose influence on his friend, Gustav Holst, is described in Clifford's memoirs *Ideas and People* (1936) and *Some I Knew Well* (1951). By 1914, there was enough attendant curiosity about Indian music to culminate in the publication of *The Music of Hindostan* by the English folk song authority and scholar A.H. Fox Strangways. He included tables of the Indian ragas and many music examples which he combined with considerable analysis of mode and idiom. He had travelled in India in 1910 and was amongst the first to show a genuine appreciation of

Hindu music as a completely different art from that of Western music, as complex as that of the West, but working from a melodic, rather than a harmonic basis.

This new awareness of Eastern religion and culture, combined with the distrust of conventional religion, led inevitably to research into new spiritual truths which emanated from the East rather than the West; it encompassed a new curiosity about esoteric as well as merely unfamiliar forms of religion, which could be broadly defined as the 'occult'. This word literally means 'hidden', but today has often become confused with its lesser and marginal forms - spiritualism, the paranormal in the shape of ghosts, witchcraft, white and black magic coupled with Satanic worship and diabolism. The origins of bodies as respectable as the Freemasons are occult, and Masonic ritual is a strong influence on many occult societies and their traditions. All these examples are manifestations of a larger definition of the esoteric which embraces all beliefs and practices and is regarded as some kind of Secret Doctrine, whose hidden rituals and initiation patterns are not necessarily sinister or evil, but are known only to initiates and adepts who are learned in the disciplines of their particular branch.

Interest in the occult was by no means confined to Britain. Russia and France especially were caught up in these new spiritual vistas: artists such as Kandinsky and Mondrian were professed occultists, believing, like Scriabin, in the correspondence of sound and colour. Many of the French Symbolist poets such as Baudelaire and Rimbaud, and French composers such as Satie, Debussy and Roussel were absorbed in the occult and, in Russia, Scriabin ardently publicised his theosophical beliefs. In England such interests were not so openly displayed, and the esoteric, as a force in the lives of the artistic community, remained relatively unacknowledged.

The two most important branches of esoteric belief and practice that had grown up by the turn of the century had East and West polarities. The Eastern form, Theosophy, was founded in India: its message, based on Hindu religious and philosophical thought, remained world-wide for about fifty years until after the first World War, and the Theosophical

Society had a strong and active branch in London. The founder of the theosophical movement, Madame Blavatsky, believed in the benevolent supervision of mankind by a Great White Brotherhood of the Masters (who were adepts and initiates of a universal Secret Wisdom). She expanded at length on this theory in her books *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. The movement was pan-religious and amongst the Masters were representatives of the four great religions such as Christ and the Buddha as well as lesser luminaries such as Cyril Scott's supposed Master, Koot Hoomi, who was generally considered to embody the reincarnation of Pythagoras. The Brotherhood was supposed to be engaged with the Dark Forces in a permanent cosmic, esoteric struggle. Other ingredients of Theosophy's extraordinarily potent recipe were Hindu concepts such as reincarnation plus elements of spiritualism. It was concocted by Madame Blavatsky between 1875 to about 1890 and greedily imbibed by the Western world whether resident in Europe or in Theosophy's Indian headquarters and branches, and popularised by figures as politically charismatic as Annie Besant. Its scriptures were basically Hindu in source - the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Ghita* and the *Rig Veda* - all of which were to have such an influence on Holst. Its adherents came from all walks of life but were characterised by a hunger for a new spiritual message which would not force them to reject their Christian upbringing entirely. Madame Blavatsky's biographer Peter Washington summed up the role of Theosophy as fulfilling

> deep needs at a time when religious doubt was fuelled by the first great age of mass education. The late nineteenth century produced a large semi-educated readership with the appetite, the aspiration and the lack of intellectual sophistication necessary to consume such texts ... where nudism and dietary reform linked arms with universal brotherhood and occult wisdom. (Washington 1993: 53)

As far as English music was concerned the mainstream seemed untouched by such exotic spiritual fare. Most musicians would have agreed with the minor composer and influential music critic Cecil Gray that Theosophy was 'admirably adapted to those weak and dyspeptic spirits who are unable to digest more wholesome and solid religious fare. Theosophy is in fact a kind of peptonized, predigested essence of deity, the synthesis of Science and Religion as its founder grandiloquently termed it.' (Gray 1924: 154) Nevertheless Theosophy spread not only to the impressionable Cyril Scott and to the young composer John Foulds, but also

to Holst, via his theosophical stepmother. Rather more incongruously, Elizabeth Lutyens's mother sent her teenage daughter to Foulds for composition lessons, entirely because of his theosophical beliefs. Lutyens remembers these lessons in her autobiography - they were not a success:

> It was under Foulds's influence that I first came into contact with another and very dangerous aspect of Theosophy - occultism. Foulds and a group of fellow-Theosophists were trying to make contact with the Devas or angels and to receive messages or music from them. This was to be achieved by meditation of an undefined sort in the attempt to render oneself psychic. (Lutyens 1972: 26)

Lutyens uses the term 'occultism' here in the most superficial sense, where ignorance tended to spell fear and distrust: she clearly had only an inaccurate and shallow impression of what Foulds was trying to do, coloured no doubt by her youthful, but understandable, intolerance. Despite such scorn as that of Gray and Lutyens, Gray's friend Sorabji (who had most eclectic tastes in religion, absorbing all, yet refusing to state his own beliefs) was impressed enough by its tenets to contribute to the theosophical magazine *The New Age* along with such eminent literary figures as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. But from the late 1920s onwards Theosophy ceased to have any real influence in the artistic world. There were so many accusations against Madame Blavatsky of fraudulence and against the Theosophical Society of petty in-fighting that Theosophy lost most of its credibility. The second generation of theosophical leaders such as Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, despite their influence on many literary figures, eventually succumbed to distrust and scandal, although the Theosophical Society still exists today and maintains a redoubtable presence in London.

The other important branch of esoteric belief lay in the Westernised search for the Secret Wisdom. Towards the end of the nineteenth century various societies emerged, based on the resurgence of hermetic tradition and magical and alchemical practices of the past. They had their roots in Western hermeticism and Rosicrucianism with input from Masonic ritual, and included study of the Kabbalah and white magic. The best known English society based on these principles was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which was founded in 1887 and dissolved in 1923. This attracted notable literary figures: W.B.Yeats was involved with

it and progressed successfully through its secret hierarchy over the course of his life. The novelist and short-story writer, Arthur Machen, who had a great influence on John Ireland, was a member for a time, as was the author Algernon Blackwood, who was also a friend of John Foulds.

Though basically a learned and harmless Society - corroborated by the Irish literary figure and friend of Yeats, Maud Gonne, who said that the members 'seemed to me the very essence of the British middle class' (Howe 1972: 70) - the Golden Dawn had a darker side. Its most notorious member, 'the Great Beast' as Aleister Crowley was called, dabbled in drugs, black and sexual magic and was the instigator of the few scandalous scenes in the Society's history that brought both it, and the study of the occult, into disrepute. There were no well-known musicians amongst its members, but composers such as Warlock hovered on the fringes through artist friends Augustus John, Nina Hamnett and the poet and publisher, Victor Neuberg, who was Crowley's partner in experiments with sexual magic. Somerset Maugham was so impressed by Crowley that he used him as the main figure in his melodramatic early novel *The Magician* (1908) in which he describes him as 'a fake but not a fake.' As his biographer, John Symonds, says, 'Crowley was one of the many who rebelled against the self-righteous, rosy view of society and of man that was held by the Victorians. These were the "gods" that he trampled underfoot to set himself in their place.' (Symonds 1971: 39) Inevitably the more conventional amongst the artistic community would not have liked to be associated with perpetrators of such disturbing beliefs and eventually, as in the case of Theosophy, enthusiasm began to wane during the 1920s and 1930s.

Changes in social or spiritual environment are bound to affect any creative artist, who in the case of the composer, has to mirror contemporary sentiments if performance and recognition are a goal. Many of the best known English Renaissance composers of the first half of the century wrote music destined and designed to be a palliative to the anxieties of their country about its place in the cultural world, and they were performed because their music filled a need, irrespective of its instrinsic quality. This was so in the case of Vaughan Williams and his circle; but because their music was tailored so exactly to fit the needs of the surrounding

society, their role was more than palliative, for they helped to mould and fix, as well as reflect the average listener's concept of national identity.

Conversely, if a composer's music is unsuited to the required mirror role, no more than token performances will ensue, or possibly none at all, and posthumous rediscovery is a matter of chance or research; yet the music may be just as fine as that which receives immediate acclaim. The ensuing chapters will examine the personalities, circumstances and work of a small group of such composers, and will investigate their cosmopolitan interests in oriental, esoteric and occult thought which formed a strong contrast to the nationalism, Christian agnosticism and nature-mysticism of the English Renaissance brotherhood.[2] This contrast is exemplified in opposed concepts of both the spiritual nature of music and its role in society which resulted in marked stylistic differences in the music itself. Inevitably these differences were reflected in the increasingly hostile reception of the compositions of such divergent composers. They became gradually alienated from the musical Establishment, and there is even some evidence of an insidious conspiracy against them. The question then remains of whether their work was unjustly neglected and its intrinsic worth unrecognised.

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[1] According to Humphrey Carpenter's review in *The Sunday Times* of 12.2.95 of the Tagore biography.

[2] For an overview of what was happening in music and the arts in European esoteric circles, the reader is referred to the useful summary in Ellen Crystall's thesis on *Esoteric Traditions and Music in the Early Twentieth Century.*

CHAPTER ONE: THE TEAMS

By the advent of the First World War English music had settled into one broad mainstream fed by its various tributaries, with a number of lesser and disregarded rivulets heading in other directions. The source of the main flow was an awareness of the dwindling imperial image: its gathering force sought to persuade musicians to balance or replace this image with that of a growing cultural ascendancy. Therefore they had to supply a characteristic English music strong enough to be a force on the Continent comparable with that of English literature and painting: the telling tag of 'das Land ohne Musik', however simplistic and genuinely undeserved, had to be obliterated. The result was a tightly-knit bunch of composers whose closeness led for many years to a superficial over-simplification of their musical traits as 'pastoral' and based on national and early English music.

Nevertheless, as demonstrated so exhaustively by Stradling and Hughes, many of these mainstream Renaissance composers were concerned with the invention of a National Music. Parry and Stanford had already recognised this need over the last years of the previous century, but did not compose in a specifically nationalist manner, however patriotic their enthusiasm. Though their contemporary, Elgar, shared much of their patriotism, his was a genius arguably large enough to sound an individual voice. His Peyton Lectures of 1905-6, given during his short occupancy of the Birmingham University Chair of Music, begged for a genuinely national music that was *not* based on what he considered the backward-looking aims of the emergent Renaissance. However he did not share Parry and Stanford's role as desk-clearers for the next generation (which was centred round the bulky shape of their pupil, Vaughan Williams).

Much of Parry and Stanford's historical importance lay in raising the respectability of the musical profession in England to the level where they were awarded a knighthood apiece, and in writing English compositions of a stature comparable (in the eyes of their contemporaries) to those of the continent and Germany. They provided a tradition for Vaughan Williams and his circle to inherit as well as rebel against - hence the title *Heirs and*

Rebels given by Imogen Holst to the volume of occasional papers and letters between Vaughan Williams and her father. In fact, an awareness of inheritance figured much more largely than rebellion, probably because Vaughan Williams shared a similar public school/ Oxbridge and RCM background with Parry and Stanford, had been taught by both and admired them as men and teachers. He owed them a great deal - after all Stanford, however much he may have criticised Vaughan Williams's works in his usual non-compromising manner, managed to persuade the Leeds Festival to give the first performance of the *Sea Symphony*.

But it was Parry rather than Stanford who made Vaughan Williams aware of the musical tradition that he inherited. Being related to Darwin, he must have been particularly appreciative of Parry's evolutionary theory of the development of music, expounded in *The Art of Music* (1893) (which, in a later edition, was called *The Evolution of the Art of Music*). Parry believed in a Darwinian progression from the music of primitive man, which gradually evolved from animal-like yelps and howls as an expression of emotion, through to the beginnings of rhythm and melody; in time such music was shaped by what he calls 'design', i.e. formal organisation, into the comparative sophistication of folk song. His belief that each country reflected its indigenous racial characteristics in its folk music became central to Vaughan Williams too, but he was to build on it in an unexpected manner. For though both Parry and Stanford had wanted to put English music on the map again, a goal entirely shared by their pupils, they did not show any of Vaughan Williams's desire to found a truly nationalistic school of music.

There were other enthusiasms that Vaughan Williams inherited from Parry - a love of the choral music of the Tudors, and a conviction that Bach represented one of the highest pinnacles in music. The reverence for Bach, balanced by the awareness of the great Tudor legacy, are constant themes that reappear and are developed in Vaughan Williams's writing. But he differed from Parry in that he did not see England as merely part of a great European development represented at its best by the evolution of Teutonic music via Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, with Wagner as a rather regrettable mutant in the evolutionary process.

Vaughan Williams also inherited Parry's genteel radicalism and took to heart his adjuration to write choral music 'as befits an Englishman and a democrat' (Vaughan Williams 1987: 182). Parry admired Walt Whitman and passed on to his pupil many of the heady ideas of universal brotherhood and true democracy expounded by Whitman during the second part of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly these ideals contributed to Vaughan Williams's and Holst's hope of reaching the heart of the common man via their music, and were the reason behind their attraction towards setting Whitman's poetry.

Vaughan Williams was a seventeen-year-old when he first had lessons with Parry, but was more mature when a student of Stanford, and therefore had the courage to rebel against him. Stanford was openly distressed that none of his eminent pupils showed any desire to follow in his and Parry's pro-Brahmsian footsteps. In fact the pressing task for the post-Stanford and Parry generation of the RCM 'College Boys' became 'Getting rid of Brahms', as 96-year-old Sir Thomas Armstrong said in his radio reminscences broadcast during the 1994 'Proms' season. Not only Brahms, but Wagner dominated the English musical scene at the end of the nineteenth century. The College Boys effectively ousted the whole Teutonic influence, including that of Wagner, by their reverential assimilation and application of the language of both English folk song and the Tudor and Jacobean composers. Thus they invented an English national style which was intended as a potential, if tardy, rival to those established by Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Spain and Russia at the end of the nineteenth century.

The similarities of the College Boys to each other was very marked. Because they were almost invariably financially secure and shared a public school and/or Oxbridge education, and were not forced to earn their living as musicians or indeed otherwise, they will henceforth, for the sake of convenient simplicity, be dubbed the 'Gentlemen'. They were typical examples of Philip Dodd's observation that 'many of our educational and, more generally, cultural traditions and institutions were forged in the later part of the nineteenth century' (Colls and Dodd 1986: 1) in which the English public school and Oxbridge were seen as the 'guardians of English cultural life.' (Ibid.: 5) At some point most of the

Gentlemen had been students at the RCM under Parry and Stanford, or, in the next generation, under or around Vaughan Williams. The Gentlemen comprised not only composers, but also musical policy makers, who (especially during the inter-war years) formed a large part of the influential fraternity of music critics, concert programmers and the BBC music department. They amalgamated into one team with a vital backing of strong 'Reserves', as I shall call them, who could, at a pinch, have joined their Gentlemanly colleagues in the quiet struggle to suppress any composers with deviant aims from those of the Renaissance. The match between the Gentlemen and the aberrant 'Players' - the topic of my thesis - was one of the strongest fixtures of English music in the inter-war years.

The Gentleman had a strong and persuasive captain in Vaughan Williams, who came to embody the ideals of the English Renaissance, and was certainly the most articulate and prolific in print on the aims of his team. Yet its members, however accomplished, did not match their captain in stature, considering the historical significance accorded the movement, so that the sum tended to be greater than the parts. Several were examples of doomed youth: George Butterworth was killed on the Somme in 1916, and W.C. Denis Browne died in the trenches in 1915. He studied with Edward Dent and was a friend of Vaughan Williams while at Cambridge, was a Tudor music enthusiast and wrote a handful of fine songs. Ivor Gurney was destined to languish protractedly in a mental asylum as a partial result of his war experiences; therefore, like the young poet Rupert Brooke, who was a friend of Browne's, they were glamorised into proof that those whom the Gods love die young. Through sentiment, their promise has possibly been exaggerated into more solid achievement than was actually the case: Butterworth's sensitive handful of works are essentally lightweight, however beautifully crafted, and Gurney's output, whether as a poet or as a song-writer, is extremely uneven.

The rest of the team were up to twenty or so years younger than Vaughan Williams and included Gerald Finzi, Patrick Hadley, Herbert Howells and E.J. Moeran. Apart from Hadley they all enjoy a mild popularity today, but they are not representative in Europe of a national school of English music, comparable to the international stature of Dvorak or

Smetana, and indeed probably never saw themselves as writing music of such stature. The only other team member of any real stature in public or posthumous eyes was Holst, Vaughan Williams's contemporary at the RCM. But as will be shown later in this chapter, his Gentlemanly membership was partial and increasingly superficial; in effect, he was a quiet 'mole', keeping many of his deepest beliefs from his colleagues. Nevertheless, because of his close friendship with Vaughan Williams, he was always regarded as part of the team during his lifetime, though his membership had become almost honorary rather than active by the time of his death in 1934.

So what were the characteristics and interests that the Gentlemen shared that bound them into a remarkably cohesive team? As a group, given their almost identically affluent and sometimes richly cultured backgrounds, they had much to lose in the new uncertainties of class and tradition, and were understandably determined to conserve past values, not only in music, but in appreciation of English landscape and in traditional Christian frameworks. Nostalgia for what was already irretrievable or fast-changing bound them together into an incestuous closeness, strengthened by the 'old boy network' of personal friendship, RCM experience and membership of the circle around Vaughan Williams. Only Gurney and Holst were comparatively impoverished, but joined the team through their connection with the RCM.

Despite their sheltered background, they were no head-in-the-sand ostriches, were very aware of the injustices around them, and subscribed to the tenets of Socialism. Vaughan Williams and Holst, in particular, admired the Utopianism of William Morris, whose ideas contributed to the idealisation of the honest craftsman (and hence his presumedly honest folk music) and to the formation of the rural myth so carefully preserved by both writers and musicians in the first part of the century, and indeed still so potent and commercially exploited today. The following Morris adjuration was taken seriously:

> Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
> Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
> Forget the spreading of the hideous town:

Think rather of the pack-horse on the down
And dream of London, small and white and clean,
And clear Thames bordered by its gardens green.
(From the Prologue to *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70))

The picture of England epitomised in his Utopian fantasy *News from Nowhere* (1891) struck many sympathetic chords, especially in the mind of the young Holst who was more actively involved with Morris than was Vaughan Williams, attended the former's lectures in Hammersmith, and conducted the Morris-founded Socialist Club choir (where, incidentally, he met his future wife). One of the finest of his early works is the Molto Adagio, dedicated to William Morris, in his *Cotswold Symphony*.

The musical result of this idealistic Socialist empathy was a belief in the need to establish music-making for everyone, to find beauty in the enjoyment and deployment of music as a craft as well as an art. During the early years of the Renaissance movement Vaughan Williams said that any art 'like charity, should begin at home. If it is to be of any value it must grow out of the very life of himself [i.e. the composer], the community in which he lives, the nation to which he belongs.' (Vaughan Williams 1912: 198) This is of course both a viable and praiseworthy aim, if growth of that art is a result of the composer being a genuine member of the community. The Gentlemen were determined to educate the English Everyman in a knowledge of his musical heritage and were all interested in music for amateurs, whether in the form of Vaughan Williams's Leith Hill Festivals, Holst's teaching at Morley College, creation of the Thaxted Festivals and work with the soldiers in Salonika, or Finzi's involvement with the Newbury string players.

Because of the desire to conserve and communicate, all the Gentlemen showed an interest in the editing and performance of sixteenth and seventeenth century English music. There had been much scholarly work in the latter part of the nineteenth century culminating in the famous collections, edited by Gentleman E.H. Fellowes, entitled *The English Madrigal School* (1913-24). So much has been written on this influence that it merely needs reiteration of its importance as a powerful binding trait in the music of the Gentlemen. Not

only did they compose for amateur use in a style that used the modal characteristics, the contrapuntal ingenuity and the word-painting of both secular and sacred music of this period, but they resurrected many lost masterpieces, involving their students and colleagues in their performance, as part of the general public saturation in English music. Despite the sheltered background of the majority of the Gentlemen, they did not intend to inhabit an ivory tower even though in retrospect they may appear to have done so. Their form of English *Gebrauchsmusik* had a faint atmosphere of benevolent patronage and 'do-gooding' in its dispensation of music by the élite to the non-élite. As will be seen in the final chapter, a similar attitude pervaded BBC policy in the inter-war years.

The natural outcome of musical involvement in the community is the use of its music. But Vaughan Willams's use of native art as exemplified in folk song was to abstract it from its surroundings, thus removing it from its life source, turning it into a sophisticated art-form at the point when it was practically moribund in the community: it was always old people, not young adults, who sung to the collectors in the first years of the century. Thus the belated national movement in England differed radically from those of twenty years earlier in Europe, when industrialisation was less ubiquitous, where the folk tradition was still alive and more pervasive throughout the community and where there was an emotional need amongst the people to express their feelings as emergent nations.

All their belief in the musician as the servant of the community was really the cart before the horse: in fact the Gentlemen were determined to celebrate and resuscitate England's greatness in music by imposing musical nationalism on the community as a subsitute for waning national confidence subsequent to the Boer War. They were creating an artificial need for a national music, where none existed before, entirely because it was politically and socially expedient. As noted by the young iconoclastic composer Constant Lambert, this was despite the fact that 'the London bus-conductor is not to be found singing the type of tune that occurs in *Hugh the Drover*; if he sings at all he is probably singing a snatch of "Love is the Sweetest Thing", in an unconvincing though sickening imitation of the American accent.' (Lambert 1934/48: 124) Vaughan Williams's essays on the vital role of national

music in a composer's life (collected together by OUP as *National Music* in 1963) constantly urge musicians to look towards our national musical heritage in order to escape from the Handelian choral norm and the Teutonic instrumental tradition. However he was fully aware of what he, as a composer, was doing in consciously 'using' national music:

> Those who bring about revivals are often scoffed at by the ignorant as foisting on the people something 'unnatural' - if it is 'real' we are sure it will come about 'naturally'. But does not life itself start for us in nine cases out of ten 'artificially'? Ask any doctor. And when life is nearly extinct can it not be revived by artificial breathing, artificial feeding, artificial blood pressure? If a healthy life ensues why quarrel with the means employed? (Vaughan Williams 1963/87: 56)

Constant Lambert viewed all this with a jaundiced eye. While admitting the necessity for ridding English music of Teutonicism he maintains that the folk song movement 'is by now - if it was not always so - a definitely exotic and "arty" movement completely detached from any genuine life.' (Lambert 1934/48: 124) No wonder Lambert, with his cosmopolitan outlook and his fine work for that most un-English art-form, ballet, was viewed as an *enfant terrible* by his contemporaries, in his condemnation of the use of national music as an artificial graft, not a natural growth.

However artificial this need for a national music, the Gentlemen built most efficiently upon it. Though their background was amateur, in that most of them performed and wrote music for love rather than money, they were utterly professional in their attitude. Their shared vocation was to establish England's musical greatness, based not on cosmopolitan influence, but on indigenous talent: their evangelical zeal drove them as hard as any composer who had a need to earn a living. As a result they all wrote music that shared certain characteristics. As Balfour Gardiner (who gave up composing in the style of endangered English music in favour of planting trees to save an endangered English landscape) said ruefully to his friend, Percy Grainger: 'You must know that I am a Civilised Being and have been at Charterhouse and Oxford; and though I loathe and detest them with my whole soul, yet they have left their mark on me, and I write as I must.' (Lloyd 1984: 24) 'I write as I must' referred to one of the most pervasive characteristics of all the Gentlemen - the use of English folk song as one of

the tools in creating a national music.

An antiquarian collecting interest had already existed throughout the end of the eighteenth and all the nineteenth century, culminating in the collections of Lucy Broadwood (1858-1929) and the 'squarson' (i.e. squire-cum-parson), the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924), but their activity was that of educated amateurs with no axe to grind, with a conservationist rather than an educative goal. This was not so in the case of the most famous collector, Cecil Sharp (1859-1924), very much one of the Gentlemen in both his public school/Cambridge background and his belief in the importance of establishing a national English school of composition. He used the dissemination of English national music in a political way as well as an educational and musical end in itself. His *English Folksong: Some Conclusions* (1907) remains an impressive book even if much of his field work has been regarded as inaccurate and incomplete, and therefore criticised as unscholarly: certainly today his ideals seem redolent of sentiments that are a pot-pourri of Edwardian lavender and Imperial Spice. He believed that the study of folk song in schools would 'tend to arouse that love of country and pride of race, the absence of which we now deplore.' (Sharp 1907: Introduction) His influence on the Gentlemen was incalculable whether in the discovery and noting down of the actual music or in his philosophy for its use. His picture of the nineteenth century English village as a 'nest of singing-birds' (Ibid.: 105) is part of the general myth--making of a beautiful but comatose English music, awakened by the kiss of Prince Ralph with a backing of school choirs announcing that they were in the process of vocally sowing *'The Seeds of Love'*.

As an adjunct to the glorification of England's musical past in the form of folk song came the attendant glorification of its setting - that of rural England. The contemporary Georgian poets seemed to have the same didactic aim as the Renaissance composers in wishing to conserve all that stood for English Pastoralism so that it would be a beacon for future generations. In addition, during the First World War publishers marketed rural nostalgia to the British Tommy by making sure that anthologies of mainly pastoral poetry such as the *Oxford Book of English Verse* were available in a 'size to fit a knapsack and the mental

equipment of officers and men alike.' (Colls & Dodd 1986: 120) In fact the ordinary soldier's nostalgia was more likely to be for Manchester than an idyllic Grantchester as painted by Cambridge-educated Rupert Brooke:

> oh! yet
> Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
> And is there honey still for tea? (Brooke: *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester*)

There was another unreality at the heart of this nostalgia, for the Gentlemen did not fully experience the English countryside, as their love was based on a romanticised 'weekender' observation rather than actual habitation: Vaughan Williams, for instance, lived in or near London for most of his life, and Holst could only escape to his Thaxted retreat during the school summer holidays. The artifice at the root of their enthusiams amused Constant Lambert, for he distrusted similar 'admirably meant endeavours of William Morris and his followers to combat the products of those dark satanic mills with green and unpleasant handwoven materials: while its heartiness conjures up the hideous *faux bonhomie* of the hiker noisily wading his way through the petrol pumps of Metroland.' (Lambert 1934/48: 125).

The Gentlemen had to match fine English lyric poetry with characteristic English music. Like the poets, their conscious purpose may have been nationalist and celebratory of England's pastoral beauty, but their subconscious message was elegaic and nostalgic. However positive their apparent goal of composing and writing in a genuinely national language, their nostalgic themes merely bewailed the erosion of what they considered to be their artistic roots which were fast disappearing in a despoiled English countryside and a blurring of class demarcation lines. The Renaissance became a bulwark to prevent assimilation of English music into a musical European federation.

The unrealistic idealism of social and political purpose that lay behind so much of the Gentlemen's interests seemed to be echoed in their private lives, which reflected the romantic 'weekender' attitude noted above. Considering how much is known of their common aims,

and friendships with the rest of their team, surprisingly little is known of their relationships with women. There are many similarities: most were ostensibly happily married, but many of their wives appear to have been glorified secretaries. Women, except as performers of the Gentlemen's music, are shadowy background figures of little significance and are seldom mentioned in biography, memoirs or correspondence. Vaughan Williams did, however, marry twice. His first wife was an invalid much of her life, and when she finally died, he married family friend and eventual biographer, Ursula Wood, who for many years had written, arranged and altered many of the texts he set.

Holst, as far as his marriage was concerned, was a true Gentleman: he waited several years to get married to Isobel, until, practical as always, he could afford a wife. Vaughan Williams clearly shared his friend's idea of the role of a wife: 'To a foolish friend who once said to Holst "I suppose you did not marry to help your composition", he answered: "That is exactly what I did do."' (Vaughan Williams 1953: 69) Holst's letters to Isobel from Salonika, though affectionate, are far more detached in tone than are his letters to his friends W.G. Whittaker and Vaughan Williams. That her place in his life was peripheral is implied in the much-quoted remark when he was desperately ill towards the end of his life: 'as soon as I reached the bottom I had one clear, intense and calm feeling - that of overwhelming Gratitude. And the four chief reasons for gratitude were Music, the Cotswolds, RVW and having known the impersonality of orchestral playing.' (Vaughan Williams and Holst 1959: 81) Where were Isobel, or loyal and understanding daughter Imogen, in his priorities? There is a depressing picture implied in a letter written in 1903 to Vaughan Williams while the young Holst and Isobel were abroad, ostensibly on holiday. Holst reports that he had

> walked my wife off her legs day after day until she was too tired to do any copying. While lately I am sorry to say she has not been very well. Also she does not seem able to acquire a "teshneek" but can only do it [music copying] very slowly so that these few pages we send you really represent rather a lot of work. (Ibid.: 19)

In fact, Clifford Bax notes that Holst had 'little sex-interest' (Bax C. 1936: 56): the sharing of deep emotion was apparently not for pillow-talk. It was reserved, as in the relationship between Holst and Vaughan Williams, for manly confidences, shared while tramping through

the countryside on what they called their 'Field Days', during which they discussed each other's work and aspirations. In all Gentlemanly works there seems to be little overtly sexual inspiration. For instance Vaughan Williams's setting of the *Song of Songs* in *Flos Campi* only succeeds in being chastely sensuous.

Focal points of Howells's and Gurney's lives and close friendship were also long walks through the Gloucestershire countryside. Gurney was too damaged emotionally to embark on any permanent or realistic relationships, but Howells left accounts of a committed courtship of his wife Dorothy in his letters, though his biographer Christopher Palmer says that 'Herbert's sex-drive was certainly strong and demanding and could not contain itself within the normal confines of his marriage. This should not be taken to imply that the marriage was a failure.' (Palmer 1992: 198) However he seemed to share the Gentlemen's certainty that a musical vocation was top priority to such an extent that he spent his honeymoon in the composition of a promised new work for the 1920 Prom season. As Christopher Palmer suggests:

> Most likely he had simply failed to address himself to the task, and the only time left was the honeymoon period. If so, it certainly had the merit of teaching poor Dorothy, right at the very beginning of the course, what being married to a composer was about to entail! (Ibid.)

Gerald Finzi was particularly lucky in his devoted wife Joy whose own considerable artistic talents were marginalised for the sake of her husband - again she provided a background of domestic comfort and informed listening for his work. A contrast to these serene, apparently uneventful pictures of Gentlemanly marriage is that of Moeran to the cellist Peers Coetmore. She was more than a match for him, and it ended in disaster, exacerbated by his drinking and the frequent separations which resulted from both the demands of her career and Moeran's instability.

To assume that enjoying like-minded companionship on long walks pre-supposes inability to form deep relationships with the other sex is obviously nonsense. What does seem significant is that the Gentlemen seemed to prefer to spend their leisure, not in the company

of their family, but with their musical blood-brothers. The closeness of the friendships within the team automatically excluded their womenfolk as much as if they had been Rugby-playing hearties. There was no real suggestion of homosexuality however, except possibly in the case of Gurney (see Palmer 1992: 39) - the air was of good clean living and overt manliness. It is only amongst one or two of the Reserves that there is any whiff of what the Gentlemen would have deemed to be 'decadence'. They simply seemed to regard their women as comfort and support providers - makers of tea for the match - who were usually musical enough to empathise with their husbands' world, but were not considered as of a sufficient stature either to enter it, or to pose a threat.

The Reserves

The Reserves, in particular Delius, Ireland and Bax, were often on the periphery of the Gentlemanly world and there seemed to be a certain amount of mutual respect: for instance Vaughan Williams was moved enough by the loss of Delius to attend the rather bizarre ceremony of his re-burial in England, thus electing him publicly to posthumous membership of the Gentlemen's Team: Howells paid Delius tribute in his programme note for the *Songs of Farewell* performed at the Albert Hall on 8.3.1950. (Quoted in Palmer 1992: 313) Bax and Ireland were either close friends or at least friendly acquaintances of many of the Gentlemen, perhaps because of their similar comfortable background (even Ireland, who was by no means rich, was affluent enough to maintain a devoted housekeeper and enjoy a comfortable life). In the second generation of Gentlemen, Moeran was taught by Ireland and revered him, while Howells talked of Ireland's melodic gift with a grudging admiration. Howells also considered Bax's *Symphony No. 3* as 'jolly fine' (Palmer 1992: 354) and Vaughan Williams paid a public tribute to Bax on his death (Vaughan Williams 1967/1987: 243). Admittedly there may have been some musical back-scratching because Bax had stated in his confession *I am a Brazen Romantic*[1] that he had the most respect and sympathy for Vaughan Williams amongst his English contemporaries. According to Foreman they influenced each other in the late 1920s (Foreman 1983/88: 116) and Vaughan Williams dedicated his *Symphony No. 4* to Bax; but this work is atypical, and a milestone in Vaughan Williams's symphonic development in that it broke away substantially from the serenity of the

language of much of his previous work.

The Reserves often evinced folk song characteristics as part of their melodic language, occasionally used folk song as the basis of a work and sometimes used it to depict a landscape which was presumed to be English even if the title was not specific. Delius, in *Brigg Fair*, one of his most characteristic works, had written a rhapsody on an English folk song suggested by Grainger, and Warlock, in his disguise as a Reserve, had dressed up some folk songs chromatically in his *Folk Song Preludes* for piano, though he witheringly detached himself from any association with the Gentlemen by saying that Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony* reminded him of a 'cow looking over a gate.' (Gray 1934: 78-9) Many of Warlock and Delius's melodies are in a folk song idiom and Delius's *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* was automatically considered to have taken place in England despite his French domicile. He was certainly regarded by Cecil Gray as:

> unmistakably English ... How magically ... do the first few pages of *Brigg Fair* evoke the atmosphere of an early summer morning in the English country, with its suggestion of a faint mist veiling the horizon, and the fragrant scent of dawn in the air! (Gray 1924: 73)

But none of the Reserves used modally harmonised folk song in an intentionally educative manner intended for amateur singing, as did the Gentlemen. Admittedly Grainger's fame, amongst his contemporaries as well as today, did lie in his choral arrangements of folk songs, and their 'dishing up', as he called it, for piano, so he was tolerated, even though the results were too difficult for amateur or Gentlemanly *Gebrauchsmusik* use. However his pioneering work, involving the use of a phonograph to record folk songs faithfully rather than sanitizing them for educational use, was naturally disapproved of by both Sharp and the Folk Song Society, because it was done with no ulterior didactic purpose. It is significant that anything that did not involve folk song at all, notably the experimental music of his last years, is still seldom heard.

Amongst the other Reserves, Bax occasionally used Irish folk tunes (he maintained that all good folk melody was Irish, not English). Boughton wrote the inevitable set of choral folk

song variations in 1907-10, which his biographer Michael Hurd says have a Victorian flavour. He was more interested in the Kennedy-Fraser collection of Hebridean tunes and their pentatonic scales which are echoed in the *Faery Song* from *The Immortal Hour*. John Ireland on the other hand, whose RCM background contained everything that went into the making of a Gentleman, stoutly declared that his music was not specifically English in style (Schafer 1963: 31): the public disagreed. It must be emphasised that none of the Reserves used folk song to the extent of the Gentlemen, and above all they were not concerned with the establishment of a National Music.

As seen above, the attendant link with folk song was love of the English landscape and musical portrayal of its beauty, and again the Reserves conformed, superficially at least, with the Gentlemen. The possible exception was Rutland Boughton, who merely lived in a beautiful place - Glastonbury - rather than writing music about it. Delius's titles were often based on landscape, though not necessarily an English landscape - for instance the *Song of the High Hills* could be placed anywhere, but *North Country Sketches* are uniquely English, though a little outside the territory normally favoured by the Gentlemen. Warlock's 'Hey Nonny No'-type songs often celebrate the open countryside of Belloc-type poetry: Bax, haunted by the Irish landscape and the sea, did not limit himself to specific places with the exception of *Tintagel*, but he was a contributor to the musical celebration of rural beauty. Ireland in particular, whether in piano pieces like *Amberley Wild Brooks* or orchestral works like *Mai-Dun* (or Maiden Castle), was concerned with specific English places, but his style is cosmopolitan rather than English national. Though the Reserves' attitude to landscape transcended what they saw before them into realms that smacked of Nature-mysticism and the sublime, as opposed to simple pastoral scene-painting, they were enough in tune with the Gentlemen to be regarded as sympathetic.

If the average concert-goers of today were to be asked for the most typical characteristic of the music of the English Renaissance, they would probably say 'pastoral' or 'based on folk song', because this is still the received impression of music of that era. However, when asked for the name of a typically English composer, they are more likely to say Delius or

Elgar, before alighting on Vaughan Williams. Yet Delius lived abroad almost all his life, with apparently no homesickness, and Elgar had pastoralism thrust upon him by the public, just because he loved the Malvern Hills. According to Michael Kennedy, Elgar 'was saying in public that inclusion of a folk song in a piece of music was a sign that the composer was shirking his job, and to Troyte he once said, "I write the folk songs of this country".' (Kennedy 1968/87: 104) So though the public perceived the Reserves as members of the Gentlemanly Establishment, they were in reality no part of its aims and shared only some of its musical language and to no greater extent than any composer breathing the prevalent musical air.

However, the background of some Reserves (such as Ireland, Bax and pseudo-Reserve Warlock) was Gentlemenly in that they had similar economic and social upbringing and enjoyed some sort of private means so that any musical work was from choice rather than necessity. Warlock, though perpetually pleading poverty to his long-suffering mother and stepfather, always had a secure background. Only Grainger and Boughton had of necessity to earn a living through music, in contrast to the other Reserves. There were Gentlemanly similarities in musical training also, for many Reserves were College Boys: Ireland was RCM educated, ending up on the RCM staff, and even the impecunious Boughton attended the RCM for a year in 1900, under Stanford, where he was funded by a generous local benefactor: Bax only diverged a little in attending the RAM. The rest however present a motley variety of training. Warlock was self-educated musically like his friend and mentor, Delius, who, apart from a short time in Leipzig and private tuition with a local organist in Florida, picked up his craft through experimentation and observation. On the other hand, Grainger, also a young friend of Delius, came from Australia and was educated as a concert pianist in Frankfurt, not at the RCM, as one of the 'Frankfurt Group' of young English composers, whose other members were Balfour Gardiner, Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter and Norman O'Neill.

As far as idealist Socialism is concerned, most of the Reserves were firmly apolitical and unconcerned with the lot of their fellow man. Only Boughton tried to follow William

Morris's Utopian ideals and bring music to the masses. He had some success in his use of the local community in his Glastonbury festivals which were a distinct forerunner of the more intimate festivals so common today. In fact this was only a starting point for his political activities, for he became a vociferous Communist and was more and more shunned by the Gentlemen as a result. The brilliant London success in 1920 of his Celtic opera, *The Immortal Hour* (1912-13), was as short-lived as its composer's fame, and his fate was decided when he began to use his post as music critic for the *Daily Herald* to air his political views. He made matters worse by his statement in a letter to the *Workers Weekly* on 12.2.26: 'the Capitalist system of today allows a few artists to make things for the enjoyment of the master ... And it is cute enough to provide a certain amount of artistic dope for those of the middle class who live near the edge of the proleteriat.' He was so concerned with his message that he lost all sense of the ridiculous, for in 1926 he set his Christmas opera, *Bethlehem*, in a miner's cottage as a gesture of solidarity with both miners and the General Strike: Herod, naturally, was presented as a top-hatted capitalist.[2]

As personalities, the Reserves were infinitely more individualistic than the Gentlemen, who were generally pleasant, kindly, affable creatures and apparently faithful to their wives. Many of the Reserves by contrast had flamboyant, or even disturbed, personalities and very colourful sexual lives. Delius was probably the most megalomaniac English composer of all time, whose sad final years of paralysis and blindness caused by syphilis contracted during his more riotous years in Paris cannot blur his basic selfishness and the exploitation of his talented painter wife Jelka. As for Boughton, he had the attitude of a kindly sheikh to his select little harem of mistresses and wives plus an assortment of children and goats in his cold climate kibbutz in Glastonbury. Bax had a series of long extra-marital relationships (notably with the pianist Harriet Cohen), Ireland was a closet homosexual paedophile, whose attempt at marriage was as disastrous and even more short-lived than that of Tchaikovsky, and Grainger's sexual proclivities involved flagellation - all rather dissimilar to the home-life of our dear Gentlemen.

Therefore, while undoubtedly a part of the Renaissance, the Reserves were not made of the true Gentlemanly stuff, but had enough in common with them to be treated with qualified approval and admittance to the club, if not to the team. But what of the rest of British composers? Despite current interest in those who were thrust to the sidelines, performances of their music tend to be dutiful and occasional rather than enthusiastic and frequent. They can be divided into two groups: those who posed a direct threat to the Gentlemen, and had therefore to be challenged and defeated, I shall refer to as 'the Players', and those who were regarded as a harmless background to the Renaissance will be designated 'the Spectators'.

The Players

The miniscule team that opposed the Gentlemen did not share their ideals, being cosmopolitan in attitude and deeply committed to Eastern philosophical beliefs; two at least were forced economically to earn their living as musicians in contrast to merely choosing to follow a musical vocation. The combination of Cyril Scott (1879-1970), John Foulds (1880-1939), pseudo-Gentleman Holst (1874-1934) and pseudo-Reserve Peter Warlock (1894-1930) seems an apparently unimpressive and even unconscious challenge to the strength of the Gentlemen and Reserves, and indeed there is no reason to believe that they saw themselves in such a role.

The Players were all deeply influenced by their esoteric and occult beliefs, based on either Eastern philosophies, or on Western hermeticism in the case of Warlock. Yet they did not band together into any homogenous group - their common characteristics might have made them stronger as a whole if they had done so, but they were not, unlike the Gentlemen, particularly clubbable men. It must be stressed that, despite examination of their correspondence and known circle of friends, at no point were they apparently enough in contact to discuss any shared aims as a group, though there were tenuous links. For instance, Scott was clearly aware of Holst's esoteric interests: he made an interesting comment in an interview with John Amis on 14.6.62 that Holst, like Scriabin, wrote his music under an occult influence.[3] Warlock and Holst knew each other slightly - Warlock had toyed with the idea of taking lessons from Holst, but eventually came to dislike his music -

while Scott had attended the performance of Foulds's *World Requiem* in 1923 and wrote a short congratulatory note to Foulds, saying: 'I have heard your Requiem (and possess it) and admire it very much'. (BL Add. MSS 56482) In addition, Scott and Holst shared a friendship with Frankfurt Group composer, Balfour Gardiner. On the surface there seems to be little that the Players had in common, perhaps because they apparently did not combine to discuss shared mystical beliefs, and there seems to be no other evidence of mutual recognition. Why then did the Gentlemen see them as a challenge and worth conscious efforts at subjugation?

It is important to recollect that at the time when the Gentlemen were pressing home the need for a national music, their greatest chance of success lay in being taken to the heart of the general public. Ironically, each Player was, however temporarily, a household name to a degree not attained by the Gentlemen during all the inter-war years and only by Vaughan Williams by the end of the 1930s. Scott's piano music, especially the little piece *Lotus Land*, was on every piano stand, though much of the rest of his work was disregarded. Foulds's *World Requiem* packed either the Albert Hall or Queen's Hall on every Armistice Day from 1923-26; the reasons for its subsequent neglect will be discussed in Chapter Six, but at the time its removal from the scene of national mourning ritual caused a general outcry from performers and public alike. Holst's *The Planets* has of course remained enormously popular to an extent barely matched by even Vaughan Williams's most-performed works, and Warlock's *Capriol Suite* has been subjected to numerous arrangements and amateur performances by people who know nothing of its composer. Overall, however, the Players' story is of a neglect so unaccountable or a representation so unbalanced that there must be some reason for it: their music merits some re-assessment, or at least new performances. The Gentlemen were antagonistic to the Players, not only because of their unwelcome popularity, but also because they did not conform enough to the national music movement; their popularity was therefore a potential threat to its progress. The documentation of the path of their critical reception, concentrating on the inter-war years, is, in the case of all except Warlock, a picture of growing schism and breakaway from Renaissance and Gentlemanly ideals, based in the end not on superficial differences, but on the Players'

esoteric beliefs. Scott and Foulds were publicists, writing books and numerous articles about the occult nature of music - in fact, they 'came out' as non-conformist in their spiritual convictions. They were therefore sent to a musical Coventry by the Gentlemen. Holst and Warlock wisely remained closeted, and therefore were not entirely neglected or suppressed.

Despite the fact that the Players did not form a group like the Gentlemen and had no mass vocation, they had many characteristics in common, though their backgrounds and musical education varied considerably. Warlock and Scott came from reasonably wealthy families, but there the similarity with the Gentlemen ceased. Warlock left Eton at sixteen, attended a 'crammer' to ensure his entry to Oxford, but having arrived there only stayed for a part of his first year and left without taking a degree. Thereafter he did all he could to discard his background, and lived a Bohemian existence. Scott's father made his money in shipping and followed the normal pattern of sending a musical child abroad to study, for in 1891 English musical training was still regarded as inadequate. All musicians of worth were automatically pre-supposed to come from abroad, for 'getting rid of Brahms' was still to come; Holst had yet to be embarrassed by what he was later to call, in a letter to W.G. Whittaker on 23.5.1917, the 'good old Wagnerian bawling' (Holst 1974: 23) of his first major opera, *Sita*. In Frankfurt, with a tradition heavily based on the teaching of Clara Schumann, Scott trained as a concert pianist and only later as a composer under Ivan Knorr, whose main enthusiam was for the modern Russian school. Such a training made Scott eminently unfitted for Renaissance membership, for he remained a cosmopolitan in music, attitude and often domicile for much of his life.

Unlike Scott and Warlock, Foulds and Holst were never rich and only intermittently comfortably off. Foulds was brought up by a strict Plymouth Brethren family, but a musical one, for his father was a bassoonist in the Hallé orchestra. He ran away from home at fourteen, earned his living in cheap theatre orchestras and was apparently 'under the wing of "a lady of ill-repute" (his daughter's description) who took a motherly interest in the boy and acted as his protector throughout his teens.' (MacDonald 1989: 1) He resembled Holst in many ways: he was an orchestral player, joining his father in the Hallé as a cellist, worked for

the YMCA at the end of the war, and only wrote his more serious and large-scale music in his limited spare time. His second marriage was to Maud MacCarthy, a violinist and ethno-musicologist steeped in Indian music. He lectured, became a pianist after the war for silent films and composed much light music, attaining some fame as a composer of incidental music for plays, notably Shaw's *St. Joan.* The success of the London performances in the middle 1920s of his *World Requiem* have already been mentioned, but it was clearly his disillusion with the final fate of the *Requiem* and with the English musical scene that led to his disappearance from it.

He worked first of all in Paris, partly as a cinema organist, in the late 1920s, and then went to India in 1935, accompanied by his wife and family and a young workman who was a medium for the messages of theosophical 'Brothers' or Masters.[4] Once in India Foulds joined Maud in collecting Indian folk music and then in 1937 settled down to achieve his dream of synthesising the East and West in music. To this end he worked for All-India Radio, and learned to play Indian instruments and taught Western notation to Indian musicians. In 1939 he had begun a symphony which was to combine the music of East and West and had formed a radio orchestra of instruments from both cultures. His dream was never realised for he died suddenly of cholera in Calcutta. It would be difficult to imagine a life more diametrically opposed to that of the Gentlemen in its frequent musical drudgery and brief but dramatic fame.

Holst too knew about musical drudgery juxtaposed with sudden fame. He was the son of a provincial musician in Cheltenham, had no private means and all his life worked exceptionally hard. At first he played the trombone, or 'worming' as he called it because the conductor of the White Viennese Band in which he played was called Stanislas Wurm. He taught at various evening institutes including Morley College and eventually and famously at St. Paul's Girls' School: therefore composition was limited to the summer holidays. His life was outwardly uneventful, illumined only by warm friendship and a sense of vocation, but disrupted temporarily by the unwanted and bewildering success of *The Planets*. It was Holst's inner life which eventually drove him away from the Gentlemen in that he questioned

all the accepted Western spiritual values that characterised the Establishment. He was still their brother, but by the end of his life he must have appeared to have spurned his inheritance and emigrated into climes so distant that they must have seemed like outer space to the bewildered Gentlemen.

Scott and Warlock shared a flamboyance of character and behaviour which would have been anathema to the Gentlemen, who were not prone to exploits and were conservative in conduct. Both were strikingly attractive in appearance and had considerable personal charm and magnetism, verging on sheer showmanship. Warlock was 'rather pallid-faced, but his neat gingery beard, added to his dangerous eyes, gave him the effect of a waspish Elisabethan bravo with a courtly air.' (Lindsay 1962: 85) Jack Lindsay was one of Warlock's riotous Café Royal circle which included the music critic and minor composer, Cecil Gray, with whom Warlock shared a flat. They were often joined by van Dieren, Sorabji, Moeran, Constant Lambert, the poet Robert Nichols, D.H. Lawrence, the painter Augustus John, Aleister Crowley and later Bruce Blunt, whose poetry was set by Warlock in some of his finest songs. Apart from Moeran, none of these figures were remotely connected with the Gentlemen's world, being rowdy, vociferous, iconoclastic and enormously self-absorbed, and probably as threatening to the Gentlemen as a serpent in an English Eden. According to Moeran's biographer, Geoffrey Self, the friendship with Warlock occurred at a time when Moeran was particularly low, and his drinking problem was exacerbated by Warlock's company. In the late 1920s, when he lived with Warlock in the latter's cottage in Eynsford, he had not really strayed from his Gentlemanly ideals, but merely mislaid them; he wrote very little music during these years.

Despite the roistering character of one side of Warlock's personality, there was something effete in him which D.H. Lawrence memorably sensed and described under the character of Halliday in the Café Royal scenes in one of his most famous novels, *Women In Love.* Warlock clearly recognised the portrait and that of his future wife, and the depiction was the subject of a libel case which was finally settled out of court. He appears in other novels of the time by lesser writers than Lawrence or Huxley[5], and therefore it must be accepted that

his personality was memorable and intriguing to a wider circle than his fellow musicians - it would be most difficult to imagine any of the Gentlemen as a basis for a fictitious character.

Warlock was to use two names eventually - his own, Philip Heseltine, and 'Peter Warlock' under which pseudonym he first became known as a song writer. The legend, first perpetrated by Gray in his biography of Warlock, that he was a 'split personality' has since been generally accepted as far-fetched. But there is no doubt that his violent mood swings from a sensitive dreamy Eusebius figure as Heseltine to an extrovert and often drunken Florestan were startling in their intensity. They are more perspicaciously documented than by Gray in the works of his many other friends, notably Jack Lindsay in his book *Fanfrolico and After* (1962), and Douglas Goldring who said 'there was nothing really "evil" about either personality and the only "devil" that possessed him was his musical genius.' (Goldring 1935: 183) Today the general consensus of opinion that he was a sensitive and probably mildly manic-depressive figure is born out by his recent biographer Barry Smith.

Warlock was the complete antithesis of everything either Gentlemen or Reserves stood for, and only a Reserve when in Philip Heseltine mode. However, he became a peripheral friend of Arnold Bax, who admired Warlock's choral writing in *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* saying that it was a 'masterly piece of tragic writing'. (Gray 1934: 265) He remarked sadly on hearing of Warlock's death that 'he was always a very unhappy fellow and used to try and escape from himself by drug-taking and wild drunken riots and bad behaviour in general. But fundamentally he was an idealist; and in many ways I was fond of him.' (Foreman 1983: 276)

Scott was an equally flamboyant personality, but less disruptive in behaviour. He left partial accounts of his life in no less than two autobiographies, *My Years of Indiscretion* (1924) and *Bone of Contention* (1969), and clearly enjoyed shocking by his appearance as well as his actions. Bantock's daughter Myrrha remembered his visits well and said that she never saw Scott move quickly: 'He drifted, walking and sitting with the studied grace of a Beau Brummel ... In the afternoons he slept and on his door would be pinned a notice: DO NOT

DISTURB. I AM IN AN ASTRAL SLUMBER.' (Bantock 1972: 134) The novelist Arnold Bennett apparently admired Scott's appearance when he had 'been bold enough to go [to a party] in a dark plum-coloured velvet dinner jacket' (Scott 1969: 152), and the pianist Esther Fisher describes him as wearing two extraordinary rings, a scarab and an amethyst.[6] Eugene Goossens was a friendly acquaintance and described Scott at home thus:

> In an incense-laden, Gothic, pre-Raphaelite atmosphere, this gifted, esoteric, intensely sincere man dispensed China tea and played me his latest work, with the setting sun filtering through a stainedglass window. At such times his finely chiselled sensitive features took on the expression of a transfigured Chopin, strangely at variance with both his occult nature and the forlorn melodic wailing with which he still accompanies his playing. (Goossens 1951: 299)

The 'wailing' was in fact Scott's 'composer's voice' trying to convey vocally lines that his hands could not encompass on the piano.

Both Scott and his close friend, the Reserve Percy Grainger, were the only professional performers amongst the Teams which might account for the soloistic exhibitionism of much of their appearance and antics. In contrast, the Gentlemen were only concerned with a team rather than a solo performance. The net result of Scott's very un-English ambience and appearance was that he tended to be distrusted as a lingering manifestation of the world of Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and the whole aesthetic movement of the Nineties of which the Symbolist movement was a part: it attempted to reach the almost occult power of the symbolic imagination to arrive at a hidden but more genuine reality than that about us, as exemplified particularly in the poetry of Baudelaire and Stefan George, both of whom were translated by Scott.

Neither Scott nor the rest of the Players seemed to feel any nationalistic fervour, being uniformly unpatriotic - even Holst did not feel strongly nationalistic for his was a concern with the music itself, not its Englishness. Warlock said he learnt a dead language, Cornish, as an unconventional but 'effective protest against imperialism' (Gray 1934: 162) though he does not make it clear why he regarded such a task as an effective protest. He successfully

avoided conscription by spending 1917-18 in Ireland, thus implying that he did not consider England worth fighting for. Foulds looked first to Europe and then beyond to India for intellectual and musical inspiration and was unconcerned with England, while Scott despised his Merseyside origins all his life: their patriotic apathy was a strong contrast with the Gentlemen's intensity of feeling towards England.

Unlike the Gentlemen, most of the Players seem to reserve their emotional intensity for women, rather than for the establishment of England's musical greatness. Whereas the Gentlemen (and Holst) quietly ignored their wives, women fulfilled an important, though variable, role in the lives of the rest of the Players. Foulds was the only Player influenced by Theosophy and Hinduism who had a remarkably fulfilling and artistically rewarding relationship with his brilliant if exasperating wife, Maud MacCarthy. He understandably valued her as a teacher, guide, and a musician on an equal footing with himself, who shared his aspirations yet had her own adventurous and independent life to lead, and who had an enormous influence on his beliefs and music. In many ways, Warlock was an irresponsible womaniser who despised any woman with whom he had a sexual relationship: Aldous Huxley portrayed him as such in the character of Coleman in his novel *Antic Hay*[7] which abounds in passages such as the following when Coleman has seduced the heroine with his beard covered in his own blood from a wound inflicted by another girl with a penknife: 'and all the time Coleman had hung over her with his blood-stained beard, smiling into her face, and whispering "Horrible, horrible, infamous and shameful".' (Huxley 1923: 223). His marriage according to all his circle and to his son Nigel was a disaster, and he openly flouted convention in living with his last girl-friend at the time of his death.

Nobody could have been more heterosexual than Scott to the extent of rebuffing the homosexual advances of the glamorous Stefan George. (Scott 1969:103-4) He was very susceptible to women, finally married late to the novelist Rose Allatini, simply because a theosophical Initiate advised him that he and Rose had unfinished Karma from a previous existence to work out. (Scott 1969: 177) Presumably this was successfully accomplished before they eventually separated. Scott was governed also by occult reasons in his second

choice of partner, his common-law wife Marjorie Hartston Scott; she is still alive and during an interview with her, surrounded by the extraordinary furniture and mementos of his life, she recalled Scott for me with admiration and love, and with no questioning of his sincerity. (She was however, singularly reluctant to expand on either his friends, his beliefs or even his music, the last perhaps because she does not claim to be a musician.) Understandably, his behaviour, appearance and surroundings would have immediately classified Scott as an insincere poseur in the eyes of contemporary Gentlemen and Reserves.

The Strange Case of Holst

Some of the sources of the Players' sense of alienation can perhaps be highlighted by examining more closely the ambivalence of Holst's position as a Player or a Gentleman, for he perched precariously on the boundary between the teams. In the earlier part of his life he managed to keep a balance of interests that was acceptable to the Gentlemen, but in his last ten years drifted gently away from them and could not even be regarded as a Reserve in the focus of his interests. His initial inclusion amongst the Gentlemen was not a false or even superficial classification, for he had all the necessary characteristics for team membership in that he loved English music, especially the Tudors and Purcell, and was enormously interested in folk song and incorporated it into his music. He adored the English countryside through which he tramped indefatigably, either alone or with Vaughan Williams amongst others. He put his genteel Radicalism into practice by bringing music into the lives of ordinary people through his teaching, his Festivals and by writing music for amateur consumption which was never workaday in quality, though always practical for amateur performance. How then did he not conform, and was therefore destined for relegation, however gentle?

First, Holst's interest in early music, though similar to that of the Gentlemen, became more and more focused on the rhythmic and speech-dictated freedom of plainsong, though he taught, revived and conducted with enthusiam much neglected sixteenth and seventeenth century English music, especially Weelkes and Purcell, throughout his life. But he was already travelling in slightly more distant directions than his contemporaries when

incorporating plainsong in such a unique way as at the beginning and end of *The Hymn of Jesus*. His love of plainsong also led to more freedom of metre, hence much more frequent use of unusual time-signatures like 5/4 and 7/4 than their occasional use by the Gentlemen. Secondly his interest in folk song became more and more centred not on its melodic and implied harmonic formulae, which was the Gentlemanly style, but on the intertwining of words and music as one entity. The Gentlemen were far less interested in the words and more concerned with the music. As Wilfred Mellers put it,

> Holst did not see in the folk song cult any wistful reversion to a simpler more 'primitive' form of existence; he admired the songs' simplicity and economy, their emotional beauty combined with impersonality, but most of all he was interested in them because words and tune had grown up together. (Mellers 1947: 145)

Musically the effect of all this was to make his music less, rather than more, pastoral in character - the pastoral style was never one of simple economy or impersonality. Such signs of disaffection were there for all to see, very early and before Holst's maturity; he merely wrote some works that were Gentlemanly but just as many that were not. Early Gentlemanly works include the 1906-7 *Somerset Rhapsody* and the 1908 *Cotswolds Symphony* mentioned above. But examples are few, unlike Vaughan Williams, of the use of actual folk songs or idiom amongst the large-scale orchestral pieces, and according to Imogen Holst they are unsuccessful, probably because their use is not integrated into the texture and development of the music.

Soon Holst's major works did not even look in the direction of folk song - it is in the minor works that he uses them as a peg on which to hang immediately appealing music. He uses no less than four folk tunes in *A Somerset Rhapsody*, combines a dargason with *Greensleeves* in the *St Paul's Suite* and includes *If All the World were Paper* in the *Fugal Concerto*. There are numerous settings of folk song or arrangements for chorus, *a cappella* or accompanied. Always attractive, often moving, these still do not strike the listener as Holst's most deeply-felt work. In fact he tends to use folk song as one of the genres in which he creates music for the amateur - well-crafted but not representative of his deepest thought. It is significant that in many of the recordings of Holst part-songs, they are performed by good

amateur rather than professional choirs. However, they were popular with audience, choirs and critics alike and ensured his acceptance as a Gentleman for many years.

The most extraordinary statement of his impersonal attitude to folk music was in his opera *At the Boar's Head* in which he combined a compilation of Shakespeare's own words in the tavern scenes from *Henry IV* with existing tunes of folk dances and songs. He wished to show that though the unaccompanied tunes were already complete in themselves, 'trying to persuade them that they were meant for each other' (Holst I. 1968: 86) was not only viable but desirable. He apparently regarded this cobbling together as a daunting but enjoyable task and an excuse for parody and contrapuntal ingenuity - as such Imogen Holst remembered that it was 'condemned by nearly everyone who heard it. *At the Boar's Head* is a brilliant failure.' (Ibid.) In fact the tunes are interwoven in such a contrapuntally effective way in the orchestra as well as vocally, and the surrounding texture is so genuinely operatic, that, on a radio hearing, it seems far more stageworthy than it was deemed at the time. No doubt the attitude of a composer who could manipulate the rediscovered folk-jewels of the Renaissance in such a way, however successfully, must have seemed suspect, and the enterprise a cavalier and disrespectful use of a resuscitated inheritance.

Thirdly, much as Holst loved the English countryside, there was no element of rural nostalgia in the music - the typical pastoral *sentiment* was lacking. There are no larks ascending or descending, nor, after the early nod towards Somerset and the Cotswolds, any Norfolk Rhapsodies. His late, and amongst his greatest, work *Egdon Heath*, a musical evocation of the sparely beautiful opening of Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native*, would surely, as a subject, have brought him back into the Gentlemanly embrace. (Hardy was much admired by the Gentlemen, especially Vaughan Williams and Finzi, even though his pessimism was at odds with their basic optimism.) But though there is a ghostly Dorian tune to be heard, as a tribute perhaps to Hardy's known love of folk music, there is no nostalgic summoning up of the lushness of English green countryside. Instead it faithfully mirrors the detachment of Hardy's words:

> a place perfectly accordant with man's nature - neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly; neither commonplace, unmeaning or tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony.

In some ways this description could be appropriate to Holst's mature works as well as to his own personality. According to Imogen, 'he knew it was the best thing he had written.' (Holst I. 1968: 106) Unfortunately neither audience nor Gentlemen agreed, and Holst's wife is quoted as remarking to Sir Hugh Allen, an archetypal Gentleman involved with the nascent BBC music policy, 'Oh dear, Sir Hugh, how I wish you could stop Gustav writing music like this and get him back to his old style.' (Short 1990: 264)

Fourthly, Holst was a realist. His was an attitude of practicality and of creating a future for ordinary music-making for the interested amateur. An integral part of it was the rediscovery and amateur performance of early music, thus incorporating it into the lives of everyday people. In his Thaxted Whitsun Festivals of 1916-18 he performed Bach cantatas, the Byrd Three Part Mass and some of his own music, including what he considered his best part-song, *Tomorrow Shall be my Dancing Day*. Imogen says in her leaflet on her father (which is still available in Thaxted Church): 'His tradition lives on. The Kyrie from the Byrd Mass is still sung every Sunday and every Christmas morning, the 1917 music-banner is still carried round the church during processions.' Such a socially engaged attitude was indeed shared and encouraged by the Gentlemen. The difference was that Holst's practicality stemmed not only from a sense of vocation and an idealistic desire to be of social use, but also from the need to earn a living. Most of the Gentlemen could dispense with that basic need because of their private means or because they held stable teaching or academic posts in Universities or the Royal Schools.

Holst was never patriotic or nationalistic in the manner of Vaughan Williams - their feeling of a Whitmanesque brotherhood of man was shared, but his was a universal not a nationalistic brotherhood. It was Vaughan Williams who trumpeted about the need for a national music, whereas Holst was not trying to convey any such an extra-musical message. Michael Short says:

> the magazine *Musical Opinion* [April/May 1955] compared Holst's position with that of Vaughan Williams: 'History ... was against Holst. He was cosmopolitan at the wrong moment. What was required and supplied by Vaughan Williams was the selfconscious militant national ideal. Holst, often, was an exotic, an alien, and thus historically unacceptable.' (Short 1990: 333)

Holst merely wanted English audiences to enjoy unjustly neglected music and rejoice in its resuscitation for the sake of the music itself. There was no sense of ulterior motive - that of putting England on the European musical map, therefore the tone of his lecture notes on *England and her Music* (Vaughan Williams & Holst 1959: 49) is far less nationalistic than that of Vaughan Williams's essay on *National Music.*

Holst must have been terribly torn, because his RCM connection would have made him feel part of the team. In addition there was his need to remain loyal to friends such as Howells and Vaughan Williams, who was not only captain of the Gentlemen, but perhaps his greatest friend. Equally strong was the call of his personal duty - of 'Dharma' in the Hindu sense. Fortunately this often coincided with the perceived duty of the Gentlemen, but at times, especially in the last years, in his struggles towards lean lucidity, he was very far from Gentlemanly aims. Yet the pull towards the Gentlemen was very potent as can be seen from the remark quoted above about his gratitude for Vaughan Williams and the Cotswolds (see p.19).

The Spectators

The setting of the match between the Gentlemen and the Players is completed by a motley crew of Spectators, who were composers uninvolved with the Gentlemen, that is, their beliefs did not threaten or conflict with those of the formation of an English national style. Elgar is the most striking name amongst them. He was not a Gentleman by birth or background, though many writers have maintained that he longed to be. The nationalistic label that was pinned on him by the public and his declared love of the Worcestershire countryside, and of Malvern in particular, meant that he had enough in common with the Gentlemen for them to respect and admire him, though he was too far removed from their background and aims to be counted amongst the Reserves. Despite his death at the height of

the Renaissance, he had written only a few large-scale works since 1918 and seemed in many ways to belong to a past age.

The rest of the Spectators were regarded as non-threatening simply because their music had not caught the public imagination. Therefore, even though it did not contribute to the Renaissance cause, it did not divert the flow of communication and education of the man in the street that the Gentlemen hoped to achieve, for most Spectators were too far-removed from public interest to detract from the increasing strength of the Gentlemen. They often wrote music that was opaque and unplayable, or of such enormous length that it required a dedication in both performer and listener alike that was not practical - Havergal Brian and Holbrooke could be thus categorised, and Sorabji would probably have been ignored as foreign and exotic because of his Indian blood. In addition, such vast and expensive forces were needed by Holbrooke, and sometimes Brian, that they were not worth the experiment.[8]

The personality of Bernard van Dieren was enormously impressive, not only to the young partisans Peter Warlock, Cecil Gray and Sorabji, but to a sculptor of the stature of Epstein who used him for a model of the head of his statue of Christ in Majesty. It was fortunate that performances of his music were so few and so unsuccessful that the Gentlemen could afford to ignore him, for his tastes were very cosmopolitan: in addition he was not even an Englishman, but of Dutch extraction and therefore of no use to the Gentlemen. According to Gray's *Musical Chairs* he seemed to 'pick up the dropped threads of the so-called classical tradition and weave them together with the rich resources and expressiveness of the moderns' (Gray 1948/1985: 106) with not even the thread of a folk song in sight. Walton, Lambert and Bliss apparently concurred with Gray in their opinion of van Dieren (Ibid.: 107), but such a cloth was not the stuff that Gentlemanly musical dreams were made on.

However, one Spectator, Granville Bantock, had performances aplenty, but in his case the music simply seemed too fustian for post-1918 tastes, and it dropped naturally out of the repertoire. Even his Oriental interests were only those of an interested Western observer and essentially superficial (unlike those of the Players as we shall see), and were accepted enough

to ensure performance of his setting of Fitzgerald's translation of *The Rubaïyat of Omar Khayyam* - a text which today is generally considered an example of received nineteenth century orientalism, as opposed to the genuine article.

There was an inherent trust amongst the Gentlemen for those with an RCM background, and though the following Spectators failed to be regarded even as Reserves, because of their cosmopolitanism, they were not regarded as a potential threat because of their musical education. Frank Bridge, though RCM-trained under Stanford and therefore a potential team member, was cosmopolitan enough in outlook and style to appeal to the young Britten, rather than to his ex-RCM contemporaries. Arthur Bliss too, educated at Rugby and Cambridge and a Stanford pupil at the RCM for a year in 1913 and therefore eminently qualified for the Establishment, was concerned neither with pastoralism (despite his *Pastoral: Here lie the white flocks*) nor folk music, but was more aligned with theatrical, especially ballet, music. His earlier works owed more to France than England in style and timbre. However, he admitted that the greatest influence on English music in this century has been not that of individual twentieth century composers but 'the publication and dissemination of our sixteenth and seventeenth century masterpieces'.[9] Thus he shared some Gentlemanly interests, and his gratitude for initial support given him by Holst and Vaughan Williams ensured that he was not feared by the Gentlemen.

The Selectors

Membership of a team depends on its selectors. In the background to this musical match of the first half of the twentieth century, it was primarily the concert promotors, especially those concerned with London performances, and the conductors (amongst whom Sir Henry Wood and then Sir Adrian Boult and Sir Thomas Beecham figured large) who were influential in deciding whether an English contemporary work was worth a first or repeated performance. Before 1914, there was no particular bias towards Gentlemanly compositions, but from the middle 1920s onwards, the musical power of the BBC blossomed, and the fate of the Players was sealed; the BBC's Music Advisory Committee was resplendent with Gentlemen whose policy was identical with those of Vaughan Williams, and accordingly

there was no room for the Players. The policies and decisions of the Selectors are only mentioned briefly here, as they will be discussed in the final chapter as relevant to the critical reception of the music of the Players. It is they who steered public opinion, who vetoed performances and ultimately ensured the Players' exclusion from the mainstream of contemporary British music.

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1 Published in *Musical America* 7.7.28: 9.

2 For more details see Michael Hurd's article on *The Glastonbury Festivals* MT 1984 p.435.

3 NSA BBC LP 32634, recorded when Scott was 83.

4 The role of the workman or the Boy is described in Maud's book *The Boy and the Brothers* published in 1959.

5 I.A. Copley *Warlock in Novels* MT 1964 p.739.

6 National Sound Archive BIRS T1080 and P 1109.

7 See Copley, as above.

8 For an amusing account of Holbrooke's requirements for his composition *Apollo and the Seaman*, see the exasperated Sir Thomas Beecham's experiences (Beecham 1944: 75) which involved, amongst many alarums and excursions, an odyssey in search of a sarrusaphone player.

9 From a lecture in Kansas City, 1929, quoted in Classic CD August 1991: 34.

CHAPTER TWO: TEAM SPIRIT

Creative artists, whatever their medium, have spiritual needs of some intensity. The fulfilment or frustration of these needs can affect their work in both a positive and a negative way, though it is generally the quest for the Holy Grail (or its equivalent) rather than its successful outcome, that is the inspiration behind a masterpiece. As has been seen in the Prologue, the void left by the undermining of conventional Christianity during the latter part of the nineteenth century led to a search for alternative beliefs; these alternatives, though not always confined within the dictates of any particular creed or philosophy, had a foundation based on mysticism or the mystic experience. One of the main sources of the alienation of the Players from the Gentlemen lay in their very different attitudes to aspects of mysticism, both within and without their music, for the Gentlemen seemed incapable of tolerating the mysticism inherent in the esoteric and the occult. Before discussing in this chapter those aspects of the Players' mysticism that they felt able to accept, it is necessary to define what is meant by these terms.

The esoteric or occult is concerned with hidden knowledge which is only accessible through detailed study and carefully guarded secret wisdom. It often, but not invariably, has religious connotations in the broadest sense, as has been seen in the Prologue. Mystical experience is frequently part of the esoteric and occult package, in that it embraces that which is unseen and apart from the material world. Hinduism and Theosophy both recognised these unseen worlds as different planes of existence, but regarded them in an endearingly matter-of-fact way: thus it would be considered fortunate, rather than remarkable, that Scott's theosophical Master K[oot] H[oomi] conveniently materialised in Devon to Scott's partner Marjorie Hartston at the point when the composer was in need of a new set of creative instructions from him. (Scott 1969: 316) These aspects of mysticism will be reserved for full discussion in Chapter Three.

Mysticism is a directly experienced awareness of realities that transcend the world of appearances that surrounds us. The mystical experience may well require the practice of

contemplative disciplines to reach the moment of revelation, but may also come unheralded, with no preparation. There is nothing matter-of-fact about mysticism, for the vision of the Other is completely removed from normal existence. Whatever its springboard, the flash of mystical experience seems to be a leap into eternity away from the actual and the rational, an immediate access into realms normally beyond our limited comprehension. The thread that runs through mysticism within and without the esoteric seems to be the feeling of time standing still, of a unity with the universe in all its aspects, comprehensible or otherwise, and of an awareness of worlds other than the limited and questionable reality of our own; hence Holst's fascination with the concept of Maya, or the illusory nature of the 'real' world.

According to the Gentlemanly critic and academic, J.A. Westrup, 'mysticism in its true sense implies the communion of the human mind with the divine essence, the attempted realisation of the ultimate.' (Westrup 1924: 805) Mankind was at the centre of the Gentlemen's concept of mysticism, and therefore at the centre of their musical expression of the mystical; anything that was opposed to this humanistic concept of mysticism was therefore incomprehensible to them. The Players, in contrast, were unconcerned with the human mind and its relation with the divine essence - they merely acted as a representative channel of such an essence, and in the process were receptive to what Scott's book defined as *The Greater Awareness* (1936) of the universe as a whole. Mankind was almost irrelevant in their mystical language, which probably accounts for the effect of emotional detachment in much of their music.

The Gentlemen's mysticism was apparent in two realms of music - the spiritual evocation of idealised nature, preferably inspired by the English landscape, and the more purely religious/ metaphysical area of Christian agnosticism; both elements were closely intertwined. There were one or two composers amongst the Gentlemen, such as Warlock's friend, Moeran, who did not apparently wish to convey a spiritual message, but confined themselves to the one trait shared by all the team, the expression of English rural beauty encapsulated in the language of folk song; but most of them combined mysticism with rural mud. When confronted by a crisis of faith such as described in the Prologue, it was a short step from folk

song to finding a consolation in 'Nature, wherein God, however mysteriously he may work his wonders, may be presumed to be manifest'. (Mellers 1989: 60) In this statement lies the centre of Christian agnosticism, and the root of the Gentlemen's Nature-mysticism. As Mellers says:

> the pastoral Arcadia had, if not outward manifestation, at least places that might be envisaged as the material equivalents to the Kingdom of God, the Celestial City and the New Jerusalem - a mythology which was to inform Vaughan Williams's later music with increasing vigour. (Ibid.: 95)

Because the pastoral was thus linked to the Christian tradition, most of the Gentlemen, and indeed the Reserves, were Nature-mystics to some extent, as an inevitable part of the particular brand of English musical nationalism that they represented. Christopher Palmer believes that

> Nature-mystics could not have existed in music before the rise of nationalism and consequent re-appraisal of folksong, because the far-reaching changes in melodic, harmonic and formal syntax which the repatriation of folksong brought in its wake were endemic in musical representation of the folksong milieu, i.e. nature, the countryside. Nature was simply not realistically 'available' in musical terms before. (Palmer 1976: 149)

The key word here is 'realistically', because there were few existing English 'nature' tone-poems during the nineteenth century: those that were popular were essentially civilised views of the landscape framed by a romanticised attitude, not dissimilar to Victorian pictures of sea or Scottish Highland, but free of any true Nature-mysticism. Composers did not approach *Fingal's Cave* or its equivalent with the twentieth century attitude of awe, nostalgia or even national pride; natural landscape was merely part of the cosmopolitan Grand Tour.

Because of a fast-changing landscape and way of life, the sense of loss and nostalgia, already noted in the Gentlemen was also present in the Nature-mysticism of writers such as W.H. Hudson and Richard Jefferies. Hudson's *A Shepherd's Life* (1910) heightened his account of the everyday trivialities of rural existence into an almost Scriptural reverence. These

authors, and the 'Georgian' poets[1] were essentially nostalgic chroniclers of ephemeral everyday matters, especially those encountered in country life. Along with both the prose and poetry of Thomas Hardy, they were widely read by the Gentlemen and general public alike. As Mellers says, Hardy's 'agrarian revocation in poetry and prose sprang from anguished recognition of loss. What had been lost was that consanguinity between man and Nature described by Hudson.' (Mellers 1989: 25)

A text is not always a necessity for the expression of a sense of oneness between Man and Nature: a title is often enough. Vaughan Williams's vision is typically expressed in the ecstatic violin melismata of *The Lark Ascending*, inspired by Meredith's poem, but there were many examples amongst his followers. Howells avowedly escaped from the worries of the First World War by evoking Chosen Hill (a spot in Gloucestershire which had enormous spiritual connotations for him, crowned as it was by a tiny and lovely church) in the slow movement of his *Piano Quartet in A minor*: 'Until the holidays began in April and I saw Gloucestershire again nothing more was added. Chosen Hill, with its wonderful view, set my mind going again.' (Palmer 1992: 431) Because it was a special place for Gurney too (and Finzi a little later), Howells dedicated the work to Gurney, who found in it 'clouds, hilltops, and the great Malverns in the distance.' (Ibid.: 433) The spiritual connotations of place and language were closely interwoven, not only in Gurney's songs, but in his own uneven, but often magical, poetry. For him, as for most of the Gentlemen, the place was usually specific and the appreciation of natural beauty homed in on the personal and essentially English facets of the scene, often using the musical idiom of English folk music as a focus.

Consequently the Gentlemen did not find the impersonal and universal aspects of true Nature-mysticism as evinced in the music of many of the Reserves, or in Holst's *Egdon Heath*, entirely acceptable. The famous Hardy quote at the beginning of this work, and the title itself, must have induced an expectation of Holst returning to the pastoral fold, but it took Vaughan Williams a year before he could write to Holst on 25.2.28 that 'I've come to the conclusion that E.H. [*Egdon Heath*] is beautiful - bless you therefore.' (Vaughan Williams and Holst 1959: 64) He was later to say that he had suggested alterations to Holst,

which were wisely disregarded, thus retaining what Vaughan Williams came to recognise as the 'bleak grandeur' of the music. (Ibid.) Even Adrian Boult, a sympathetic interpreter of Holst's works, found difficulty in comprehending the score at first sight, but found that repeated hearings enabled him to come to terms with it, saying 'I remember particularly how enormously *Egdon Heath* grew on me when I heard him [Holst] rehearsing it and playing it through three or four times in succession.' (BBC Archives Holst file, memo of 19.11.43)

Aspects of Nature-mysticism amongst the Reserves

It is ironic that the three most frequently performed Reserves, Bax, Delius and Ireland, are often regarded as even more English than the Gentlemen by the lay musical audience because of the Nature-mysticism perceived in their work; yet none are true members of the Gentlemanly team, in either their attitude to folk song or, with the exception of one or two works, to their use of the Christian liturgy. It is true that Bax temporarily joined the Gentlemen in writing works such as *Mater Ora Filium* and *This Worldës Joie*, which use a Christian liturgical text, but they are an exception: Delius's *Mass of Life* was a setting of that most un-Gentlemanly of texts, Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and Ireland's small output of church music was merely occasional music relating directly to his post as a church organist in Chelsea.

The use of folk song was often a corollary of the expression of Nature-mysticism in music. Though these three Reserves seem occasionally to have acquired a surface turn of phrase which is linked to folk song idioms, Bax was in fact more interested in Irish than English folk music, and Ireland said to Murray Schafer that he had never 'gone in' for folk song. (Schafer 1963: 31) Delius, despite his post-mortem repatriation (see p.21), could not have been more thoroughly cosmopolitan in both his life and music, nor rejected the English musical scene more totally. In fact he wrote to Philip Heseltine (not yet Peter Warlock) on 20.9.1914 that 'There is no English music'. (BL Add. MSS 52547-9) Yet the depth of feeling for natural landscape is so strong in all these three composers that they were automatically included as members of the Reserves. But unlike the Gentlemen, they had no folk song-based language that was linked to their mystical closeness with Nature. Their subjects were mystical but the

language they used was basically post-Impressionist, or even Wagnerian at times. Whereas the pastoral Establishment mainly loved and appreciated the natural scene as exemplified by an English, rather than a foreign, landscape, they did not regard it with reverence. At the most, it represented the mourned 'lost content' of the past, closely linked with rural humanity (which is why they set the poetry of Housman so frequently), not a timeless unfathomable force, unconcerned with the petty minutiae of human existence. If a sense of Nature-mysticism is expanded into religious awe, it becomes worship of Nature as a deity and can be linked with pantheism, in that it is an identification of God with the forces of Nature. As such, it was found both consciously and unconsciously in the work of Delius, Bax and Ireland, but not in that of the Gentlemen.

Delius and Bax, even when limited to a specific place as in the case of Bax's *Tintagel*, seemed to perceive nature not in a nostalgic way, but as an ever-present religious substitute, and therefore did not share the Christian agnosticism of the Gentlemen. Delius said to the young Heseltine that he believed in 'no doctrine whatever - and in nothing but in Nature and in the great forces of Nature'. (BL Add. MSS 52457-9) For Ireland also, however English his place-name titles might be, nature became Nature - an inscrutable mystery, often terrifying as well as beautiful, a force as omnipotent as any Christian idea of God - pantheism in fact. It is here that the world of the Players can touch the world of the Reserves and even the Gentlemen, in that pantheism has an occult quality which was acceptable to the Gentlemen - but only because it was based on the awe-filled experience of Nature-mysticism. As Foulds says when he defines mysticism in a throwaway footnote in his book *Music Today*, it is a 'seeking to commune with higher realms of Nature by means of exaltation of human consciousness.' (Foulds 1934: 198) Bax and Delius would have agreed with him as long as 'Nature' was regarded in the specific sense of pantheism: but Holst, Scott and Foulds would have understood it as meaning the Universe itself as a result of their Indian and theosophical conditioning.

In the case of Delius his pantheism stemmed from his decision to become a composer in a 'visionary moment' which one of his disciples, Cecil Gray, describes:

> one summer night ... he was sitting out on the verandah of his house in his orange grove in Florida, and the sound came to him from the near distance of the voices of the negroes in the plantation, singing in chorus. It is the rapture of this moment that Delius is perpetually seeking to communicate in all his most characteristic work. (Gray 1948/85: 191)

He was apparently surrounded, as he listened, by the beauty of a Southern dusk. This combination of the impersonal melding of humanity into its natural surrounding led to the composition of *Appalachia*, his first really characteristic work.

Delius's pantheism is based on an obsession with the transient, drawn partially from his admiration of Nietzsche, who viewed all existence as a passing moment only made valuable by man's efforts to extract the most from it. Yet he countered his *Songs of Sunset* with a *Song Before Sunrise*, thus balancing his pessimism with the optimistic certainty of vernal renewal. In this he shared Hardy's (and Finzi's) vision, thus combining a philosophy central to himself and to the Gentlemen:

> These are brand-new birds of twelve months' growing,
> Which a year ago, or less than twain,
> No finches were, nor nightingales,
> Nor thrushes,
> But only particles of grain,
> And earth and air and rain. (Hardy: *Proud Songsters*)[2]

The comfort of cyclical renewal is central to religions of the East, as exemplified by the doctrine of reincarnation, so that in essence there is this unlikely link in the beliefs and creative themes of Delius with Holst, Foulds and Scott. Delius merely expresses his credo in a different language. As the ardent and excessive young Heseltine wrote apropos of *A Mass of Life*,

> Delius is, indeed, a pantheistic mystic whose vision has been attained by an all-embracing acceptation, a 'yea-saying' to life. Such a mind has become so profoundly conscious of the life of all nature that it has begun to perceive the great rhythms of life itself; so that all things seem to live and have their being in itself, filling it with a sense of such deep peace and beauty that the conditions of separate existence in the self become intolerable to it. (Warlock 1923: 106)

This was one closet Player speaking of another. Heseltine then makes a startling comparison, showing that he regarded his own esoteric and occult interests as allied to Delian and Nietzschean philosophy by saying that 'the message of Zarathustra is the same as the message of Hermes Trismegistos and of Blake'. (Ibid.) Yet Heseltine, admiring Delian acolyte though he was, did not share Delius's sense of oneness with Nature, despite craving it and fleeing to the countryside as a refuge from London life. So Delius's nostalgia was different then from that of the Gentlemen. Like them he mourned past beauty, but unlike them he did not try to conserve or recreate it, but believed in its inevitable, impersonal renewal, which had nothing to do with the efforts of humanity. Nevertheless, the elegaic quality of all his later music, and his occasional modal flavour of phrase, thus evoking the modality of English folk music, were superficially in keeping with his Gentlemanly contemporaries, and were enough to present him as a non-threatening augmentation of the English pastoral scene.

The aspect of Bax's form of mysticism that was acceptable to the Gentlemen was that of the Celtic Twilight movement of the pre-war years, which had enough in common in its national pride, its preservation of past myth and legend, its Irish poetry and the evocation of a beautiful landscape to strike many sympathetic chords amongst the Gentlemen. Sir Thomas Beecham spotted this when he asked with wry shrewdness, 'Is there some connection between this phenomonen of the resurgence of the Celt and the steady decline visible in every part of the Empire?' (Beecham 1944: 51)

Brought up in London's leafier and wealthier suburbs, educated in a similar background to the Gentlemen (though eventually at the RAM rather than the RCM) and enjoying considerable private income, Bax had become deeply involved in things Irish in his youth and was an enthusiastic member of the Dublin literary circle and all its attendant Celtic Twilight absorptions. This was a result of encountering Yeats's *The Wanderings of Usheen* in 1902: he vowed that 'in that moment the Celt within me stood revealed'. (Bax A. 1943: 41) Initially he had been influenced by the folk song movement, having been educated in the Hampstead Conservatoire which was directed by Cecil Sharp 'with considerable personal

pomp'. (Ibid.: 16) Possibly as a result of this encounter, he soon rejected English folk music, stating that all English folk songs were 'either bad or Irish' (Bax C. 1925: 211), and mocked the 'sacred pentatonic scale and the hallowed minor seventh.' (Bax A. 1943: 17) This could not have endeared him to the Gentlemen. Yet there was enough of Gentlemanly nostalgia and love of landscape in his music, coupled with his background, for them to treat him as at least a Reserve.

In his youth however, he was no Establishment figure, and the influence of the ancient Irish prehistoric landscape and seascape was even stronger than that of Irish literature. His best known tone-poems are *Tintagel* (celebrating a Celticism that pertained to ancient Cornwall rather than to Ireland) and *The Garden of Fand* (which was based on Irish legend). They are both sea-visions which have a kind of ecstatic pantheism that transcends the humanistic relationship with the sea encountered in Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*: in fact they are closer to the timeless oceanic detachment of Delius, in *Sea Drift*. Bax himself remembered an extraordinary moment of fusion with nature:

> Whilst my vision became saturated with that aerial colour of Irish distances the two sounds of which I was alone aware were in a moment fused into one. My life's blood it was that laughed and danced down the mountain, and the hill-stream coursed through my veins - was my very being ... and deep in that multicoloured pool of consciousness I sensed the images of all the beauty and pain in beauty that had ever illuminated or shadowed the race-memory of man. (Bax A. 1943: 110)

He seemed to share Delius's sense of cyclical renewal and awareness of the detached inevitable process of Nature of which humanity is a very microscopic part: 'the pantheism of his inner being clings tenaciously to earth, in which there is promise of a new birth and new growth' (Scott-Sutherland 1973: 69), and 'into this macrocosm [of Nature] Bax ventures, the microcosm of a tiny human spirit ... Bax stands apart from the emotional forces he has unleashed, quiet amongst the tossing branches and autumnal storm of *November Woods* and the menacing swell of *Winter Waters*, a not quite human beholder.' (Ibid.: 71) The detachment from the scene, and yet the courage to be simultaneously part of it, as described in all the above quotations is very different from the Gentlemen's personalised involvement

with the English landscape around them. As Geoffrey Self says in his book on Bax's young friend, Moeran,

> [Bax] contemplated the sea from the castle of Tintagel, but the woods he dared to enter were enchanted, and the sea was the magic Garden of Fand. In other words he transformed the real world of nature into his own fantastic sound world - and at times it was quite a terrifying world. (Self 1986: 248)

This element of fear was lacking in the Gentlemen's Nature-mysticism. Surprisingly, Vaughan Williams, perhaps because he was a personal friend of Bax, was clearly undisturbed by Bax's pagan side, or the almost occult nature of his musical inspiration when describing him as if he

> seemed to have something of the faun in his nature. One almost expected to see the pointed ears when he took his hat off. This reflected itself in his music. Though no ascetic, he seemed not to belong to this world but always seemed to be gazing through the magic casements ... waiting for the spark from heaven to fall. (Quoted in Scott-Sutherland 1973: 42)

It is on the level of the above quotations that the spiritual centres of composers as different as Bax, Ireland and Delius all meet. It is a very different level from the mysticism of the Gentlemen, who do not overtly evince a religious awe nor the sense of Oneness in the face of Nature. There is nothing sacramental in *The Lark Ascending*, however ecstatic the spiritual mood, and there are no other purely Nature tone-poems in Vaughan Williams's finest work. The Gentlemen's experience of personal ecstacy confronted by natural beauty is very different from that of the Reserves' sensation of religious awe in the face of the sublime. In fact:

> [Bax] had little use for the trappings of conventional religion, although his music speaks eloquently of some great spiritual experience, which he himself described as ecstatic, and which appears in the music most often as a kind of pantheism. This was by no means agnosticism - and only atheism if one seeks to express it in words ... he clung to those forces which have most nearly the attribute of omnipotence and permanence - the elements of Nature. (Ibid.: 102)

There was one aspect of the Celtic Twilight movement that the Gentlemen chose to ignore, for it had deeply occult overtones. Its mystic 'alternative' attractions had spread partly from

esoteric circles such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, in which Irish literary figures such as Yeats and Maud Gonne were involved. In the case of Bax, there was sympathy not with the Golden Dawn, but with the belief of the Irish poet 'Æ' (George Russell) and many of his friends in the existence of the Irish Faery, or *sidhe*. Rutland Boughton's enormously successful opera *The Immortal Hour* was based on a legend about the *sidhe*. It must be said that these wild and beautiful beings were not amongst those that would choose the bottom of any civilised garden as their habitat, but were perceived as a species of elemental beings, dwelling in Fiona Macleod's 'hollow hills',[3] who were not dissimilar to Cyril Scott and John Foulds's Devas of Hindu belief.[4] Both Bax and 'Æ' believed that they heard Faery music simultaneously when staying in the rural depths of Donegal, and Bax enshrined the experience in his tone-poem *In the Faery Hills.*

> I [Bax] suddenly became aware that I was listening to strange sounds, the like of which I had never heard before. They can only be described as a kind of mingling of rippling water and tiny bells tinkled, and yet I could have written them out in ordinary musical notation. 'Do you hear music?' said 'Æ' quietly. 'I do', I replied, and even as I spoke utter silence fell. I do not know what it was we both heard that morning and must be content to leave it at that ... As the dusk deepened, many-coloured lights tossed and flickered along the ridges of the mountains. 'Don't you wish you were amongst them?' murmured my companion, and I knew he meant that we were gazing upon the host of fairy. Even under the spell of that lovely hour and with an intense will to believe it seemed to me more probable that those dancing shapes of flame were some thing to do with the retinae of my own eyes straining into the semi-darkness, and no far-off reality. (Bax A. 1943: 103)

The book in which this passage occurs is Bax's autobiography *Farewell My Youth*, and deals with the years when he was under the Irish spell. Its title implies that he put away such childish things to take his place amongst the Gentlemen as a pillar of the English Renaissance, relinquishing his occult interests as merely part of a maturation into responsibility towards the re-establishment of England's greatness. His considerable series of warmly Romantic symphonies which occasionally had overtones of Irish melody, but no whiff of pagan irresponsibility, were comfortably incorporated into the Team's image. He was certainly accepted by the Establishment, in that he was created and remained Master of the King's Music until his death in 1953.

Ireland was also accepted as a Reserve not only because of his RCM background, but because of his manifest love of the English countryside, and his romanticisation of London which echoed that of Vaughan Williams in the *London Symphony*. There were many spiritual, though clearly personal, connotations in his frequent use of place-names for titles of his pieces, whether for piano or orchestra, and the texts he used for choral or song settings tended to be from the sources approved by the Gentlemen - Housman, Blake, Hardy, the Rossettis, and the Elizabethans. But despite Ireland's employment as a London organist and choirmaster, he wrote no major liturgical or obviously mystical works, and none of the Team seemed to search beneath the surface and see the pantheistic paganism which would have made his work rather dubious and indeed unacceptable.

Ireland was very discreet about the underlying influence upon his work which was belief in, and indeed personal experience of, the occult phenomenon of perichoresis, which is the interpenetration of one area of time by another. He first encountered this theory in the works of Arthur Machen, whose writings enjoyed a temporary vogue in the 1920s, and were a Welsh crepuscular version of Celtic Twilight. He was one of the members of the Order of the Golden Dawn, and had as much influence on Ireland, the composer, as the country of Ireland had on Moeran and Bax. Machen's sense of past pagan rites, intimately associated with prehistoric or Druidic remains, permeates books such as *The Great God Pan* (1894) and *The Hill of Dreams*. His apprehensions were almost Jungian as he tried to 'express the inexpressible, to rend the veil through the regaining of ancestral consciousness, which to Machen, meant re-aligning oneself with the Celtic spirit'. (Sweetster 1964: 31) The hint of decadence and evil found throughout his work is clear in the following extract from *The Hill of Dreams* where the youthful hero, Lucian, becomes part of Nature itself, in what eventually transpires as his first sexual experience:

> just above ground where the cankered stems joined the protuberant roots, there were forms that imitated the human shape and face and twining limbs that amazed him. Green mosses were hair and tresses were stark in grey lichen; a twisted root swelled into a limb; in the hollows of the rotted bark he saw the masks of men. His eyes were fixed and fascinated by the simulacra of the wood, and could not see his hand, and so at last, and suddenly it seemed, he lay in the sunlight, beautiful with his olive skin,

> dark haired, dark eyed, the gleaming bodily vision of a strayed faun. (Machen 1897: 19)

There are clear links here with Mallarmé, Baudelaire and the Symbolists - all favourites of that arch-Player and cosmopolitan, Cyril Scott, who thus incongrously shared an interest with Ireland, a composer regarded as typically English. And so Ireland was, but in a primordial, not in a national sense - a distinction unappreciated by the Gentlemen. But they approved of his celebrations of the fresh air of Southern England, with the occasional excursions into the Channel Islands to be encountered in his titles, and therefore could interpret them as merely evocations of past history. In fact Ireland knew that their approval could only be superficially based, for he questioned his old friend, the minor composer John Longmire, 'How can the critics even begin to understand my music if they have never read Machen?' (Longmire 1969: 20) He remarked on 16.7.36 to his friend and confidant, the priest, Kenneth Thompson, that he felt that he, like Machen, was 'a Pagan, a Pagan I was born and a Pagan shall ever remain.' (BL Add. MSS 60535) Delius also showed similarities with Machen's brand of pantheism. His setting of Jacobsen's poem *Arabesk* is suffused in pagan mysticism and the presence of Pan himself. Christopher Palmer points out that in both men 'the pagan ecstacy of physical passion is rendered as a pantheistic experience with strong overtones of fear-inducing corruption.' (Palmer 1976: 77) In Machen's story *The Great God Pan*, Pan was a figure of terror, but Ireland saw the necessity of his presence: he wrote to Thompson on 29.5.52 that 'the Great God Pan has departed from this planet driven hence by the mastery of the material and the machine over mankind'. (BL Add. MSS 60536)

Ireland was terrified yet fascinated by the thought of evil forces and Black Magic which he sensed all around him, and followed any hint of it in the Press. He wrote to Thompson on 23.1.46, 'I am far from repelled by an admixture of the occult and magical if of a genuine kind ... I have no actual experience of Black Magic' (BL Add. MSS 60535) - but he mentions in the same letter that he was one of the few people who knew that Warlock had experimented with it. He wrote to Thompson again on 11.11.56 about an unidentified scandal over Eugene Goossens: 'whatever it is, I expect it will be "hushed-up" in the English press. Some say Goossens was "framed" by a Black Magic Gang.' (BL Add. MSS 60536)

According to Longmire, it is difficult to underestimate Ireland's (and Machen's) belief in racial memory:

> [It] cannot be overlooked if one seeks to understand one of the strongest influences in Ireland's music. In it lies the key to his fascinations with the prehistoric, the druidical, the pagan and the mystic ... Probably no native composer has, or ever will, convey in his music, not only the loveliness of his own countryside, but the feeling of age, of mystery and of aeons long past.' (Longmire 1969: 27)

Ireland then shared the same sense of awe in the face of Nature's darker powers with Delius and Bax. But unlike the other two composers, Ireland personally re-experienced the past on several occasions in vivid clairvoyant episodes. According to Jocelyn Brooke[5], he saw children from the distant past dancing silently on Chanctonbury Ring, which prompted the composition of *A Legend* for piano and orchestra, of which Bax said that he 'found that Ireland's queer and rather sinister piece got me'. (Foreman 1983: 289) Ireland stated on 23.1.46 that *The Forgotten Rite* was 'a highly concentrated expression of one idea ... the Rite is a religious ceremony' (BL Add. MSS 60535): he was equally to evoke the sense of the prehistory of Maiden Castle in his *Mai-Dun*. In the Channel Islands, in *Le Catioroc* from the piano suite *Sarnia*, he heard the sound and saw the fires of ancient sacrifice, and only discovered afterwards that there was a local legend of Witches' Sabbaths held there. He sensed the presence of the ancient Dolmens in Guernsey, and 'this strange trait amounting to clairvoyance occurred and re-occurred in connection with prehistoric locations throughout his life'. (Longmire 1969: 47) Even today the atmosphere around the little headland and flat grassy plateau of Le Catioroc has a bleakness and quiet secrecy not present in other parts of the island.

All these experiences would have seemed slightly unpleasant, suspect and posititively un-Gentlemanly to the Team, but they probably did not know about them, for, according to Longmire, Ireland only confided in those who were closest to him. The Gentlemen could cope with pantheism, perhaps even perichoresis, but the occult element of paganism was another matter: it was a far cry from Christian agnosticism. So the pastoral characteristics that made Delius, Bax and Ireland tolerated as Reserves had very different occult undertones

from the Renaissance Nature-mysticism, overtly present in the celebration of the beauty of the English landscape. Obviously, all their music did not have esoteric connotations, and the fact that they wisely underplayed the occult element meant that they were not quietly dropped as Holst was to be. They knew what they could safely publicise as being part of the English Renaissance ethos, but they sensed also what they needed to conceal if they wished to be accepted as part of the Team's periphery.

Christian agnosticism

Coupled with their Nature-mysticism, the Gentlemen inclined towards the visionary mysticism of Samuel Palmer, Blake, Bunyan and the Christian liturgy, with whose beauty they empathised even though they were often non-Christian in practice or belief: this dichotomy was obvious in the case of Vaughan Williams, who has often been referred to as a 'Christian agnostic'.[6] His 'morality' based on Bunyan's *A Pilgrim's Progress* occupied him for much of his mature composing life, and epitomised his spiritual beliefs. The whole team's mysticism was essentially a Western Christianity-based concept: it was strongly allied to what Wilfred Mellers calls Vaughan Williams's 'Vision of Albion'. Humanity and human feeling were always part of the landscape: therefore it was a personalised vision full of personal ecstacy. Even Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antartica* is about the heroic music of humanity as well as the impersonal wastes of the South Pole.

Why then did these openly agnostic men write so much apparently religious, or at least 'spiritual', music, based on mystical words? The following remarks of Christopher Palmer on Howells could apply to all the Gentlemen:

> Was he religious? He was certainly a profoundly *spiritual* person: he believed in *something*; he might have called what he believed in the eternal verities, whatever they may be; and there is no shadow of bogus spirituality about his music ... more likely, Howells had what Henry Williamson called the Divining mind, the God-like mind which sees a Divinity in all things. And how Celtic - wholly intuitive, non-ratiocinative - *that* is! So is the basic theme of *Hymnus Paradisi* - the theme of loss ... in Howells, the visionary and the sense-of-loss are inextricably bound up together. (Palmer 1992: 197)

The key words here are the 'sense-of-loss'. It was appropriate that Finzi should set Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, because the English were still 'trailing clouds of glory' and feeling that 'there had passed away a glory from the earth.' The mystical experience of the Gentlemen was essentially recollection of emotion in tranquillity - their spiritual experience was linked to a glowing past, and whether it concerned unity with God (as expressed in plainsong and Tudor church music) or natural beauty traced in the outline of folk-melody, it was essentially a threatened or lost experience, whose return was longed for. Any kind of mysticism that smacked of the present or lacked a nostalgic element seemed unacceptable to them, for they could only relate to a longing for a past musical greatness which was essentially linked with retention of the English cathedral tradition of music. Therefore the Gentlemen reverted to a twentieth century version of the Tudor idiom of contrapuntal ingenuity and modal language, which seemed to give them the necessary sense of unity common to all mystical experience - in this case a unity with their past. There was no doubt of the sincerity, and often the unique beauty of their creations: the emotional reverberations of singing even the slighter liturgical works or carols by Holst, Finzi, Howells or Vaughan Williams in a cathedral setting were considerable for several generations of English choirs. But these reverberations were essentially insular and did not travel well on the Continent, and the musical idiom of individual Gentlemen was frequently so similar, because of their shared source of inspiration, that they could almost be clones of one original resurrective source. In fact, the nostalgia for a musical past was so great in Vaughan Williams's case that his *Mass in G minor* was a deliberate re-exploration of both plainsong and Byrd, as were Holst's *Nunc Dimittis*, Howells's *Mass in the Dorian Mode* and Charles Wood's *Nunc Dimittis* - the last three works all being written for the Tudor music authority R.R.Terry who was director of music at Westminster Cathedral from 1901.

The Gentlemen, then, could embrace all forms of mysticism that were based on the traditions of the Christian Church. Despite their avowed agnosticism, they continued to write works in the Christian liturgical tradition fully established by Byrd and, later, Purcell, which developed into the foundation of the great English choral events (especially the Three Choirs festivals); thus they embraced and strengthened the revival of much of the Tudor and Jacobean music

which was part of putting England back on the musical map. Mystical contributions which contained any of these national elements were gratefully received. Thus, because it uses a theme of a composer of the so-called Golden Age, and though it is not strictly speaking a liturgical work but an abstract piece, Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* was quickly hailed as a masterpiece. The general effect, employing the added reverberations, visual, spatial and spiritual, of a great English cathedral, was experienced by the young students Herbert Howells and Ivor Gurney as the equivalent of a mystical revelation, for they paced the streets of Gloucester, sleepless with excitement after hearing its first performance. (Palmer 1992: 13) Howells said later that he regarded the work as 'a supreme commentary by one great [English] composer upon another'. (Ibid.: 388)

Apart from Vaughan Williams, none of the Gentlemen were symphonists. They needed suitable texts to convey their sense of the beauty and purpose of their spiritual convictions in large-scale works. Walt Whitman was enormously popular in the first years of the century amongst the general public and composers, perhaps because the mystical sense of Oneness was readily to be found in his poetry: he believed that 'a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars'. (Whitman *Song of Myself)* His credo, based on democracy and universal brotherhood, of unity within humanity was trumpeted abroad from America to Europe, via ecstatic verbal clarion-calls:

> And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
> And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
> And that all the men ever born are also my brother, and the women my sisters and lovers. (Ibid.)

This message obviously had a strong mystical element and appealed particularly to Vaughan Williams and Holst, and rather unexpectedly Delius was inspired by it in *Sea Drift*. Two of Vaughan Williams's major works from 1905 to 1910 (*Toward the Unknown Region* and the *Sea Symphony*) were settings of Whitman, and as late as 1936 he used Whitman for part of the *Dona Nobis Pacem.* Holst's *The Mystic Trumpeter* (1904), the *Dirge for Two Veterans* (1914) and *Ode to Death* (1919) also used Whitman words. Significantly, Whitman lost his appeal for Holst as his spiritual vistas began to differ from those of the Gentlemen, for whom

the still small voice of humanity was at the centre of the universe, rather than a microcosmic and unimportant part of it as it was to Holst. They could empathise always with Blake's ability

> To see a world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower,
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
> And eternity in an hour. (Blake *Auguries of Innocence)*

because it was a human hand that held and encompassed the mystic experience: Blake was certainly one of the artists and poets that Vaughan Williams revered.

The Gentlemen inclined towards the combination of the generally mystical with the Christian tradition, and therefore turned not only to the Bible or the age-old emotional associations of the Latin Mass and Requiem, but also to the seventeenth century metaphysical writers, such as Herbert, Traherne and Crashaw. Perhaps they found within their work that sense of the English Eden, the 'green thought in a green shade' that they were trying to recreate. Howells and Finzi in particular contributed to the English cathedral tradition with both large and small works throughout their lives, both using mystical but secular texts, as well as the purely Christian liturgy. Howells's *Hymnus Paradisi*, whose composition arose from the sad death of his young son, was an example of the use of liturgical words in a setting of personal grief, while his *Missa Sabriniensis* was non-liturgical, as was Finzi's setting of the English mystic Thomas Traherne in his *Dies Natalis*: these were regarded as important works and were much admired by the Gentlemen.

If they were to feel comfortable with music that had an overtly spiritual message, then the Gentlemen had to sense a sympathy for a Western/Christian, rather than an Eastern/universal mysticism. Before Holst's regretful relegation by his erstwhile team-mates, he wrote many minor liturgical works and one major work, *The Hymn of Jesus* (1917), which they could willingly, if erroneously, embrace as part of the Western mystical tradition. Its text was ancient, and Holst needed help from his friends Jane Joseph and G.R.S. Mead in extricating his own paraphrase from the Gnostic Greek. It is not hard to see why Gnosticism appealed

to Holst as opposed to more conventional Christian texts in that it is drawn from symbolic and clandestine sources which were later outlawed by the Christian church. Being banned, these texts assumed the glamour of esoteric importance, because they could only be understood by the initiated, who studied them in secret. The text is full of mysterious allusion which would only have meaning to those having esoteric knowledge. As Boyer says:

> Gnosticism was fundamentally a magical theory of life, man, the universe, God and morality. The good-evil, spirit-matter, creator-creature, omnipotence-freedom dilemmas posed by Christianity were attempted to be solved in Gnosticism with a magical doctrine in which man and the cosmos reflected each other ... out of such a background of Jewish apocalpytic, eschatological and cosmological fantasy, out of the melting pot of religions that was in Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era, Gnosticism rose. (Boyer 1968: 34)

Nothing could have been farther from the overt mysticism of the Gentlemen. As always they preferred to perceive only those aspects of Holst's work that made him one of them, and ignore those fundamental traits which set him apart from the Team.

Warlock and the flight from Christianity

The Gentlemen were prepared to empathise with mysticism from amongst the Reserves, as long as it was not consciously atheist, however apparently agnostic the composer. This is particularly so in the case of Peter Warlock. As Elizabeth Poston says, Warlock 'was born into the secure comfortable world of the squirearchy, one which gave him the background of leisure. By nature and reading he was an aristocrat.' (Cox & Bishop 1994: 9) In addition to his Eton background, his scholarly work on Elizabethan composers, and notably on the English Ayre, endeared him to the Renaissance Establishment, even though there was no overt folk song element in his work: his only examples of a setting of an existing folk tune are *Yarmouth Fair* (whose native simplicity is framed by such a difficult accompaniment that it is only playable by sophisticated professional pianists) and the highly chromatic solo piano *Folk Song Preludes.* Apparently, according to Brian Collins, 'Warlock enjoyed folk song but disliked the way it was employed by, in particular, Ralph Vaughan Williams'. (Ibid.: 144) Yet Howells numbers him amongst a list of typically English composers such as Parry, Elgar, Holst, Vaughan Williams and Bliss. (Palmer 1992: 175) Perhaps this was because of

Warlock's close friendship with Moeran, who was very much a Gentleman (despite his rather dissolute reputation) because of his devotion to the conservation of English folk music; certainly Vaughan Williams admired Warlock enough to include three of his carols in one of his own Bach Choir concerts in 1921.

The drama and romance of Warlock's unsuccessful flight from Christian belief would have appealed to Gentlemanly sensibilities; like the poet Francis Thompson in the *Hound of Heaven*, Warlock could be said to have 'fled Him down the nights and down the days.' His carol settings in particular, with their use of mediaeval or sixteenth or seventeenth century texts (often anonymous), were entirely in the Gentlemanly tradition of Christian agnostic mysticism. His late works, whether the magical choral setting of the *Corpus Christi* carol, or the solo plainsong-like setting of Bruce Blunt's poem, *The Frostbound Wood,* were redolent of the numinous quality of mediaeval and Elizabethan Christian tradition which so stirred the Gentlemen, and to which Warlock increasingly succumbed despite his apparent cynicism.[7] The dichotomy of Warlock's increasingly uproarious drunken life and his flight into introspective melancholy was a secular/sacred polarisation which must have appealed to the Gentlemen's own ambivalent attitude to conventional Christianity.

There is no feeling in the mystical element of the Gentlemen's music of the struggle that Warlock clearly experienced, for essentially these works convey resolution and peace, whereas Warlock's life was one long unresolved suspension and discord. He is pictured for instance beneath the barely fictionalised cloak of the hero Robert Durand of Ralph Bates's *Dead End of the Sky* as guffawing loudly in church, having been deeply moved by the service only a minute before.[8] More famously there is the often recounted anecdote, to be found originally in Gray's memoir of Warlock, of the mock-sacrifice by himself, John Goss and the painter Augustus John of Warlock's girl friend Barbara Peache on the altar at Eynsford church. At the vital moment -

> with a deafening crash, a thunderbolt struck the building, instantly filling the interior of the church with smoke and dust, and with electric cracklings on every metal surface and the screeches of a distraught charwoman adding to the general confusion,

> one received a vivid impression of Hell being opened and all its devils loose! Philip [Heseltine, i.e. Warlock] with his peculiar beliefs in 'Principalities and Powers' was the most shaken, especially as he was about to mount the tower of which a pinnacle lay shattered on the ground outside. (Gray 1934: 13)

Warlock was always ready to blaspheme, but was terrified of his actions. Another friend of Warlock, Jack Lindsay, analyses the conflicts in Warlock's character as a search for mystical unity, where there is no sharp division between darkness and light, but a

> ceaseless becoming and intermingling of the one with the other - which is the unity we call mystical ... the conflicts and the variety are lost not resolved in the unity [in Warlock's case]. Here then is the weakness that perverted his rebellion and inverted the adventure of the whole-man into a satanic defiance ... the Heseltine dream of oneness-with-nature fought to the death with the Warlockian masquerade, in which the defiance of the world shaded off into an acceptance of evil and violence. Instead of fighting violence he took it into himself; and there it tore him to pieces. (Lindsay 1962: 91)

The Gentlemanly religious ambivalence was tame in contrast; their solution was one of private non-participation, but public conformity, and was essentially serene; any violence tended either to be limited in musical language, or allegorised as in the Vanity Fair scene of Vaughan Williams's *A Pilgrim's Progress*. They did not seem to seek, or even need, redemption, as Warlock did at the end of his life from his friend Winifred Baker, whom he appeared to regard as a kind of Mater Dolorosa. He cried in a letter written to her six months before his death:

> The supreme blasphemy, the sin against the Holy Spirit, is to know the Light, and knowing it to plunge into the darkness; and I know now by bitter experience that it is not without reason that this sin was called the soul's destruction. (Gray 1934: 283)

Despite inhabiting such an ostensibly different world from this, Vaughan Williams might well have understood Warlock's plight on the evidence of one work in particular: his portrait of Satan in *Job*, where blasphemy is so vividly portrayed, has the same kind of twisted spirituality as that of Warlock. Indeed, Warlock liked and admired the captain of the Team, despite his youthful feeling that nearly all Vaughan Williams's works encouraged 'the peculiar state of mind engendered by prolonged contemplation of a cow in a field on a foggy

evening. He is one of those for whom mysticism means mistiness.' (Warlock 1917b: 156)[9] Later he was to recant on 19.1.29, writing that 'The best new work for chorus and small orchestra that I know is Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi*' (BL Add. MSS 54197), and he also admired *Sancta Civitas*.

In fact nobody who was not an avowed Gentleman could have produced more Christian agnostic statements than Warlock. He wrote on 27.9.1917 to Colin Taylor, his old music-master at Eton:

> the most important of all undiscovered countries is the 'Kingdom of God' which is within us ... any knowledge we may have acquired of an inner or 'spiritual ' life has been derived from one of the so-called 'Christian' churches, whose very foundation we have afterwards discovered to be rotten through and through.... And in our repudiation of this rottenness, ... we have cast overboard everything that we have ever associated with it - including things of a value unsuspected by ourselves. (Ibid.)

Here, though a very young man in his early twenties, he sums up one of the problems of the age, that of throwing the spiritual baby out with the bath-water. The Gentlemen solved it by placing national pride within a traditional Christian framework, yet neatly disassociated themselves from any obvious personal, as opposed to musical and social, involvement with the Church: they were optimistic over the value of its role, but did not believe in its specific message. In contrast, Warlock's mysticism had an aura of pessimistic desolation, as if he was the child locked out of the Christian security he craved.

Though Warlock's spiritual dilemma was acceptable to the Gentlemen, his esoteric beliefs were infinitely less attractive. Whereas the supreme characteristic of Eastern esoteric thought is inner concentration and outward receptivity and passivity, that of Western esotericism tends to be active, cerebral and controlled by the individual. Therefore the Gentlemen should have found Western occult thought more acceptable than Eastern, but this was not so, because of the sinister connotations that Western occultism attracted. There is no known evidence in the Gentlemen's work of interest in the occult as found in the activities of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn: nor were they interested in magic, black or

white, however venerable its history, nor impressed by the renewed popular interest in its disciplines already described in the Prologue.

Though the Gentlemen might have understood Warlock's spiritual questioning as natural in a young and confused composer, his attempted personal solution would have seemed not only incomprehensible, but blasphemous to the Renaissance credo. He was the only member of the Reserves who, as a closet Player, had knowledge of any the Western occult worlds. He was not ostensibly attracted to the East - in fact he stated darkly, but rather inappropriately in view of his own interests, that Scott was 'the horrible example of what one comes to through taking to mysticism.' (Armstrong 1959: 453) He certainly despised Scriabin's 'hectic erethism' (or excessive and neurotic sensibility), comparing his compositions to the 'most extravagent and unbalanced excesses of a Salvationist prayer-meeting'. (Ibid.: 124) Because he was secretive about his magical experiments, the Gentlemen probably knew little about his occult activities and embraced him as a Reserve, because they were misled by his Christian agnostic exterior. If they had enquired more deeply, they would never have countenanced his activities. To be a member of the Team, insularity was essential, and any spiritual ideas that were not sympathetic or relevant to English musical nationalism were disregarded. So, as with Holst, they took what they needed from him and dismissed the rest, even though the occult interests that made him a Player were as strong a part of his make-up as the traits that seemed to make him a Reserve.

In fact, as a student of magical arts and the kabbalah, the tarot and spiritualism (he was a fine interpreter of the tarot cards, probably those designed by the Golden Dawn members McGregor Mathers and A.E. Waite), Warlock was far more a spiritual child of his time than the Gentlemen, in their longing for a vanished past. He was most reticent about this part of his mystical make-up, but could not have succeeded entirely in hiding it, for some of the Gentlemen seemed to be afraid of him. In the course of an interview with Eric Fenby, Cox noted that Steuart Wilson, who was a Gentleman and BBC mandarin, once said about Warlock, 'He was the one person I ever knew who was wholly evil', and Fenby agrees that there was a 'certain ... sinister something'. (Cox & Bishop 1994: 29) Herbert Howells's

attitude to Warlock, transcribed from a recorded interview, shows the ambivalence of the Gentlemen towards him, and the condemnation which might have followed had he been more public in his beliefs.

> I don't think I have ever met anyone actually more satanic than Peter Warlock. But at the same time I had an enormous respect for a lot of his stuff, and for his mind ... for the rest - he was drunken and satanic. Except for the very last act of his life, which was one of his best: he put the cat out before he gassed himself. You see, one of the things I never forgive Warlock for was that he really debauched one of the nicest creatures God ever made, called E.J. Moeran. When Moeran came down from his public school, when I first came across him (he became a student, a fellow student at College with me), he was one of the gentlest, nicest people God ever made, and a *very* promising composer. And then he got in with the Heseltine clan, took to drink - you couldn't belong to that sort of unofficial club without it - and just went to the dogs. Terrible. (Palmer 1992: 354)

It would be impossible to imagine a more heinous crime for a Reserve to commit - not only did he dabble with the occult, but he was rowdy and, worst of all, he corrupted a Gentleman! And this was despite having the approved interest in sixteenth century music, and writing some lovely carols.

Philip Heseltine adopted the name Peter Warlock because he needed an identity that did not link him with the *enfant terrible* image that he had created under his real name, either through various lively but aggressive writings in the musical press, or through musical hoaxes that had mocked the more conservative elements of the contemporary musical establishment. He first used it when reviewing Goossens's chamber music in 1916 in *The Music Student*, and managed to persuade the publisher Winthrop Rogers to accept some of his songs as the compositions of a 'Peter Warlock', when they had been refused under Philip Heseltine; thus the pseudonym began to spell success for him, when he had failed under his own name. There has been much speculation over his choice of surname:

> He once told the prominent ballet critic and bookseller Cyril Beamont (1891-1976) that he had found it on a 'sampler' in the window of an antique dealer. Bearing in mind all its various associations, the choice was highly significant. 'Warlock' comes from the Old English ... meaning one who breaks faith, a scoundrel, the Devil: synonyms include conjuror, demon, enchanter, magician, magus, necromancer,

> sorcerer, witch and wizard. Copley has pointed out that this dictionary definition might later have had some significance for Philip, particularly in the choice of a woodcut of a 'Magus' on the title-pages of the early songs published by Winthrop Rogers. One must remember that this was a time when the influence of the notorious occultist Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) was being felt and a considerable amount of interest was being shown in black magic and the occult. Although it would be some time before Philip would embark on a serious study of such things, his subconscious would seem to be leading him in that direction. (Smith 1994: 103)

He needed to throw off the influence of his rather repressively religious Welsh conformist background, and his membership of the talented, articulate, often pretentious and always challenging Café Royal circle introduced him to artists who were interested in the occult - the sculptor Jacob Epstein, the painter Augustus John, and the poet and novelist D.H. Lawrence. Warlock's relationship with Lawrence was at its strongest during 1915-16, when he formed part of the latter's Cornish ménage. Lawrence's interest in the occult extended to attending meetings of the Theosophical Society when very young and befriending a local couple who were involved in meditation and magic. He believed in the Hindu/theosophical doctrine of the *chakras*, practically deified Aleister Crowley, and introduced Warlock to Pryse's book *The Apocalypse Unsealed* which dealt with the rites that led to progression along the hierarchy of magical knowledge which had much in common with the rites of the Golden Dawn; Warlock frequently mentions this book as seminal to his thought in the letters to his various friends, which are to be found in the British Library. The tone of Warlock's later descriptions of him imply that Lawrence might have encouraged his burgeoning interest in the occult. The friendship soon ended: after a quarrel, Warlock described him in 1916 in a letter to his friend and mentor, Delius, as a 'subtle and deadly poison', and Warlock's close friend, Cecil Gray, maintains his influence was 'dark, sinister, baleful, wholly corrupt and evil' (Gray 1924: 121), and that he administered a 'deep spiritual wound which never healed' (Ibid.: 122), thus concluding that Warlock's dabbling with magical powers (of which Gray apparently disapproved), may have been intensified by the Lawrence friendship. It must be noted that recently Gray has been regarded as an unreliable and over-conjectural source by Warlock scholars.

There were like-minded musical friends too: unexpectedly, Delius had confessed to experimenting with spiritualism in his youth, and, like Holst, had cast horoscopes and sincerely believed in astrology. Sorabji was interested in the esoteric in general, for he wrote to Warlock on 6.1.1914, 'I am very nearly a Buddhist. Buddhism is to me one of the most sublime of teachings. It is so pure so lofty and noble, so sublime and satisfying, while the esoteric side is one of unimaginable grandeur and splendour.' (BL Add. MSS 57963) Though Warlock's side of his correspondence with Sorabji in 1917-18, the year in which Warlock was most interested in the occult, has vanished, Warlock's openness to all these influences might be seen as very healthy in a young man of an enquiring mind, who wanted to discard some of his Gentlemanly attributes and embrace current spiritual speculation as part of the general flow of European thought and exploration.

In August 1917 Warlock fled to Ireland, thus avoiding a second demand for military conscription - he had escaped the first on a vague medical excuse - and remained there until August 1918. Much of the primary source material about the magical experiments of Warlock's so-called 'Irish Year' occult experiments is to be found in the correspondence with Colin Taylor (BL Add. MSS 54197), and his letters to Cecil Gray. (BL Add. MSS 57794-57803) The rest tends to be surmise by friends who shared his interest, or circumstantial evidence. Warlock himself makes increasingly frequent, but maddeningly vague references to his growing interest in the occult. He said that his 'voyages of discovery during the last six months have opened up for me such amazing and far-reaching vistas of hitherto undreamed-of possibilities' (BL Add. MSS 54197 letter of 27.9.17), but does not elaborate. In the end, the 'Irish Year' was one of frustration and even implied terror. Gray says that a large number of Warlock's notebooks belonging to this period (which are presumed lost) were full of comments on his reading and deal with the tarot and astrology; he refers in particular to Eliphas Lévi's book on magical formulae, or spells, called *The Book of Abramelin the Mage,* with which Warlock is presumed to have experimented. Gray maintains that from 'these activities Philip suffered certain psychological injuries from which in my opinion, he never entirely recovered.' (Gray 1934: 163) The efficacy of any magical formula must depend on the user's faith in it, and Warlock 'was an ardent believer in the

objective reality of the phenomena of the magical arts, and ... he practised them assiduously during this period of his life.' (Ibid.: 164) He was apparently a gifted diviner, using the tarot cards, and became a great friend of a famous medium in Dublin, Hester Dowden, who specialised in automatic writing. Like Yeats, whom he met in 1918, Warlock became convinced by this phenomenon. Gray maintains that these magical experiments were 'catastrophic quicksands and morasses'. (Gray 1934: 198) The fact that the first mature songs date from this time would seem to negate Gray's fears that the experiments were entirely unfortunate. These songs proved to be amongst his best work, and arguably owed their composition to his delving into the occult and trying to live up to his new name by experimenting with magic to help his musical inspiration.

Gray makes no mention of the fact that he too dabbled in magical experiments. However, his daughter Pauline reported that in the early 1920s both Gray and Warlock were 'involved with a particularly unpleasant group of people which included the infamous Aleister Crowley, and were smoking hashish.' (Pauline Gray 1989: 29) Warlock's son, Nigel Heseltine, maintains that his father was part of a cult around Crowley which enabled a member to

> be strengthened and able to perform feats of which he would be otherwise incapable ... the aim of the magical cult, to which Crowley purposed to initiate him, is power over people and over matter. What therefore was more natural than that Philip should seize on this apparent short-cut which would probably make him master of the environment he desired? (Nigel Heseltine 1992: 84)

This need to be in control of both himself and his musical environment is probably one of the main reasons why Warlock needed to experiment with magic. Arnold Whittall has an interesting theory that astrology (meaning Warlock's interest in the occult) was the only way in which he could explore the function of art:

> only a fully mature and integrated personality - the next best thing to a superman - could succeed in such an exploration, and maturity was impossible for him. He carried the wound of his immaturity like a Tristan who knows that Isolde will come too late. He used astrology to creature a future, to provide an artificial integration. He could not accept responsibility for himself ... Cecil Gray points out that at the end

> of the war Heseltine was technically a deserter. Temperamentally he was one throughout his life ... like Elgar, he could not face the reality of his isolation. Elgar had, and possibly doubted the consolations of Catholicism, Heseltine had astrology and an infinite capacity for acting. (Whittall 1966: 122)

Before he went to Ireland his compositional efforts had been amateurish, uncertain and lacking direction. He knew he wanted to be a composer and much of Delius's correspondence with him deals with this; the older man seems to have understood the wild flailing about from one solution to another that characterises so much of Warlock's vividly self-absorbed writings. It would seem that Warlock was in a creative impasse, and needed to find inspiration from without, to help him explore within himself, which is why Crowley's environmental control through magic must have appealed so much. Warlock recommended Eliphas Lévi's *History of Transcendental Magic* to Taylor as being an introduction to 'the secret of art [which] is "Know thyself" and through thyself the Universe of which thou art but an epitome'. (BL Add. MSS 54197) He desperately needed to find a reason why he could not compose.

Warlock looked to magical experiment not only to inspire him but, through the realms of his art, to provide the 'means of communicating spiritual realities for the world of material semblances ... From finance and imperialism to sadism and buggers - all that is sensation [is] a frenzied effort of despair in the darkness. The inevitable outcome is universal death - for death is the last and greatest of all possible sensations.' (Ibid. letter of 9.8.18) Maybe his supposed suicide was triggered by a need for this last sensation.[10] He frequently railed thus against imperialism or materialism as the source of not only the world's woes, but also his own, and felt he could only control this unsympathetic world by using the powers of what he calls 'Elemental spirits' in a letter to Gray of 7.4.1918. (BL Add. MSS 57794) The Gentlemen probably would have agreed with him in his statement to Gray that 'in any age of extreme materialism it is necessary to insist on the things of the spirit rather more strongly than would be needed by a more enlightened epoch' (Ibid. letter of 9.6.1918), but they could never have accepted his method of summoning musical inspiration.

Though all these letters are full of veiled horrors, Warlock is never specific about what actually transpired, but clearly he took fright at the forces he had supposedly aroused by usage of spells. On his return from Ireland, he warned an old girl-friend, Viva Smith, of the dangers of what he called 'table-turning', (BL Add. MSS 58127 letter of 12.11.1918) and on 14.12.1917 he asked his Oxford poet friend, Robert Nichols, to ignore a previous letter, written when he had been 'suffering from the reaction that inevitably overtakes those who tamper prematurely with the science vulgarly known as Black Magic'. (BL Add. MSS 57796) He did not write to Delius until towards the end of the Irish Year, saying on 5.5.1918 that he had passed through 'a year of dark and critical vicissitudes, metamorphoses of various kind, follies and their consequence, from which I am now fully extricating myself.' (BL Add. MSS 52547) Some of his experiments had clearly been of a kabbalistic nature, for he wrote to Delius on 22.7.18:

> I have sunk to the very lowest depths, stuck fast in the mire, and only lately realized, when on the point of being wholly submerged, the supreme necessity of getting out of it ... of throwing over the whole wretched past at all costs. I believe in Destiny ... and by the powers of Kether, Chokmah, Pinah, Ghedlah, Geburah, Tipereth, Netzach, Hod, Jesod and Malkuth I swear it will not be my fault if we are not talking face to face. (Ibid.)

Apart from the more sinister connotations of Warlock's hints at his magical experiments, he was also interested in main-line theosophical thought. For instance he urges Taylor in a letter of 15.6.1918 (BL Add. MSS 52547) to read S.T. Klein's *Science and the Infinite*, which is concerned with the polarity of good and evil and the necessity of evil if good is to exist. This is very close to Scott's beliefs in the occult purpose of modern music, which was to cleanse away evil. (Scott 1933: 144) In addition, Warlock was becoming interested in Oriental philosophy and wrote to Taylor: 'The art of meditation is to obtain complete control over <u>all</u> the selves ... Circumstance ... becomes at once explicable when one considers the true meaning of what the Indians call the law of karma.' (BL Add. MSS 54197) But, unlike Holst whose life was dominated by his belief in Karma, he did not pursue this path, for his interests remained largely in the realms of Western, not Eastern esotericism.

If the Gentlemen had known in any depth about Warlock's private confidences to Taylor, Gray and even Delius, he would never have been considered as a Reserve. But because of the dichotomy of his character, he was, like Holst, able to sit on the fence and yet pursue his apparently Gentlemanly interests with enthusiasm, while keeping hidden the driving forces behind his creativity. Whereas the Gentlemen actively used their spiritual beliefs for promoting the cause of English music, Holst, Warlock and the Reserves were passively used by them. As will be seen, this difference in attitude is one of the most revealing in discussing the polarity of the Teams and their music, and in particular is applicable to the mysticism of Scott and Foulds.

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1 The 'Georgian' volumes of poetry appeared 1913-23 and the poets included Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, John Freeman, John Masefield, Robert Nichols, Siegfried Sassoon, J.C.Squire, Edward Thomas.

2 This song forms part of Gerald Finzi's song-cycle *Earth, Air and Rain.*

3
How beautiful they are — They have faces like flowers
The Lordly Ones — And their breath is the wind
Who dwell in the hills — That blows over summer meadows
In the hollow hills — Filled with dewy clover.

(From Rutland Boughton's opera, *The Immortal Hour*: libretto by Fiona McLeod (nom-de-plume of William Sharp).

4 For a description of the role of the Devas, see Chapter Five.

5 See Brooke, Jocelyn *Birth of a Legend* 1964.

6 Attributed to Sir Steuart Wilson according to Wilfred Mellers (Mellers 1989: 1).

7 For an interesting analysis of these two carols see Denis ApIvor's *Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock); a psychological study* (MR 1985 121-2).

8 I.A. Copley *Warlock in Novels* (MT 1964: 739).

9 This appeared in the Theosophical magazine *The New Age*.

10 There are differing conclusions about Warlock's death. The coronor's verdict was open on whether it was accidental death, or suicide. However his son Nigel (in *Capriol for Mother*) has the startling theory that Warlock was murdered for his non-existent money by his friend and legatee Bernard Van Dieren.

CHAPTER THREE: FOREIGN TOURS

Because of the conditioning and musical aims of the the Gentlemen, they ignored the music of composers whose spiritual interests were concerned with Eastern forms of mysticism and the esoteric. Any aspects of *es*oteric, as opposed to their own *ex*oteric mysticism, was alien to them, despite the fact that, in European artistic movements, such interests were considered both urgent and fashionable. Mysticism was acceptable only as long as it did not challenge the spiritual basis of the English musical heritage that lay close to the heart of the Gentlemen. This chapter will explore those aspects of esoteric and oriental mysticism that would seem to present such a challenge.

The Gentlemen distrusted the serious and exploratory study of Eastern philosophy and mysticism, especially when they were evinced publicly as by Foulds and Scott in their writings. The ideas of some of the Players on the occult nature of inspiration were alien to them, for they could not envisage the composer merely as a medium for the unheard music of the other planes that supposedly surrounded him. The type of music produced by composers interested in the occult was anathema to them, as it was often cosmopolitan, rather than English Renaissance, in style; in the case of Scott, Foulds and some of Holst's later work, the Players hinted at a new concept of music, which entirely lacked form or development in a Western sense. Many of these issues can be conveniently illustrated with reference to Holst's understandable silence on the growth and effect of his esoteric beliefs.

Holst was one of the first to explore non-Western forms of spirituality, and, as always, forms a link between the Gentlemen and Players. The aspects of his mysticism that were Western and therefore acceptable to the Gentlemen have already been outlined; those that diverged did so because of his absorption in the esoteric, which stemmed from his childhood conditioning by his theosophical stepmother and his later immersion in Eastern philosophy. In his twenties, during rehearsal intervals in his orchestral trombone-playing, his interest was re-awakened by reading Friedrich Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*. His painful self-taught mastery of Sanskrit, so that he could read the great Hindu texts of the *Upanishads* and the

Bhagavad Gita in the original and then paraphrase them for his own usage, is well-known. In the process he seemed to learn an Oriental attitude to existence and to his own place in the universal scheme.

Unlike that of the Gentlemen, Holst's mysticism was neither personally nor nationally confined. There is a quality of pan-religion which attracted him in the *Rig Veda* hymns; the sentiments of the words are for all times and places. He defined his views on mysticism in an article he wrote for the theosophical magazine *The Quest* entitled 'The Mystic, the Philistine and the Artist', in which he compares the reactions of each as a 'blind man looking in a dark cellar for a needle that is not there.' (Holst 1920: 371) He says that the Philistine uses reason to explain why the needle cannot be found, the Artist emerges with it in his hand, whereas the Mystic 'is he who leaves that cellar proclaiming that he has seen the needle.' (Ibid.) He defines mystical experiences as 'either illusions or *direct and intimate realisations*' (Holst's italics) (Ibid.: 368), and feels that

> all mystic experiences seem to be forms of union. The highest Mystic is, I suppose, one who experiences union with God. Is he alone a Mystic? Or is Whitman a Mystic in his intense feeling of unity with all men, all life? What of the wonderful feeling of unity with one's pupils when teaching, a feeling of contact with their minds other than the contact occasioned by speech? Of the similar feeling of unity between musical performer and audience? What of being awakened at night by a thunderstorm and not knowing if one is oneself or the thunder? Of reaching an indescribable state of existence where sound and colour are one? If you do not draw the line somewhere, you will be landed in absurdities, like the man who woke up proclaiming: 'Now I know that Liberalism and Pizzicato are the same!' (Ibid.: 369)

Holst demonstrates in this quotation that his attitude is the Eastern one of true unity with the cosmos rather than the more limited Westernised mysticism: no wonder Howells remembered him as a man who 'walked about as if half in a trance'. (Palmer 1992: 275) He also unconsciously summarises both differences and similarities between the Gentlemen's mysticism and that of his own (or indeed Foulds and Scott). The Gentlemen would have agreed with Holst about Whitman's mystic message - though perhaps not with Whitman's adjuration to look towards India as a land of primal thought.[1] They would have understood mystic experience in the performance of music; but their sense of unity was more with

landscape, preferably English, than with God, in the Eastern/Universal meaning implied by Holst. His sense of oneness with the thunderstorm would have probably seemed fanciful, except perhaps to the pantheism of some of the Reserves (notably Bax), and his bringing of mysticism into the everday world of teaching exaggerated. But Foulds and Scott would have joined him in his concept of unity. They would also have recognised the reference to colour and sound, for clearly Holst was referring to the concept of artistic, or music and colour, synthesis which was so much part of Scriabin's theosophical concepts.

Holst's interest in Hindu thought was the inspiration behind all the early Sanskrit works, including the early opera *Sita*, the four sets of *Hymns from the Rig Veda* where his real musical style is arguably first established, the uneven but often impressive *The Cloud Messenger* and the simplicity of the extraordinarily evocative chamber-opera, *Savitri*. His painfully wrought paraphrases from the Sanskrit in these works are often clumsy and almost laughably artificial, but the music is original and extraordinarily effective. His belief in Dharma, or dutiful path in life, was reflected in the quiet simplicity of *Savitri*'s music; he saw his Dharma as his honest faithfulness to his role as a teacher and composer, and he stuck to it.

Holst apparently waited until 1926 (by which time he had grown away from the Gentlemen) to try and explain his Eastern philosophical beliefs to Vaughan Williams:

> I still believe in the Hindu doctrine of Dharma which is one's path in life. If one is lucky (or maybe unlucky - it doesn't matter) to have a clearly appointed path to which one comes naturally whereas any other one is an unsuccessful effort, one ought to stick to the former. And I am oriental enough to believe in [not] worrying about the 'fruits of action' that is success or otherwise ... I am convinced that Dharma is the only thing for me ... I suppose it is really a confession. (Vaughan Williams and Holst 1959: 64)

We have no record of any verbal discussion of this subject, though Holst's use of 'still' could mean that it had been mentioned some time previously. But if this was the first time the subject had cropped up (and the explanatory tone of the letter could indicate that it was), what a confession this must have seemed to Vaughan Williams. It was a negation of the

guiding principle of the Gentlemen's musical life - the placing of English music on the international map - in favour of a submission to an Eastern concept of duty which must have appeared alien and incomprehensible. Yet Vaughan Williams must have been readily admitted to many of Holst's inner thoughts. (The elliptical style of the letters published as *Heirs and Rebels* presumes an assumption of knowledge typical of communication between those who have talked a great deal and share each other's interests.) Therefore it seems odd that there is little reference to something so central to Holst. It is as if he sensed that his acceptance by the Gentlemen, no longer automatic because of the manner in which his musical style was veering away from theirs, could be further endangered by public confession of beliefs so utterly alien to them. He was in a difficult position and managed to stay a peripheral member of the team all his life by simply keeping quiet and private: at times he must have felt like a double agent.

Holst had close friends outside the Gentlemanly Team, notably Clifford Bax, who was deeply involved in Eastern philosophy in general and Buddhism in particular; his belief in astrology influenced Holst and undoubtedly lay behind the concept of *The Planets*. He wrote occasionally about his esoteric beliefs to writers like Bax or Helen Waddell, but never to his Gentlemanly musician friends. For instance, to Bax he wrote that he was 'looking forward to Devachan' (the Summerland of Hindu philosophy where the soul awaits direction to its next incarnation) (Bax C. 1936: 54), and to Waddell, 'Please ask God, Karma and the stars to arrange for your new play to be running when I'm well again.' (Bax C. 1951: 147) In a letter to an unnamed friend, quoted in Imogen's book, he asserts, 'I am Hindu enough to believe that comradeship becomes transmuted into Unity, only this is a matter that lies beyond all words.' (Holst I. 1938/88: 51)

His belief in Karma, or the working through any unfinished business from a previous existence, went hand-in-hand with a belief in reincarnation. In 1925 he made one of his rare attempts to explain to Vaughan Williams that, because of his beliefs, he did not worry about drifting apart musically from his friend. He expected that it was

> the result of my old flair for Hindu philosophy and it is difficult to put simply. It concerns the difference between life and death, which means that occasionally drifting is neccessary to keep our stock fresh and sweet. It also means a lot more but that's enough for one go. (Vaughan Williams and Holst 1959: 62)

The implication is that because Holst believed in reincarnation there was no need to worry about any drifting apart in this existence, for such a space would merely add vitality and freshness to his and Vaughan Williams's meeting in a future life. As when he had mentioned his belief in Dharma to Vaughan Williams, the tone of Holst's letter is that of an embarrassed but dutiful parent explaining adult concerns to a child, with little hope of comprehension.

As for the concept of Maya, which was the Hindu idea of the illusory nature of apparent reality, there is no evidence that he even attempted to explain it to any of his Gentlemanly friends, and yet it forms the occult basis of the story of *Savitri*. This concept, according to Raymond Head, was 'sufficiently fashionable by the end of the century for Holst to use it as the title of one of his [rare] potboilers for violin and piano - *Maya* of 1904' (Head 1988: 36), which was a 'disappointingly insipid salon-piece ... [in] the popular English style'. (Head 1986: 5)[2] In his *Radio Times* article on *Savitri*, Richard Capell defines Maya as the 'spirit of illusion, the illusion that stands between us and Purusha or the ultimate principle of things'. (Capell 1935: 15) Savitri, the epitome of transcendent human love, says to her husband Satyavan, the doomed woodcutter:

> The forest is to me a mirror wherein I see another world, A world where all is nameless, unknown, all sick with fear. [Satyavan answers] It is Maya! Dost thou not know her? Illusion, dreams, phantoms ... Maya is more. Look around. All that thou see'st Trees and shrubs The grass at thy feet All that walks or creeps All that flits from tree to tree All is unreal All is Maya [When Savitri tricks Death into restoring her husband to her, thus proving love can surmount all, Death's voice is heard in the distance] One hath conquer'd him One knowing life One free from Maya Maya who reigns where men dream they are living Whose pow'r extends to that other world where men dream that they are dead. For even Death is Maya [lack of punctuation as in the vocal score]

Holst deals with the oneness of the characters with the surrounding forest, the microcosm of the small human tragedy and the larger issue of death, and subsumes all in the macrocosmic

triumph of life and existence. Maybe he was also relinquishing Maya himself when he said that a curtain need not be used when staging the opera, thus erasing the theatrical illusion.

Drenched in such visions, Holst could easily come to terms with his early lack of success and his later relegation by the team. Like Scott and Foulds, he was too deeply indoctrinated by Hindu lack of interest in worldly success to crave it. Consequently the popularity of *The Planets* was a burden rather than a joy. Based on astrology, to which he was introduced by Clifford Bax, it was concerned with yet another esoteric subject which he apparently did not discuss with Vaughan Williams. According to Imogen (Holst I. 1938/88: 43), Holst seldom mentioned his astrological interests for fear of embarrassing his listeners. He wrote to Adrian Boult, 'of course there is nothing in any of the planets (*my* planets I mean) that can be expressed in words.' (quoted in Moore 1979: 35) What he surely meant, as when talking of unity, was that his words would fall on deaf ears in the case of the uninitiated Gentlemen. His hobby was to make astrological charts for his friends, amongst whom were Howells's wife and their young son, Michael: 'Michael's [chart], however, Holst could never be persuaded to part with; instead he kept asking his parents to confirm that such-and-such had indeed been the correct time of his birth, couldn't it have been a few minutes before or after?' (Palmer 1992: 276) Michael Howells was to die of meningitis at the age of nine, an impressive coincidence, whether Howells believed in astrology or not.

Before looking at the esoteric life of Scott and Foulds as the two most unequivocal Players in their lives and beliefs, it is worth pointing out the unexpected similarities between Holst and Scott, which derived entirely from their Player role. Holst and Foulds had a similar workaday background and their depth of interest in the East in common, and Warlock and Holst shared an absorption in sixteenth and seventeenth century music, but nobody could seem to be more different from Holst than Scott. Yet there were surprising links: Palmer makes an interesting analogy between him and Holst, in one of the few examples in which a musicologist compares any of the Players, by aligning their occult interest in Karma and reincarnation. He maintains that Scott's comparative obscurity at the time of writing could be attributed partially to his occult interests, which was also true of Holst's neglected later

works:

> Just as the coldness which characterises the music of Holst can be attributed to the steadily encroaching influence of Indian mysticism with its principle of placid acceptance and non-involvement, so the missing dimension in Scott can be similarly accounted for ... Shaping one's life round Karma and the doctrine of reincarnation may well make for personal happiness and mental well-being inconceivable to those of us with more finite beliefs; whether it is conducive also to the creating of great works of art is more open to question. ... [The] occult viewpoint excluded warmth from Holst's music and depth of committedness from Scott's (it had personal repercussions as well as it becomes clear from what we know - or rather from what we do not know about their respective marriages). (Palmer 1979: 738)

This statement contains many Gentlemanly assumptions which point up the difference between the attitudes of Players and Gentlemen. The Gentlemen had none of the Players' acceptance and detachment because their aims were positive and concrete. Vaughan Williams's comforting letter to Holst on the positively undesirable aspects of fame, when *Sita* failed to win the Ricordi opera prize in 1908, was merely referring to academic accolades, not to lack of performance: 'Think, the awful stigma to have gone through life with a prize opera on your back - almost as damning as a mus: doc: [sic].' (Vaughan Williams & Holst 1959: 41) As for warmth, there is a much-quoted story (Holst I. 1938/88: 141) in which Holst, on re-hearing the Schubert *String Quintet in C* at the end of his life, sadly concluded that his own music had missed conveying warmth. Yet warmth was inappropriate to the nature of the texts towards which he was increasingly drawn - prime examples are the remoteness of Hardy's *Egdon Heath*, and the extraordinary poem on the faraway star, *Betelgeuse*, by Humbert Wolfe, which exactly mirrors the vast impersonal spaces which Holst tried to convey so often. In this still world Man is nothing, and the aims of the Gentlemen of even less significance. The star is clothed with myriads of gold-leaved trees, and

> the God, of whom we are
> infinite dust, is there
> a single leaf of those
> gold leaves on Betelgeuse.

Scott maintained that he too was indifferent to public recognition of his music; he had so many interests that music took its place along with writing books on occultism and health foods, plus two autobiographies. He merely did what he was told to do by his Master, Koot Hoomi, and started or stopped composing according to orders from above. In earlier years, his sycophantic biographer, Eaglefield Hull, who also wrote a book on Scriabin and was therefore well-informed on Theosophy, felt that Scott's interest in the occult enabled him

> to stand aloof from the ordinary tempestuous life of the artist. His life and work show a certain poise - a detachment from the frets and worries of this world, and a deeper insight and understanding of the fuller life of the soul. His inspiration comes from higher spiritual sources ... it has been said that Cyril Scott is a hundred years in advance of his age. (Hull 1918: 28)

Yet towards the end of his life Scott wrote frequent letters, which can be found in the BBC files, asking for performances. Therefore his detachment, unlike that of Holst, would seem to be a pose, because eventually he did crave recognition. The main difference between Holst and Scott (or indeed, Foulds) lies in the public proclamation of their esoteric beliefs by the two latter composers. Unlike Holst, they not only believed that the occult was by no means 'beyond words', but also wrote fluently and, in the case of Scott, with enormous frequency on the occult, especially in its relationship with music. Scott and Foulds knew of each other, but were not mutually sympathetic, probably because of their difference in background and musical experience. It seems a pity that Holst's and Foulds's paths did not cross, in that their professional lives were very similar, being concerned with practical music-making, orchestral playing and lecturing, whereas Scott's was that of a dilettante, however gifted, with an entirely different background.

As far as Eastern-based esotericism was concerned, Theosophy and its occult derivatives were a closed book to the Gentlemen, and, as has been seen, their colleague Holst was almost silent on the principles that guided his life. Therefore the serious output of Scott and Foulds, the two other Players who were deeply involved in the East and theosophical principles, was unrecognized by the Gentlemen; the philosophical and occult beliefs that shaped them as people are examined below.

Cyril Scott - composer or (com)poseur?

Throughout the nineteenth century, it was the custom of philistine but affluent English families to send their musical offspring abroad; for instance, Warlock was packed off to Cologne for a very short time, as Delius had been sent to Leipzig. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, English musical education barely existed, though the Gentlemen, via the RCM, were to alter the situation. Scott was one of the last generation to follow the custom of foreign musical education, joining Grainger, Gardiner, Quilter and O'Neill who had been sent to Frankfurt to learn composition under Ivan Knorr in the 1890s. Knorr was one of the most respected teachers in Germany, and was known internationally as an authority on late nineteenth century Russian music and as an encourager of individuality and originality in his students. The 'Frankfurt Group' of composers did not study entirely concurrently, but were all friends sharing a cosmopolitan sympathy, who 'stood apart in outlook and education from the mainstream of the conservative [English] musical establishment at the turn of the century'. (Lloyd 1984: 11) Because of the divergence of their aims from those of the Renaissance, the Frankfurt Group's potential as a rejuvenating force in British music was discounted by the Gentlemen, though Grainger assumed temporary Gentility via his folk song collecting. Unfortunately, the Group, many of whom were well-known before the First World War, are now inevitably seen as 'a damp squib in the history of English music.' (Banfield 1977: 903) Much was expected of them as representatives of a new voice in English music, but they did not fit with the preoccupations of the growing Renaissance, in that their harmonic language would seem to belong to the immediate Continental past, and was not based on folk music, nor did it develop into a new language.

Scott first encountered Eastern philosophy, Vedantism and yoga in the first years of the new century, probably in 1902 (the chronology in his two autobiographies is very vague). He was introduced to the role of the Masters in 1907, when he first heard Annie Besant speak in her London lecture tour on Theosophy. From then on he hints that he belonged to the most distinguished esoteric circles, probably that including Debussy and Ravel in Paris and the circle surrounding 'Justin Moreward Haig' that is described in his series of *Initiate* books. Yet nowhere, apart from mentioning his friendship with Debussy and Ravel, does he divulge

names, using either single letters or pseudonyms for the members of these circles. One has the impression that if he had been less circumspect, much more would have been known of the European occult societies.

The critic Edwin Evans notes that mysticism was already present in Scott's earliest work: 'It was this mystical feeling that predisposed him to the meditative philosophy of the East, which claimed him a little later. The step thence to a preoccupation with what is known as occultism was a very natural one to take.' (Evans 1923: 210) Like Holst, he certainly believed in reincarnation to the extent of rather disconcertingly dedicating his piano suite, *Egypt* (1913) in this unconventional style:

> To my friend Mrs Marie Russak
> That enlightened Seer, who
> brought back for me the memory
> of my past Egyptian lives,
> these impressions are affectionately dedicated

His new interest affected his behaviour to the extent that the music critic Robin Legge wrote to his friend Delius that Scott 'is devoted now only to "occultism" and is seen everywhere with a black Yogi who is supposed to hold in his head all the secrets of the Universe.' (Lloyd 1979: 21) The 'Yogi' has not been identified, and was probably some Eastern guru temporarily attached to Scott. From 1921, Scott used a medium, Nelsa Chaplin, and later Marjorie Hartston, who were both apparently able to see and hear Koot Hoomi. Nelsa Chaplin accompanied Scott in 1928 to the rehearsals of his opera *The Alchemist*[3], which was provident, for Scott says: 'At the final rehearsal there was nearly a serious row, though I was not involved in it, and Mrs Chaplin had to send a mental S.O.S. to Master K.H. to come in one of his subtle bodies and diffuse peace.' (Scott 1969: 188)

It is easy in hindsight to dismiss Scott's behaviour as typical of the dottier margins of New Age beliefs, and even at the time it was regarded as affected and eccentric, and therefore unacceptable to the Gentlemen. Eugene Goossens remembers visiting Bantock's hideaway in Harlech and stumbling across two men in the sand-dunes:

> one heavy and bearded, the other slim and ascetic, sitting cross-legged Oriental-wise in the hollow of a dune - and in a state of nature. The first was seemingly endeavouring to tie knots in the muscles of his abdomen, and the second was trying to swallow a length of solid flexible rubber tubing - Bantock and Scott practising Yogi. (Goossens 1951: 138)

It would be difficult to imagine Vaughan Williams or Herbert Howells in such a setting!

All through the 1920s and 1930s Scott had become more deeply immersed in occultism, and often produced settings of words which had occult rather than literary significance. The *Mystic Ode* published in 1933 was written by an obscure poet Arkwright Lundy who apostrophises:

> The ONE, the Changeless ...
> Who art the essence of Unity
> The formless and unknowable Infinity
> The unfathomable Mystery
> The Spirit of Fraternity
> The eternal Reality
> Hail to Thee [etc.etc.]

The extent to which the need to communicate the occult message dominated Scott can only be guessed from his attraction to words of such stunning banality, where capital letters proliferate in inverse proportion to the text's literary merit. In comparison with their use of the fine words of the metaphysical poets, Whitman, the Bible and Bunyan, such a choice of text would have seemed incomprehensible to the Gentlemen. Their message was to remind listeners of England's past musical greatness via English words of accepted literary merit. Scott's message, unconcerned as it was with musical or literary medium (for *he* was the medium) was far more universal and direct in his eyes. He wanted to tell the world that we are entirely influenced by the work of the Masters who oversee the fate of humanity and its role in the unity of the cosmos, and that music has a definite role in that direction: such a message was of infinitely more importance to him than the blinkered insularity of merely putting England on the European musical map.

During the inter-war years, Scott spent much more time writing about occultism, and in particular its relationship to music, than he did on composing. His esoteric books in *The Initiate* series still shine, brightly jacketed and in current editions, on the shelves of specialist bookshops, as do his health books (which include *Cider Vinegar* (1949) and *Constipation and Common Sense* (1953)). In areas such as these, he has relevance in today's fashions, even though his music is forgotten. But his most important esoteric book had its genesis in a command from Master Koot Hoomi, via Nelsa Chaplin:

> It was during the 'twenties that I wrote the book, *Music: its secret influence throughout the ages* [published 1933] ... Master K.H. one Sunday intimated that the time had come when it was desirable to make known the esoteric aspects of music, and that The Masters wished to use my pen to that end ... Needless to say, Mrs C. and I were extremely glad to co-operate in this work together and devoting certain times to it, she would 'listen in' to K.H. while I would write in my notebook what he had communicated. I wish to emphasize here that I had previously had no idea about the occult effects of music and especially the respective effects produced by nearly each composer of established renown. (Scott 1969: 186)

It seems somewhat unfair that only Scott's name should appear on the book as its author, whereas he would seem to have assumed only the role of scribe via a ghost-writer! Given such a creative provenance, *Music: its secret influence throughout the ages* is predictably an extraordinary hotch-potch. Part I is concerned with the establishment of the occult inter-relationship between world history and music, so much so that 'an innovation in musical style has invariably been followed by an innovation in politics and morals' (Ibid.: 47), rather than vice-versa. He 'substantiates' this statement in the rest of the book by tracing in Parts II and III, with not a shade of real evidence, the occult influence of the major composers on the history of mankind. He sees in Beethoven a forerunner of psycho-analysis, and in Mendelssohn the beginnings of social welfare. The dichotomy between the magnificence of Wagner's portrayal of 'that Love which *is* God, the Divine Love or what in certain schools of occultism is termed the Buddhic' (Scott 1933: 105) and the sheer unpleasantness of his personality is ingeniously, if unconvincingly explained:

> It was because Wagner possessed such a strong desire to help mankind that he earned the right to be used, even if only intermittently, by the Masters, Who recognised in him the finest musical medium They were likely to have for the next

> fifty years or so. We have, however, no evidence to show that he was aware of this overshadowing, nor of the fact that he was also and very extensively used by the Devas[4], which in itself is enough to account for traits in his character which have called forth such strong criticism from some of his later biographers. For it often happens that Deva-inspired people lose their sense of proportion and their sense of values, and become imbued with what appears to be an intense egoism and selfishness.' (Ibid.: 108)

In Part IV he describes the occult characteristics of ancient music via India, Egypt, Greece, Rome and more recent times in bird's-eye historical views of almost endearing naïveté, as when talking of ancient Egyptian music:

> The third-tone of Egyptian music had been a strong factor in producing occult science, and through a perversion of that science its civilisation declined; similarly, the half-tone of Greek music had been a strong fact in producing the cult of physical beauty, with the same disastrous result. Nor does the similarity end here: both with Egyptian and Greek music, not only was the wisdom-engendering quarter-tone lacking, but the harmonic or religio-devotional aspect was insufficient to adjust the balance. (Ibid.: 185)

It was to be left to Foulds to deal productively and intelligently with quarter-tones and their importance; nevertheless, Scott must be credited with an awareness, if only in the most superficial way, of other musical languages than those of Europe in the immediate past, which is more than can be said of the Gentlemen. He also believed that the more discordant elements of twentieth century music had a definite occult role in destroying thought-forms transmitted by the Powers of Evil. He dates 1906 as the moment when music of the 'hyperdiscordants' came into being for this purpose:

> For it is an occult musical fact that discord (used in its moral sense) can alone be destroyed *by* discord, the reason for this being that the vibrations of intrinsically beautiful music are too rarefied to touch the comparatively coarse vibrations of all that pertains to a much lower plane ... Thus the work of destroying these noisome moral germs has been allotted to Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and other ultra-modernists, who by their dissonances offend the ears of our musical pedagogues. Yet the former are not merely spraying the lower planes with their musical carbolic ... they are helping to break down that conventional thinking which is the greatest obstacle to spiritual progress. (Ibid.: 145)

Scott's certainty is that of all evangelists. He pronounces time after time that his statement is a fact, without any kind of scientific back-up. Yet in doing so he resembles Holst's Mystic who emerges announcing that he has seen the needle, and nobody can refute his statement. He was certain that the future of music was 'to be used to bring people into yet closer touch with the Devas' (Ibid.: 212), and hoped that the 'dream of Scriabin's be realised, the unity of colour and sound'. (Ibid.: 213) So far 'with our earthly music we have only been able to imitate the faintest echo of the Music of the Spheres, but in future it will be given us to swell the Great Cosmic Symphony'. (Ibid.: 215)

Scott's dilettante attitude, his disparate interests, above all the 'foreign-ness' of his training and demeanour were bound to be incompatible with the strongly-focused aims of the Gentlemen, who, however pampered their background, were professional and practical in their attitude to music: in comparison, Scott's self-centered superficiality reduced him to the worst kind of amateurism in their eyes. Holst had felt that sentiments of a mystical nature were inexpressible in words and only partially so in music, and, as he wrote to Whittaker, 'therefore quite unfit for polite conversation'. (Holst 1974: letter of 23.5.1917) In contrast, Scott not only verbally expressed them, but frequently and at length, as if he were the prime performer in a mystical strip-show, which must have been deeply distasteful to the upbringing and tastes of the Gentlemen.

The unattractive dogmatism with which Scott expressed his belief, the superficiality of his study of Eastern philosophy, and his patronisingly ignorant concept of Indian music in such vague statements as 'ages and ages ago the Indians already had their music with subtle tonal complexities, though entirely homophonic ones in contrast to our polyphony' (Scott 1914: 123) undermine any sympathy with his beliefs. Therefore it is only too easy to condemn him as a kind of poseur - a musical and occult popularist salesman with no intellectual substance behind his literary verbosity and musical fecundity - a *composeur* in fact. But the more one reads of his work, and the more the music is examined, the more one can perceive a kind of desperate sincerity, though completely lacking in self-criticism, which enforces reluctant acceptance that he was genuine, even if superficial. His contemporaries initially judged him

so, but the Gentlemen, devastatingly, ignored him, and his reputation dwindled into the obscurity in which it rests today.

There is no record of the moment when Foulds became interested in Theosophy, but in 1910, he wrote an orchestral work, *Mirage*, which has a pentagram drawn on the front cover of the MS, kept in the British Library.[5] In addition, there is a photograph of the wooden fireplace he carved during his first marriage, which is covered with occult symbols.[6] It was clearly his esoteric interests as well as music that drew him to his second wife, the violinist, mystic and ethnomusicologist Maud MacCarthy, in 1915: she aroused in him the interest in Indian music which was to dominate his life.

> Foulds's commitment to Indian music was not merely practical or ethno-musicological, of course. It was closely related to his spiritual search - to his involvement with Theosophy, which provided him with an occult frame of intellectual reference that looks towards the East, and especially India, as the ultimate source of an ancient and Higher wisdom. (MacDonald 1989: 101)

This statement by MacDonald sums up the interdependence of the esoteric and Foulds's musical work. Though Maud and her husband were often apart, even on different continents, each pursuing their individual work, they were spiritually and intellectually very close. She introduced him to the occult power of his 'own note', or 'nature-pitch', which is based on the musical vibration rate of the individual's *chakras* or central nerve plexuses. This is an idea that is fully accepted by those musicians in the latter half of the twentieth century who recognize the esoteric aspects of music. The writer and composer, Peter Hamel, who devoted a section to the *chakras* in his book *Through Music to the Self*, described in detail the disciplines required in discovering one's own unique vibration rate which is the 'inner sound which is most intimately bound up with our very body and soul.' (Hamel 1978: 186) Foulds says:

> I confidently assert that no composer has yet realized the potentialities of a single musical tone. I speak of what I know. And I have seen a far greater effect produced by a single note of a certain *timbre*, than by whole symphonies comprising uncountable thousands of notes ... I am not speaking here of aesthetic values, or of effects upon the mentality of listeners, but of what I can only call magical effects.

> And by magic - it is a word the use of which here is sure to be misunderstood by some - I mean a change in the vibration of a listener effected by means whose manner of operation is at present unknown. (Foulds 1934: 22)

Foulds had much more to say on timbre (see Chapter Four) but his assumption that the word 'magic' would be misunderstood indicates that he knew the prejudice that confronted his work. He genuinely spoke from experience, for, tutored initially by Maud's system of phono-therapy, he describes the lessons of a Deva who instructed him, in July 1915, on finding his 'own note', with enormously satisfying physical as well as musical benefits:

> There is always first of all, a warmth spreading over the whole body, and each note sung, although vibrating the whole body, seems to specially stimulate some portion which varies according to the pitch of the note. The heart is specially and greatly affected, and also the head, but in my own case, the greatest effect is made upon the spine. The lessons seem to me more in the nature of an occult method of tuning the physical and subtler bodies, and as such to be reserved for people who already know something of the occult teaching regarding these bodies. I feel that it is as a result of, and for the advancement of, our spiritual progress that these things are done to us, and it is only because we are most readily accessible through music that this way is used. (From a typescript in a collection of Foulds's papers in the possession of Malcolm MacDonald)

At the end of Foulds's fourth lesson he seems to have had an intimation of some of the directions music was to take towards the end of the twentieth century:

> Whilst retiring I heard a very fine subtile [sic] melody which seemed to expand my consciousness enormously. It easily included all sounds which I would otherwise have considered as accidental noises: children at play, locomotive whistling, church bell, workman cracking wood in basement, railway sound "puff, puff", dog barking, the regular and very slight creak of the mattress-spring caused by my heart-beats, even a motor hooting - all these mere noises seemed to be perfectly in place as harmonious parts of the never-ceasing rhythmic music of the world, and I now easily realised the Pythagorean thesis:- The whole universe is but an ordered sound. (Ibid.)

This intense awareness of environmental sound is, after all, what Cage requires of the listener in *4'33"* (1952). It would have been incomprehensible to the Gentlemen, but is one of the many instances in which Foulds's music and philosophy were prophetic of the next fifty or sixty years.

Foulds's book *Music Today* begins with a survey of contemporary music, which he felt would only progress if we could understand the occult power of sound. In this, and in a short history of non-diatonic music, he is working in the same area as Scott, but where he differs is that he states his case far more specifically and persuasively than Scott. The whole book ranges widely, but Part Three deals with musical aesthetics and the occult and especially the occult nature of inspiration; it is in this area that the differences between the Teams are particularly marked. The Gentlemen saw themselves as Morris-type artist-craftsmen, believing in musical perspiration as much as inspiration, especially in their Gebrauchsmusik-type works for general amateur orchestral and choral use. Their inspiration was essentially that of a concrete commission, backed by a generalised inspiration and awareness of English landscape and musical tradition, and was not limited to specific inspirational moments. One cannot ever imagine Scott tailoring his works to fit the forces available, yet this was a discipline familiar to Holst (when sporting Gentlemanly colours) as well as Vaughan Williams. However, one of the Reserves, Bax, believed in the inspirational moment as being of occult origin:

> a total quiescence of that creaking engine, 'the brain', - a state of mind comparable to that of the religious ecstatic ... a Genius may be descibed as a man possessed of unusually vigorous physical and nervous vitality and awareness of the actualities of the external world, plus an infinite receptivity and sensitivity to those superpersonal and other-world ideas capable of being moulded in the crucible of art ... All that can be said with certainty is that the truly inspired artist does not possess a gift, but is possessed by it as by a demon. (Bax A. 1929: 17)[7]

Three of the Players had very specific opinions on the role of the occult in musical inspiration, which had much in common with those of Bax. Holst alone is silent on the subject, though he must have believed in its occult nature as part of his general philosophy. Warlock had decided views upon its nature. Gray quotes a letter of 15.6.1918 as saying 'I am driven day by day towards a purely mystical conception of the nature of art; I believe that creation is a wholly spiritual act for which this or that faculty may or may not be employed as a tool.' (Gray 1934: 187) If we substitute 'inspiration' for 'creation', Warlock can be seen to inhabit Scott and Foulds's world in which inspiration is seen as a purely occult phenomenon.. In saying in the same letter, 'All art is simply the making known of the unknown' (Ibid.: 195)

and 'this boundary-fence between the conscious and the sub- or super-conscious is an arbitrary and artificial thing' (Ibid.: 187), he implies that the task of the artist is to act as a medium whose role is to communicate the unknown worlds which exist beyond his conscious self, thus again meeting the world of Scott and Foulds, but approaching it by a different route. This is confirmed in Smith's summing up of the findings of the Irish Year's letters:

> Through his reading of a number of books on religion, the occult and occult-related subjects, he was beginning to develop a more confident personal philosophy regarding music and creative inspiration - a philosophy which hints at a kind of automatic writing. Mere technical equipment was not enough: the composer is the vessel into which a higher force pours the finished product - if the recipient is open to this flow. (Smith 1994: 132)

Scott and Foulds were convinced that inspiration could only be explained as an occult phenomenon. As Foulds said: 'no investigation of the forces used in sound-art can go beyond a first step without plunging into what may truly be called the occult' (Foulds 1921: 224), a view that was entirely corroborated by Scott throughout his writing. Because composers who were interested in the esoteric believed that there was this continuous but unheard cosmic music around them - and this also applies to the long history of Western esoteric belief in the Music of the Spheres - their attitude to inspiration was that of finding the entry to this hidden world of sound, and then tapping it.

Scott's method of tapping this hidden world was essentially that of receptively opening the mind. He believed that Master K.H. had been telepathically impressing ideas upon him:

> composers are not clairaudient in the accepted sense of the word, the reason being that if they could actually hear the music of the higher Planes, they would so despair of reproducing it with the means at their disposal on the earth-plane, that most of them would be discouraged from even making the attempt. Thus, whereas musicians of the better type are receptive to ideas, or what we call 'inspired' and in so far are mediums for the higher Powers, it would not be desirable that they should be otherwise psychic. (Scott 1969: 175)

He describes a process in which the composer 'fishes' and 'catches or contacts ideas which are of value to him.' (Scott 1933: 27) These ideas come from a kind of musical supermarket which Scott rather tamely calls the 'World of Ideas' so that the composer surfs a species of musical Internet. His reason why some composers find a bargain and others do not 'can only be found in the rarer ethers of Esoteric Science' (Ibid.: 34), and is entirely due to imponderables, such as mood or concentration.

> There has always been a certain stream of inspiration emanating from the White Lodge [the equivalent of Valhalla for the Masters!], but whether it is, or has been, successfully contacted by any given composer or not, depends and has depended upon the state of his own inner development. (Ibid.: 155)

However, he did believe in putting himself in the correct receptive mood:

> Creative artists will facilitate inspiration by relaxing the body and imagining the whole of their aura suffused by a pale but intense golden light like that of the sun. They should hold this thought for a minute or two before starting to work. Or they may practise it anywhere, at any time, in a bus or train. It tends to purify the subtler bodies and render them more receptive to impressions from the higher planes. (Quoted in Keeton 1939: 1026)

Once the idea is caught inspirationally, Scott says that the composer can continue it through his own talent or until he is bored with it. He states (Scott 1933: 41) that Koot Hoomi inspired his music as well as his books, so that his efforts could serve the plans of the Masters, and that 'the study of all forms of mysticism and transcendental philosophy became for me a passion; and not only that, but I found in their study a new and great source of musical inspiration.' (Scott 1924: 112) There was very little hard work involved, for it was all a question of reception and selection: in fact once the inspirational mood deserted him, as during the First World War 'owing to the generally disturbed mental atmosphere, composing proved up-hill work, and I had often to turn to literature for relaxation.' (Ibid.: 135)

Foulds's spiritual attitude looked more to the East than any other Player, even more than Holst in the most secret recesses of his life-philosophy. Whereas the Gentlemen had exaltation thrust upon them by their background and aims, Foulds worked at the disciplines

that opened his mind to that exaltation, so that his inspiration was a direct result of his perspiration. This may also have been so in Holst's case, but it is unlikely that he steeped himself in meditation methods as thoroughly as he did in Sanskrit. Above all, Foulds believed that music in its broadest sense (as issuing from the primal sound from which the Hindu Universe was created) and the occult were indivisible. For instance, he defines the occult role of a musical mantra, as he uses it in his *Three Mantras* which were preludes to each act of his lost opera *Avatara*, as an effort to 'set in motion the vibration-type of the whole act' (Foulds 1934: 177), just as a silently spoken mantra can put an individual in touch with vibrations that are on other planes than our own. As he says (his own italics), '*The occult power of sound is at the same time the most important and the most neglected of the many and varied aspects of music today*'. (Ibid.: 22)

For Foulds, this deliberate and active contacting of other musical planes was the basis of musical inspiration, a concept which would have been entirely foreign to the Gentlemen. He devotes a whole chapter of *Music Today* (p.198 et seq.) to the occult nature of inspiration, comparing it with the accounts of other creative artists, not only musicians. He stresses the need for disciplines, both physical and mental such as the finding of one's own note described above, before being in a fit state for inspiration:

> At this stage, his whole being is keyed up to the *n*th degree; his brain is on the *qui vive*; and his consciousness is free to penetrate, so far as it have power, into the wonders of the Spiritual plane, the ineffable glories of the Buddhic (intuitional), the marvels of the Causal world in which inheres all knowledge - in which time and space are not, but all of past, present and future, as well as far and near are available in a great Here and Now - and the unspeakingly moving vibrations of the Emotion (astral) world whence has emanated almost the whole of our modern music ... In bringing over into the brain and setting down even in the veriest sketch some record of such experiences, an extraordinary degree of concentration is required - an ideation, that is to say, that seems on contact to be one and indivisible - into a physical-plane expression, involving as it does the factors of time and space, is one requiring the utmost delicacy, positivity, steadiness and skill ... Examining myself - which is perhaps the honestest method of trying to add to the available data - I can say that a good deal of my stuff has come into existence in the way described above. (Ibid.: 212)

This description, grammatically incoherent and excessive though it may seem, smacks of genuine personal experience in the way that makes Scott's 'fishing' seem uncommitted and pallid. Undoubtedly this was a primary experience for Foulds, and he learnt the disciplines through Maud.

Similarly, the descriptions of his experience of musical clairaudience seem most sincere, and are an extension of the principle of inspiration. The most striking examples occurred during the composition of the *World Requiem*. (The extraordinary circumstances of this work's swift rise to fame and equally swift relegation into silence will be fully described in Chapter Six.) The occult nature of the inspiration of parts of the work was described by Maud in annotations on the first page of the original full score in the British Library:

> Parts of the work were heard in a psychically objective way - listened to clairaudiently and recorded faithfully as possible, as for instance the "washing away" orchestral passage ELYSIUM [Maud's capitals] ... The whole of the SONG OF THE REDEEMER was heard like this and many other passages. The elect angels passage was heard by me as it were enfolding our entire house. I was at the top of the house and John was in his study two floors below. I went down to tell him, and found him writing the same heavenly music, and angelic choirs sang and angelic musicians played to us. The house was at 81 Landsdowne Road, Notting Hill, London. Algernon Blackwood [the short story writer and novelist, interested in the occult and the macabre, who stayed sometimes in the house] described a few of these occurrences in his book The Bright Messenger. (Maud's annotation at the beginning of BL Add. MSS 56478 full score of the *World Requiem*)

When looking at the full score of the sections that Maud mentions, but without hearing an actual performance, it is still possible to imagine that the static quality of the music combined with the richness of orchestration could convey the sound that Blackwood describes:

> Above the continuous humming sound, he heard their music too, faint but mighty, filling the air with deep vibration that seemed the natural expression to their joyful beings. Each figure was a chord, yet combining in a single harmony that had volume without loudness. It seemed to him that their sound and colour and movement wove a new pattern upon space. (Blackwood 1921: 223).

Foulds used an instrument called a 'sistrum' in the *World Requiem* whose timbre both he and Maud heard in joint clairaudience.[8] It was pitchless and consisted of wires stretched over a

frame with small clappers and was shaken like a tambourine. In Maud's notes on the MS she says,

> We heard a sound which could not really be described as a 'musical sound' but rather as a 'musical noise' ... but the thing [ie instrument concocted for the occasion] was clumsy and inadequate. The actual sound heard quite clearly by us is like the soft backwash of waves - of continous backwash - on a seashore of small pebbles ... we heard an exquisite noise, suggesting a breathing through myriads of gossamer .. it belongs to Nature. We both heard it. (BL Add. MSS 56478)

The sense of being the clairaudient medium of inspiration, rather than the creator by perspiration, ought to have induced humility: and nowhere in Foulds's writing is there any sense of the arrogance of being a 'chosen' person that exists in Scott's writing. Yet an elderly lady who was a friend of the Foulds's son and daughter had a disconcerting memory of him from a child's point of view:

> He thought his music came direct from God. In fact he thought he was God, so he would play to us for hours, describing each piece as 'Magnificent', 'Superb ' ... Foulds was kind to us but, even then, I realised he was patronising me. Being God, he had to be kind. (Letter dated 28.11.83 in my possession)

Foulds, Scott and Holst were all concerned, then, with the Hindu concept of the unity of the universe in all its forms, spiritual, human and musical, and all their work was directed towards achieving this theosophical ideal. Their concept of the role of music and the composer was entirely different from that of the Gentlemen, who had no leaning toward removing the veil of the actual and revealing the other planes that the Players believed they could sense. The Gentlemen would surely have felt uncomfortable on reading the Players' self-revelatory and excessive writing, or on hearing of the occasional excesses of their behaviour.

The main problem in defining the attitudes of the Gentlemen towards the mysticism of the Players lies in the lack of written evidence. They ostracised the Players by omission rather than commission, in that they did not mention them in correspondence, or general writing. Not once, in the writings of the Gentlemen or the Reserves, have I been able to find a single

reference to Scott or Foulds, though there is some purely practical correspondence in the BBC Archives between Foulds and the Gentlemanly Adrian Boult when the latter constantly rejected Fould's requests for broadcasts despite the several Prom performances of his work in the earlier years of the century (an exchange which will be described in Chapter Six). So it is only by comparing the spiritual attitudes of the two teams that one can infer that the brand of mysticism that characterised the Players was completely alien to the Gentlemen, and therefore ignored, unless it was disguised, as in the cases of Holst, Warlock and some of the Reserves.

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1 See Raymond Head's first article for *Tempo* (1986: 3) on Whitman's attitude to India.

2 By this Head was clearly referring to the pseudo-Oriental style of music which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

3 This was a most unjustly neglected work if its quality is to be judged by excerpts broadcast in 1995 on Radio 3.

4 The Devas were the Hindu spiritual entities who amongst other areas were concerned with the development of music and the arts.

5 The pentagram was used as a sign to avert evil spirits and also represented Man, the microcosm as opposed to the Universe or macrocosm.

6 Reproduced in Malcolm MacDonald's book *John Foulds and his Music* 1989.

7 Quoted in Foreman 1983: 192.

8 An instrument of this name and type was used in the ancient Egyptian cult of Hathor to ward off evil spirits. It is not known whether Foulds knew this.

CHAPTER FOUR: UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR?

In charting the gulf between the teams, the emphasis has been on divergent socio-cultural aspects and spiritual/philosophical beliefs; an assessment of the effect of these differences upon the music itself has not yet been attempted. An important strand in this thesis - the resultant effect on their music of the spiritual distance between the teams - will be reserved for Chapter Five. This chapter prepares the ground by considering the effect of their general and cultural differences on the music of both teams, which partially arose from the Players' deeper awareness of continental movements. Lacking in any sense of team spirit, the Players were individualists who did not tailor their music to convey any kind of message, distancing themselves from the mainstream of English music by writing works that could not contribute to the creation of a specifically nationalist school; thus they ensured a lack of sympathy from the Establishment. Even if their spiritual interests had happened to coincide with those of the Gentlemen, their idea of the social, and even the moral, purpose of music was very different.

Before contrasting the Gentlemen's music with that of the Players, it is worth recapitulating briefly the perceived characteristics, however well-known, of the Renaissance style. Harmony, rhythm and melody were often derived either from the modal and rhythmically free nature of English folk song, or from polyphonic Tudor church music with special emphasis on the great choral traditions built up in English cathedral cities. The style was strongly distinctive *in toto*, but often the work of individual composers was indistinguishable from a general Vaughan Williams-type matrix. The 'May morning' 6/8 lilt, with an abundance of flattened sevenths and minor thirds characteristic of the use of Dorian, Aeolian or Phrygian modes, was ubiquitous and was often coupled with the passing bite of pseudo-Tudor dissonance. Percy Young, a biographer of Vaughan Williams, sums up how, as a budding composer, he tried to imitate what he calls the 'merits of the English school':

> Consecutive fifths the rule and not the exception; counterpoint, invertible when you would, unconscious of dissonance; diatonic sevenths, unresolved, *de rigeur*; emancipation from the tawdry annoyance of German, French and Italian sixths; melodies, whimsical in tonality and metre; and, in case of doubt, virtuous rows of major and minor triads whose presence spelt modulation without tears. (Young 1953: 176)

The Gentlemen remained resolutely insular, apparently wilfully ignoring continental serialism, perhaps because it could not be recruited to national music use, as could pentatonic and modal alternatives to the major/minor scale. They were determined to look to the past (rather than forward) in generating a distinctive English voice in twentieth century music, and their works had considerable appeal in England if only to the musically literate. Though it did not export well to the continent, the pastoral element in the Renaissance style swathed English musical utterance in the benignly lush greenery that still encircles incidental music to so many television and commercial productions in the last decade of the twentieth century.

In contrast, the Players had a more cosmopolitan and eclectic musical vocabulary, yet demonstrating a much sharper individualism in their attitude to tonality, harmony and rhythm. They did not subscribe to serialism - Scott for instance was very ambivalent towards the more dissonant of contemporary continental trends feeling that they had their place in the esoteric purpose of music but had no intrinsic value of their own (see p.84). Nevertheless the Players moved farther away than the Gentlemen from conventional tonality. Holst, for instance could not be said to look overtly towards Europe, but he was always interested in abandoning a major/minor framework, and not only in favour of the Gentlemanly modalism of Tudor plainchant or folk song; as will be seen, he even used Indian ragas on a few isolated occasions. He experimented in bitonality, but not apparently in imitation of Europe, for he wrote to his friend W.G. Whittaker on 25.9.32 that his use of two or more keys at once 'is something quite apart from the hits and squashes of conventional modern harmony. And I felt secretly flattered when an excellent musician complained that my two-key writing won't do because it has no "wrong notes" in it.' (Holst 1974: no page number) Thus the A minor of Savitri against the F# minor of Death's recitative theme (Ex. 1), or the F minor of Satyavan's description of Maya against an A major underlying harmony would have sounded acceptable to the Gentlemanly ears at the time, for in pursuance of their contrapuntally independent lines, they used similar passing dissonances. As Ian Parrott points out, 'the conflicting tonal centres are not a tritone apart - this became a popular clash in other composers - but they are a major [or a minor] 3rd apart' (Parrott 1967: 326), resulting in generally acceptable consonances. Even at the beginning of the late work,

Hammersmith, where the ostinato bass is apparently in F# minor and the bassoon melody above in F major (Ex. 2) and a grinding result might be expected, neither tonal centre is very strong, and there is a generally modal effect in each melodic line which softens the edges.

Foulds wrote in two keys very occasionally, as in the 'Military' movement of *Essays in the Modes* which is concurrently in Db and D major (Ex. 3), and this has a far harsher effect, partly because of the wide gap between the hands which throws the dissonance into greater relief. As for Warlock, his continental connections were surprisingly strong, considering his Gentlemanly background. He was a personal friend of Bartok and stayed with him in 1921 in Hungary; two of his closest friends, the Anglo-Indian Sorabji and the Dutchman Bernard Van Dieren, though resident in England, had cosmopolitan backgrounds and interests. Though Warlock's melodic turns of phrase are often Gentlemanly in their deliberate archaism, he sometimes combined them with an expressive chromaticism which came close to some continental trends at the turn of the century. Though never specifically bitonal, his tonal centres were often very elusive; in *The Curlew* (Ex. 4), or the angular lines of his late song, *The Fox* (Ex. 5), it is easy to see why Anthony Payne could suggest that 'atonality was just around the corner'[1]. His accompaniments were often sharply dissonant compared with the Gentlemanly innocence of some of his vocal lines, and the angularity of the more intense *a capella* choral works, such as *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* (Ex. 6), make them very difficult to sing - he often gives 'mental cues' to the choir to help them pitch their next entry.

Scott did not experiment with bitonality even as much as Holst and Warlock, in their role as closet Players, presumably because he felt he was already openly cosmopolitan. His harmonic, melodic and rhythmic language joined another continental trend - that of chromaticism taken to the limit of tonality rather than that of juxtaposing different tonalities; he regarded himself as consciously daring in his harmony. He typically challenged conservative thought with such queries as 'Why limit our inspiration by this hampering fetter of key? why have any key at all? or why not invent new scales, or regard the whole of tonality as chromatic? So some of us have abolished key-signature altogether, we have bid

farewell to an old convention.' (Scott 1914: 182) (This quotation could pertain,of course, to many pre-1914 continental composers.)

Scott was far more openly appreciative of continental trends than any of the Gentlemen and far more exploratory, which is probably why Elgar remarked, when complimented on the novelty of his harmony in his *Symphony No. 2* (1909-11), 'Yes, but don't forget, it was Scott who started it all.' (Scott 1969: 147)[2] Scott reflected the characteristics of his friends in the Frankfurt Group, whose musical and literary interests in the 1890s were vividly recalled many years later by Percy Grainger in a letter of 1958 to Sir Thomas Armstrong:

> it seems to me that an excessive emotionality (& particularly a tragic or sentimental or wistful or pathetic emotionality) is the hallmark of our group. When Cyril [Scott] returned to F.[rankfurt] in 1896 the books and pictorial art we got to know thru him were the plays of Maeterlinck (to which he wrote several overtures in those early days) the poems of Stefan George and Ernest Dowson, Walt Whitman, Aubrey Beardsley ... All we 4 composers [he omits Norman O'Neill, the fifth member of the Frankfurt Group] spoke German as fluently as English - tho not necessarily grammatically. I think it might be true that the exaggerated tenor of Germanemotionality had some influence on us all ... Perhaps it might be true to say that we were all of us PRERAFAELITE composers. Under 'prerafaelite' I understand art which takes a conscious charm from what is archaic. And what musical medium could provide the agonized emotionality needed? Certainly not the 'architectural' side of music & not the truly English qualities of grandeur, hopefulness & glory so thrilling in Elgar, Walton, Vaughan Williams & other British composers. I think the answer is 'the CHORD'. Based on Bach, Wagner, Skriabine, Grieg and César Franck, Cyril [Scott], Balfour [Gardiner] & I became chord-masters indeed. [the idiosyncratic spelling, punctuation and grammar are Grainger's inimitable hallmark] (Quoted in Armstrong 1962: 18)

Scott had expanded on the attributes of the Pre-Raphaelites, maintaining that Chopin's music indirectly inspired the Brotherhood in that it evinced the same 'spirit which is at once the quintessence of refinement, or aestheticism, of poetical minutiae'. (Scott 1933: 88) The attitude of the Gentlemen and Grainger to the past was markedly different. It can be inferred from the context of the latter's mention of the 'conscious charm' of the archaic that he meant a deliberate romanticisation of the past. The Pre-Raphaelites' artistic Utopia lay in the distant past of Italy, rather than England, though they shared an admiration of William

Morris with the Gentlemen. There was something of the self-conscious dilettante in the adoption of the term 'PRERAFAELITE composers' which was not present in the Gentlemen's scholarly interest in the archaic as exemplified by their enthusiasm for English 16th and 17th century music.

How disturbed the Gentlemen would have been by these overt expressions of emotion (even though they might have concurred with Grainger's description of 'truly English qualities')! Of the above list of favourite poets, who were mainly Symbolist, only Walt Whitman was inspirational to them. Maybe it was the supposed decadence of these poets that caused Stanford, arch-mentor of future Gentlemen, to say that Scott was a 'lost soul' and that some of his songs were 'simply blasphemous'. (Scott 1969: 84) The insistence on the importance of the CHORD would seem to belong to the continental and Wagnerian past from which the Gentlemen were trying to emancipate themselves, rather than to the more distant English polyphony to which they wished to return. These factors in the aspirations of the Frankfurt Group, and Scott in particular, would have seemed alien and possibly damaging to the national/English spirit of the Renaissance cause. However, some harmonic similarities between Scott and his English contemporaries can be found, especially to Delius in the shifting chromatic harmonies used by both composers - though this is probably because they were both friends of Frankfurt Group members, Grainger and Balfour Gardiner.

Scott's cosmopolitanism, and therefore his lack of Gentlemanly musical attributes, were compounded by the attachment to his name of the soubriquet 'the English Debussy', which partly arose from the superficial similarity of both composers' liberal use of strings of unrelated and unresolved sevenths and ninths. But the link was also a result of Debussy's own praise of Scott in the early years of the century, written as a commissioned blurb for the publication by Schott of an album of Scott's piano pieces:

> Cyril Scott is one of the rarest artists of the present generation ... The music unfolds itself somewhat after the manner of those Japanese Rhapsodies [in some versions this is corrected to 'Javanese' presumably because of Debussy's admiration of Javanese gamelan music] which instead of being confined within traditional forms, are the outcome of imagination displaying itself in innumerable arabesques, and the

> incessantly changing aspects of the inner melody are an intoxication for the ear - are in fact irresistible. (Quoted in Hull 1919: 140)

At the time the similarity was constantly remarked upon; for instance, Havergal Brian notes 'that quiet strange shifting tonality so characteristic of Debussy's own work'. (Brian 1923: 853) Certainly *The Alchemist*, an effective and colourful opera (judging by the excerpts broadcast in the summer of 1995), sounds like a hotch-potch of Dukas and Debussy coupled with the 'Gothic horror' of Elementals and sages thrown in, and is worthy of the Wolf's Glen in *Der Freischütz* - but it has the English Channel separating it from *Hugh the Drover*.

Debussy must have subconsciously compared his music with that of Scott, for he admitted that the similar instrumental texture of muted strings accompaniment and low flute melody, as in Scott's *Aubade* of 1911 (Ex. 7), was 'un peu' like his own style, and Scott conceded that 'I did owe something to the eminent Frenchman'. (Scott 1969: 124) It is interesting that Havergal Brian felt that this work had a 'mystical opening' (Brian 1923: 853) though he does not specify what he means by this description. Perhaps he was referring to the constant circling round one note which could induce a sense of timelessness and stasis. Certainly the beginning of the *Idyll* for voice and flute of 1923 (Ex. 8) has a superficial resemblance, though composed thirty years later, to the beginning of *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* (Ex. 9) in the melodic shape, the repetition of one-bar phrases, the fluidity of the rhythm and in the regular return to a single note at the beginning of each bar. Yet later both composers were anxious to play down their similarities, for Scott says, 'When I came to know him [Debussy] well, I played many of my compositions to him and asked his opinion. Most emphatically he told me that there was no similarity whatsoever.' (Scott 1929: 554) The truth probably lies in Evans's statement that 'whatever subordinate details are common to Debussy and Cyril Scott have long since belonged to the current vernacular' (Evans 1923: 208) and were therefore merely a facet of a general continental trend.

In fact Evans sensed a far deeper sympathy between Debussy and Scott than that of superficial musical turns of phrase. Both composers had a great empathy with the literary and artistic aspects of the revived Pre-Raphaelite movement of the 1890s, and Evans likens

the unbroken rhythmic freedom of Scott's music to a poem by Mallarmé. (Evans 1903: 162) In addition, both were deeply influenced by Baudelaire, Maeterlinck and other French Symbolist poets - Debussy's finest songs include Baudelaire settings. Scott also translated Baudelaire and wrote poetry himself :

> Now - dreams of summer sorrow melt in amber glory;
> Sad, my heart returns to stanzas steeped in woe,
> To lines that banish, with the bleeding leaves, a golden story
> Of evening hours, anguished eyes and tears that flow.

This poem precedes *The Twilight of the Year*, one of Scott's set of piano pieces, *Poems*; a cold shower and a dose of the heroic adjurations of Whitman or the pastoral nostalgia of Housman would surely have been the Gentlemanly antidote to such crepuscular effusions.

Apart from the more adventurous attitude of the Players in harmony and tonality, they were also less rhythmically conservative than the Gentlemen: the latter subscribed to the type of rhythmic freedom derived from plainsong which developed into the familiar rhapsodising melismata of Elihu's dance in Vaughan Williams's *Job,* or of *The Lark Ascending*, but showed no desire to emulate the 'barbaric' rhythms of Bartok and Stravinsky. Therefore Holst's use of dervish-like ostinati, which conveyed the same sense of cataclysmic energy as those found in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring,* did not appeal to them. (The nearest approximation is Vaughan Williams in 'galumphing' mood, as in the second subject of his *Symphony No. 6.*) Holst's driven ostinati, often present in the irregular metres of the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* as in *To Agni* (Ex. 10), or the insistence of 3/4 patterns in *The Cloud Messenger* (Ex. 11), culminated in the dance section of *The Hymn of Jesus* (Ex. 12) and the barbarism of *Mars*; such patterning found no counterpart in the Gentlemen's music. Holst instructs his performers to think of 5/4 as 2+3 or 3+2, according to the context, to help the variation of verbal stress. Such irregular metres sometimes found their way into the Gentlemen's music, because they were occasionally found in existing folk songs, and were therefore entirely acceptable, or in Tudor or plainsong rhythmic freedom, dictated by melody or words. Unlike Holst, however, they did not explore rhythmic patterns for their own sake; rhythm seemed to be of less importance to them than contrapuntal melody or harmony.

Scott was experimenting rhythmically also, using perpetually changing (rather than constant but irregular) time-signatures, but it must be stressed that his free rhythm had no metre, regular or irregular. It was really bar-less, and only utilised time-signatures to facilitate legibility. The difference between his experiments and those of Holst are discussed by Edwin Evans:

> When Holst, to mention another rhythmically emancipated composer, varies his time-signature from bar to bar, and when Cyril Scott does the same thing, they are presenting radically different modes of thought. Holst's asymmetry is nearly always a vindication of the supremacy of rhythm over metre. It obviates giving a false value to the metrical accents ... But Scott has a strong leaning towards asymmetrical metre, which Holst has not, and, which is quite another thing, sufficiently unusual to be considered distinctive. (Evans 1923: 211)

In fact, the opposite is true; Holst does not vary his time-signature very often in purely instrumental music, and he did lean towards asymmetrical metre, but he does change time-signatures constantly when setting words; perhaps Evans would have altered his opinion by the time of Holst's death in 1934. In contrast, Scott's rhythmic accentuation is nearly always as a result of pointing the shape of a phrase; his bar-lines occur at naturally stressed notes as in the opening of his *Piano Sonata No. 1* (Ex. 13), and the signatures constantly fluctuate. It is interesting that Evans implies in this general article from which this quotation is drawn that Holst was still generally acceptable in 1923, in that he was not 'unusual', whereas Scott was different and 'distinctive', presumably because he was not an exponent of the Renaissance Tudor and folk music rhythmic idioms. In the case of both Holst and Scott, their rhythmic characteristics were also very much a part of their esoteric beliefs and therefore discussion of the occult derivation of Scott's 'incessant flux' and Holst's orgiastic dance-rhythms will be reserved for examination under the musical language of mysticism in Chapter Five.

There were also differences in attitude to musical form: the Gentlemen and many of the Reserves still used the architectural forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth century in their music, in which overall shape depended on contrasts and developments that were based on key relationships. A significant part of Vaughan Williams's and Bax's prolific output,

continued in a later generation in the work of Walton and Rubbra, was symphonic. Even when apparently freely rhapsodic, their compositional style was still based on organised variation of melodies that were either genuine folk songs or imitated folk music. Thus the more ecstatic moments in Vaughan Williams (as in the viola and violin duet section in the *Tallis Fantasia*) still have a feeling of destination, tension and resolution because they have an implied harmonic underpinning based on a cadential direction. Such a goal is often absent in Scott, and in some of the work of the rest of the Players: Holst, for instance, tended to write sectionally, when not setting words, and has been criticised by many as a result, while Warlock's form was entirely shaped by word-setting. Again, Foulds varied his musical architecture according to the style in which he was writing, but in his large-scale later works like the *Quartetto Intimo* or the First and Third of the *Three Mantras*, the music has infinite direction and drive, depending on continuous motivic and rhythmic development unrelated to any obvious key-scheme of a nineteenth symphonic type such as that in Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 6.*

Scott's compositional technique in large-scale works was a result of the development, not of recognisable melodies, but of small motifs. In his early and more tightly-knit work such as the one-movement *Piano Sonata No. 1*[3], he was using a technique of metamorphosis of themes, reminiscent of Liszt's *Sonata in B minor.* The *leitmotiv* quoted as Ex. 14 undergoes many transformations, augmentations and diminutions in its re-appearances throughout the work, thus intellectually binding it together. He returned to this compositional style in 1956 with the *Piano Sonata No. 3*; though the texture is less thick, the general effect is still of rather amorphous, continuous flow, characterised by little that is memorable rhythmically, harmonically or melodically. This effect was possibly deliberate, for his formal concepts were very different from those of the Gentlemen:

> pattern and form are different things ... Structure, then is not good or bad according to the pattern on which it is built, but alone according to its own intrinsic goodness or badness, the merit of the thing itself. And thus we require a different starting-point for criticism than to whether a musical structure is like sonata-form, rondo-form, or so forth. We require to ask, Does it flow, has it any real standpoint of its own, or is it a mere series of irritating and meaningless full-stops?... The modern

> tendency, then, is to invent new forms or structural designs more subtle, more mystical, more flowing than heretofore. (Scott 1914: 183)

He therefore felt that standard musical form was limiting and earthbound, and that its abandonment led the way to a more overt language of mysticism. In his role as part of the 'modern tendency', Scott would have been seen as a threat by the Gentlemen, whose allegiance was to the past rather than to the future. In addition he was closer to Wagner in his avoidance of cadences, and therefore would have seemed a disciple of one of the European Gods from which the Gentlemen had emancipated themselves.

The Oriental Style

As we have seen, the Players, apart from Warlock, inadvertently distanced themselves from the Gentlemen by their open absorption in the philosophies of the East. During the nineteenth century, the occult and the esoteric had become increasingly linked with perceived aspects of the Orient, which led to a false impression engendered by romanticisation of the colourfulness of the East and an entirely superficial understanding of the complexity of ancient civilisations and their different attitudes to spiritual aspects of life.[4] Myrrha Bantock, in describing her composer father Granville's interest in the East, initially reflects this attitude, but qualifies it in her subsequent observations with an awareness of Oriental/ Occidental differences worthy of the Player that her father certainly was not:

> he found a kinship with the oriental mind, not only with its wonderful art-forms and love of brilliant colour and lavish display, but also, and far more significantly with the Soul of the East, which seeks to harmonize with the forces of nature. The East regards Man as insignificant before the powers of the Universe. Western thought is entirely different. Even from the time of the ancient Egyptians, the West has striven to dominate and control nature, believing that men are the lords of creation. (Bantock 1972: 33)

The Gentlemen regarded any interest in the Oriental, whether in music or Hindu philosophy or Theosophy, as smacking of charlatanism and of inferior musical worth, however popular with the public; they therefore could not accept the composers who wrote such music. They may have been blinkered, but they recognised musical and intellectual dishonesty in others, even though they were not detached enough to recognise their own similar exploitation of

the Pastoral. They did not even attempt the Westernised Oriental genre of music, probably because their distrust of it was exacerbated by its naïve nature, and they were not interested enough in fashionable Orientalism to differentiate between the popular received impression of the East and the genuine wish to encompass its way of thought. In view of their sophisticated literary tastes they had no interest in pseudo-Oriental texts such as Fitzgerald's 'translation' of *The Rubaïyat of Omar Khayyam*, set by Bantock, or obscure poetry by Laurence Hope, set by the salon composer, Amy Woodforde-Finden as her *Indian Love Lyrics*. The quality of Delius's genuinely lovely incidental music to Flecker's *Hassan* was an exception, when he took a diversion via an Oriental camel-train on the 'golden road to Samarkand', as in the atmospheric final chorus of the play.

In particular, salon-pieces for piano in the so-called Oriental style were enormously popular, notably those by Scott, who managed to suppress the depth of his interest in Hindu and occult philosophy enough to perpetuate pieces whose banality was depressingly matched by their professional ease. He wrote numerous piano suites typically entitled *Old China*, *Indian Suite* and *Egypt*, and, as already mentioned, most amateur pianists in Britain and many abroad knew his very attractive little mood-picture *Lotus Land*. As he said, 'We all know that artists are occasionally obliged to "pot-boil", but the man who solely and consistently "pot-boils" can never merit the name of a true artist.' (Scott 1933: 29n) An ethnically Oriental composer, Sorabji, saw this popular bias towards the East as entirely pernicious, and wrote to his friend Warlock, 'It is very disgusting to see how Europeans pilfer bits from Oriental and particularly Hindu philosophy, trick it out in their own words ... and palm it off as the results of their own philosophic speculations and researches.' (BL Add. MSS 57963) He erupted furiously into print, condemning

> the astonishing production of Cyril Scott, which underneath its trumpery finery of ninths, elevenths, added sixths, joss-sticks, papier-Asie Orientalism, and pinchbeck Brummagem-Benares nick-nackery, oozes with glutinous commonplace. (Sorabji 1932: 63)

Foulds agreed that such pieces were 'no more truly Eastern in conception and execution than my piano is African because of its ivory keys.' (Foulds 1934: 345)

What were these pseudo-Oriental gimmicks? They can all be found in Scott's salon-music: the *Snake-Charmer* (Ex. 15) from the *Indian Suite* shares the continual drone bass, popularly connected with the 'mysterious East', with the apparently occidental *Twilight of the Year* (Ex. 16). Such drone-basses are coupled with the obligatory augmented seconds of the style in the *The Piper in the Desert* movement found in the *Karma* suite (Ex. 17); often these trademarks combine with 'innumerable arabesques', as in *Lotus Land* (Ex. 18) and *Rainbow Trout* (Ex. 19). These were all examples of the type of picture-postcard East found in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade* or Saint-Saëns's *Samson and Delilah*, and therefore a facet, however exotic, of the dreaded continental influence. In fact, the younger Scott could be regarded as very much part of the European tradition from which the Renaissance was trying to emancipate itself. The last thing wanted as a Gentlemanly recruit was a pale imitation of Debussy who had lived most of his life abroad, scorning the new English-based musical education, and who had the effrontery to be universally popular in the despised Oriental style. Admittedly he had shown some admiration for folk song, which he occasionally garnished with idiosyncratic harmony, but his settings had neither Grainger's charm and beauty, nor Vaughan Williams's scholarly empathy. His musical vocabulary was un-Gentlemanly; he was therefore ignored.

Edwin Evans sums up the contemporary attitude to Orientalism and music as it appeared in 1919:

> There are several ways of representing the East in terms of music. First there is the alleged authentic method, which consists in using genuine Oriental material. As the latter loses most of its peculiar twang by transposition into the tempered scale the authenticity is usually a polite fiction. Then there is the conventional manner, in which stale theatrical devices mingle with reminscences of exhibition side-shows to produce what the man in the street, who has never been east of Tilbury, imagines to be Eastern 'atmosphere.' Thirdly there is the method which I would describe as objective impressionism, analagous to that by which Debussy evokes a vision of Spain in his 'Iberia'. In its general features [Holst's] 'Beni Mora' comes under this heading. (Evans 1919: 658)

A more cosmopolitan view was expressed by Constant Lambert in *Music Ho!* when the Renaissance was at its height:

> the imitation of the arabesques of oriental melody - though appalling at its worst - can, in the works of a composer of sensibility like Balakireff or Debussy, produce themes of a far greater plasticity than the rigid folk songs which the nationalists plump down in the middle of a symphony. (Lambert 1934/48: 136)

This was an inevitable reaction from the ballet-orientated Lambert, drenched as he was in the indigenous exoticism of the Ballets Russes. His comment on the folk song strait-jacket implied that the Oriental style, when used by continental composers, resulted in freer and more expressive music than the piecemeal lifting of folk song for incorporation in the music of the Gentlemen; hence it could prove more popular than English Renaissance music - a prospect threatening to the Gentlemen when coupled with the Oriental style's deviation from Renaissance aims. There might even have been an element of envy, for they had not been truly effective in reaching the common man, with whom they longed to empathise, and whose presumed language of folk music had been jettisoned in favour of a shoddy Oriental import. Unfortunately, in their condemnation of the mysticism surrounding the Eastern aspects of the esoteric and the occult along with its facile pseudo-Oriental surface, the Gentlemen threw the baby out with the bath water, in that they did not perceive that the more genuine alternatives to their Christianised mysticism could also inspire fine music, however different in style from their own, as exemplified in the Oriental influence on Holst which was, of course, infinitely less superficial.

Holst's initial dabbling with the style must have seemed treacherous and dangerous. Drone basses proliferated along with the repetitive Moorish melody in the *Beni-Mora* suite, and the houris in the temple-dances from *The Cloud Messenger* are garlanded with rather tame augmented seconds (Ex. 20), but these passages were surely part of Holst's immaturity at the time. He soon abandoned such crude imitative effects, and began to experiment with whole-tone scales in the *Hymns from the Rig Veda,* and to construct 'new' scales which were neither major, minor nor one of the Church modes. His explorations alienated him more and more from his Team colleagues, because they did not contribute to the nationalist cause, and yet he could not be brushed aside like Scott.

In tracing specific effects upon Holst of Indian culture, Raymond Head says that the descending scale in *To the Unknown God* is the Indian mode 'gauri' (Ex. 21). Whether Holst's use of Indian scales was conscious is debatable, though Head notes that Foulds's future wife, Maud MacCarthy, (known at that time as Maud Mann, the name of her first husband) was consulted in London by Holst in her role as a major Western authority on Indian music. (Head 1988: 38) Edmund Rubbra, one of Holst's composition pupils after the First World War, felt that this bias was not merely intellectual:

> [His] instinctive inclination was towards Hindu scales. The simplest forms of these often coincide with Western scales, as, for instance, the Rag *Gandhara* which roughly corresponds with our harmonic minor scales. The *Battle Hymn* (No.1 of the first group of *Rig Veda* Hymns) [Ex. 22] appears superficially to be written in the melodic form of the C minor scale, but the very insistence on the A natural and B natural makes it much closer in feeling to the Rag *Sind Kanada* in spite of the latter's uncertain E flat. Turning to a much later work, the *Choral Symphony*, we find on page 8 of the vocal score [Ex. 23] a recitative the scale of which corresponds exactly with the Hindu Rag, *Bhairavi*; and again the opening phrase of the late orchestral work *Egdon Heath* [Ex. 24] uses a transposed version of the Rag *Guraji*. I do not wish to assume that there was always a conscious use of Hindu scales, but merely to stress that Holst's early absorption in Hindu culture gave him a definite bias away from occidental scales. (Rubbra 1947: 17)

These examples could be regarded as merely haphazard and used by Rubbra to highlight the importance of Eastern culture at a time when it was greeted with ignorance or patronage. If so, it would be out of character because Rubbra was anything but superficial in his attitude to Eastern philosophies. As a very young man he had been, briefly but enthusiastically, a piano pupil of Scott and had studied Hindu scales (*Music in Hindostan* by A.H. Fox Strangways (1859-1948) had been published in 1914 at the time Rubbra was a student); he would have been eager to stress that his revered mentor was also influenced in a similar way, yet it is unlikely that Holst knew enough about Indian scales to use them consciously in an organised manner.

Unlike Scott and the younger Holst, Foulds was never culpable of pseudo-Orientalism, probably because Maud was so learned in Indian music and instruments, and his was a conscious awareness of Indian scales. He was always interested in the use of modes - not

just the ancient Greek modes, but the modes of the Indian ragas. This interest was quickened by reading Busoni's *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music* written in 1911, in which Busoni states, 'to music, indeed, it is given to set in vibration our human moods ... music is part of the vibrating universe' (Busoni 1911: 82) - a statement which ties in with the theosophical belief in the differing vibrations of the various planes of existence. Busoni condemns the domination of the tonal system (p. 89 et seq.) and describes the creation of one hundred and thirteen scales or modes within the arrangement of the seven notes. Foulds was inspired by this, but disciplined himself to ninety modes as an extension of the seventy-two of the Southern Indian system, and sets them out on pp. 46-7 of *Music Today* (see Appendix); the mode 'gauri', supposedly used by Holst (as mentioned on the previous page) corresponds with mode number III H. Each mode was tabulated as starting on C and had a fixed dominant, and therefore its fifth note was always a G natural, a characteristic which is closer to classical Indian music. When composing in a given mode, Foulds, unlike Busoni, limited himself to harmony made up only from its seven notes, as in the *Third Mantra - Of Will.*

There are several examples of extensive use of modes in Foulds's music, such as Mode VI F (C D# E F G A# B C) for the first movement of his piano concerto entitled *Dynamic Triptych*, but most strikingly in the set of piano pieces entitled *Essays in the Modes* (composed between 1920-1927), each of which is prefaced by the seven notes of the chosen mode, and is composed entirely of those notes. In his review of the recording[5] David Brown says

> Each uses only the notes of its scale, but upon this strict foundation are built structures that are far more concerned with colour, mood, texture and atmosphere than overt intellectual challenge. Foulds's genius is to find in what might seem almost a game (what do *these* seven notes sound like?) the perfect vehicles for the subtlest expressive purposes ... they exist in isolation, each creating its own rapt world. (Brown 1985: 35)

Amongst the Players, Foulds strayed the furthest in this conscious use of modes based on Indian ragas, though the result is still Western in effect, as in Ex. 25 from the first of the

Essays in the Modes. He believed that each mode had its own unique quality, and the listener cannot but admire Foulds's ingenuity in limiting himself not to a series of twelve notes, but only to seven, yet aurally producing an effect of astonishing variety from within a narrow discipline. The modes themselves were far removed from the Church and folk song modes which were used so extensively by the Gentlemen. Foulds was following similar paths not only to Busoni, but to Roussel, whose opera/ballet, *Padmavati*, was finished in 1918 and fully utilised Hindu scales. It seems unlikely that Foulds knew this work, as it was produced in 1923 and he did not arrive in Paris until 1927. If not, it is all the more remarkable that he was working in unconscious parallel with a continental composer, especially because, unlike Roussel, he had yet to visit the Orient.

If Foulds's use of modes still sounded Western, his use of quarter-tones was certainly an Orientalising effect undreamed of by Bantock or Scott. In fact he was at pains to emphasise that quarter-tones were 'nothing whatever to do with those "microtones" with which Eastern musicians are wont to embellish their modal melodies' (Foulds 1934: 59), but he must have been influenced by the expressiveness of the fine intervals heard in the Indian ensembles who visited Maud. The first surviving use of quarter-tones in his work is in the slow movement of the *Cello Sonata* of 1905 (Ex. 26), thus preceding the post-war quarter-tone experiments of Alois Haba. The critic W.H. Haggard was clearly aware of Foulds's potential historical importance in using quarter-tones, for he wrote to the conductor Hamilton Harty that it was only through

> Richter's performances of his early works with the Hallé orchestra[6] that this innovation in modern music [i.e. quarter-tones] spread to the Continent. Foulds has always used quarter-tones sparingly, and only where they were definitely necessary for the expression of his ideas. (BL Add. MSS 56482)

Foulds did not use quarter-tones in a compositional framework as he did in the case of the modes, but as 'fine gradations of passing notes, usually in slow-moving passages: in which surrounding, of course, they have most expressive point and can most easily be distinguished by the ear.' (MacDonald 1989: 5) Such passages were to recur many times in similar contexts throughout his work, but he never extended their use beyond that of a telling sigh.

Particularly effective examples are to be found in the slow movement of the *Quartetto Intimo*. (BL Add. MSS 56481) There is a remarkable similarity to the sighing string portamenti in Scott's *Piano Concerto No. 1* and his *Piano Quintet* (Ex. 27), which Scott merely notates as glissandi, so maybe both composers were striving for the same effect using different notation. Foulds then went one stage further in his unfinished vocal work, *Lyra Celtica* (c. 1922); inspired by Maud's brilliant vocal reproduction of the *srutis* or 23 microtonal divisions of the Indian octave, Foulds was willing to experiment. He notates these divisions as beamed lines with no noteheads, with a subtext 'microtones as indicated, not quarter-tones.' (BL Add. MSS 56476) Even in such a popular and accessible work as the *World Requiem*, he uses quarter-tones with a note for the conductor on the title-page of the vocal score, explaining his notation of ♯ and ♭ to indicate their occurrence.

All this searching outside Europe for new musical building blocks had nothing in common with the current English musical climate and was probably one of the reasons why Foulds, Maud and their two children departed to India after the apparent suppression of the *World Requiem* (see Chapter Six). A baffled Bernard Shaw (Foulds had written the extremely successful incidental music to Shaw's play *St Joan*) bellowed, via a postcard (BL Add. MSS 65482), 'What the devil are you doing in India?' It is a measure of his neglect by the Gentlemen that none of them made the same enquiry. In India, Foulds's goal was to synthesise both the musical and instrumental resources of East and West in the name of artistic and spiritual unity, via, initially, a study of Indian folk music. These ethno-musicological aims should have been of mild interest to the Gentlemen; after all, Fox Strangways was a biographer of Cecil Sharp, deeply involved in the folk song movement and a Gentleman by education and interests. Therefore the Gentlemen must have approved his book *Music in Hindostan* as a work from a fellow Team member. In addition India was the jewel in the crown of the Empire, and therefore a part of England's immediate past greatness, which was of deep concern to the Gentlemen. However, a benevolent interest in the exotic, such as that of Bantock, was very different from a serious incorporation of 'foreign' folk music into the English musical Renaissance. Such an alliance would negate the very Englishness that the Gentlemen were trying to promote. Even a writer as cosmopolitan in

his interests as Constant Lambert felt that

> Any attempt of a Western composer to approximate to oriental instrumentation by the use of exotic drums, bass flutes etc., is monstrously crude when compared to the genuine article, partly because it is impossible to rival the virtuosity of the oriental performer, and partly because the melodic instruments cannot execute the minute and subtle divisions of the scale found in non-European music. (Lambert 1934/48: 136)

Lambert clearly had brushed aside the inconvenient fact that the European string family were perfectly capable of such melodic subtlety.

Whether Foulds was even partially successful in his synthesis of East and West will never be known, for so much of his music is lost and the only records surviving from his work for All-India Radio are dealt with in Malcolm MacDonald's 1989 book on Foulds. The conductor, Walter Kaufmann, directed a performance of Foulds's *Symphony of East and West* in India, but the parts are now lost. In addition there is a memo dated 29.6.51 in the BBC Caversham Foulds File no. 2, noting that the score of the *Two symphonic Studies* had been brought back to the BBC by Kaufmann from India, but the work is now untraceable. Foulds did leave an outline of his goal in a talk on All-India Radio, Delhi in 1937 on the formation of an Indo-European Orchestra,

> [which] as I hear it in my mind's ear, will be capable of giving expression to many shades of emotion which have not hitherto been expressible in either hemisphere ... [In] my view no attempt should be made to give a massive effect to Indian orchestras but they should be kept in their own natural linear character - all their delicate, gossamer, subtle, sweet and magical qualities should be guarded carefully. (Quoted in MacDonald 1989: 123)

At the time such a goal must have seemed a pointless exercise in the face of the relentless march forward of the Renaissance, probably at its strongest in the 1930s, so that it was difficult for the conditioned English composer or concert-goer to accept the integration of other folk music than Western into a viable style. At that time, it could not have been foreseen that there would be many experiments in the combination of the two cultures' instruments and styles, as various over the last fifty years or so as Henry Cowell's use of Indian instruments in his *Madras Symphony*, Messiaen's use of Indian *talas* or rhythm

patterns, the minimalists Terry Riley's and Philip Glass's study of Indian music, and the current work of John Mayer.

Foulds's experimental attitude, so in tune with or prophetic of the many facets of twentieth century continental music, extended to an idea which he called the 'changing counterpoint of timbres', which could also have developed from his interest in Indian music. Again, like Busoni in *Towards a New Esthetic*, Foulds regarded timbre as particularly important in music and 'one of the most dynamic and magic-making constituents of the sound-art.' (Foulds 1934: 76) He notes that Western composers limit their polyphonic writing to independent melodic lines or contrapuntal blocks of harmony moving against each other. He felt that there remained

> almost entirely unexplored the possibility of a counterpoint of *changing timbres*. A chord of arresting beauty might remain static spatially, but by use of voices and/or instruments of dynamic and rainbow-changing *timbre* a complete picture might be painted upon that single chord. Sustained *timbres*; changing *timbres*; percussive *timbres*; these are our media. (Ibid: 333)

Foulds called the slow second movement of *Dynamic Triptych*, 'Dynamic Timbre', and describes its opening in his own programme note attached to the score in the British Library:

> with interchanging timbres of contrasting quality in which also passages in quarter-tones ... appear in the lower strings ... [there] ensues a further development of the timbre-variations of the first subject - a counterpoint of timbres rather than of lines of melody as formerly - and a quarter-tonal contrasted section leads to a kind of free meditation in the solo part ... in changing rainbow-hues the movement is brought to a close. (BL Add. MSS 56480)

Foulds was here reflecting not only the subtleties of tone-colour in an Indian ensemble as he had experienced it through Maud's work with Indian instrumentalists, but also his awareness of new developments in continental trends which were so assiduously disregarded by the Gentlemen. After all, *Farben* (1909), Schoenberg's experiment with the equivalent of a counterpoint of timbres, was first heard in 1912 in a Promenade concert performance of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* under Henry Wood, and Foulds was in London at the time.

In the case of Holst, Scott and Foulds, the music that was written as a result of their general interest in the Orient, whatever its quality, was intimately entwined with their Eastern spiritual interests; as has been seen, these interests were diametrically opposed to the Gentlemen's mysticism. When the different aims of these Players were compounded, intentionally or not, with a reflection in their music of the distasteful esoteric and occult beliefs that they so blatently publicised, their work must have seemed doubly unappetising to the Gentlemen, as will be seen in the next chapter.

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1 In Anthony Payne's review in *The Telegraph* 8.11.69.

2 For the full quotation see Chapter Six, p.169.

3 For an analysis of this work, see Chapter Five of Crystall 1996.

4 Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul/Penguin 1978/1991) discusses the construction of the Westernised view of the Orient in great detail.

5 The LP number of the recording of *Essays in the Modes* is ALTARUS AIR 2-9001.

6 Probably in Manchester in 1907.

CHAPTER FIVE : OUT OF BOUNDS

The striking differences between the teams' outlooks that arose from the Players' cosmopolitan interests resulted in works that the Gentlemen found antipathetic. Therefore an even greater chasm between their musical styles might be anticipated due to the divergence of their spiritual concerns. Unexpectedly, this was not always the case, for there were a number of characteristics shared by both Gentlemen and Players, when attempting to convey mysticism in music, which would presuppose a kind of musical *lingua franca* when expressing a revelatory moment.

Before turning to the music itself it is worth considering mysticism in the arts in a more general way. It can be argued that the meaning of any work of art can be more literal and specific in painting or literature than in music - the appearance of its initial colours, or the literal meaning of the words is identical for each observer or reader, though what is apprehended beyond the paint or the text is an individual and infinitely variable reaction. Looking at a painting is an immediate experience, and the meaning of poetry or prose is revealed as we read; but though the words and paint may stay as they are at the moment of finished creation, we can retrace and re-experience them to extract more meaningful reverberations on subsequent occasions from an unchanging original.

In contrast, the effect of music is more variable because of the changing nature of each performance, which can either enhance or diminish the communication between composer and public in a way not available to the writer and painter. The variety of reception will depend not only on the contribution of the composer and performers, but also on the levels of aural acuteness in the individual listener, coupled with his or her ability to concentrate on what is happening in time, during the performance. When reading a musical score, which is perhaps a closer analogy to looking at a painting or reading a poem, the score-reader can only create a performance through the individual inner ear. It is a common experience to be deeply moved by one performance of a work and yet only mildly enjoy, or even dislike, another that is apparently identical. To an even greater extent than in painting and literature,

the final apprehension must lie with the individual reception rather than with the creator's intentions; therefore the definition of the 'meaning' of a 'mystical' work of art is elusive. Even if communication of a mystical experience is intended, its effect upon each reader, viewer or listener cannot be identical.

At a basic level, the easiest entry into music for children or unsophisticated adults, apart from the dance, is via word-setting and/or programme music. For many listeners, an amalgam of literature, visual art (or simply colour) and music can arouse a predisposition to the mystical experience with arguably greater success than is possible through the individual arts. In fact, some composers and artists sympathetic to the occult have experienced the phenomenon of synaesthesia, or mixing of the senses: for example, Scriabin, Messiaen and Kandinsky had this faculty of seeing specific colours when hearing a note. A compounding of all the arts rather than just abstract non-associated music might therefore seem to be more dependable in guiding the audience by a strengthening of visual and verbal signposts, if there is to be a mystical element appertaining to the music. Yet it can be argued, as in the nineteenth century writing on aesthetics by E.T.A. Hoffman, that any synthetic (in the sense of combined rather than false or spurious) muddying of the musical waters by a text can dilute its message, and that listening to abstract music is in itself a transcendental experience.

Both Gentlemen and Players used the synthesis of words and music for their mystical as well as other works: for instance, Vaughan Williams called *Job* a 'masque for dancing' and in such a description implied his conception of an amalgam of the arts - of Blake's illustrations for the Book of Job, of the words of the Bible and of the visual spectacle of the dance itself, all implicit in the definition of a 'masque'. In *Job* or his 'morality' *The Pilgrim's Progress*, it is interesting that Vaughan Williams avoids the straightforward terms 'ballet' and 'opera' respectively, perhaps because his chosen titular terminology makes these works appear more other-worldly, and we are therefore more conditioned to receive their spiritual message.

Scott and Foulds felt that the involvement of all, instead of just one or two, of the senses echoed the feeling of unity and Oneness with an immeasurable Whole which is the basis, not

only of Theosophy, but of all mystical experience. Foulds believed, as well as Scriabin, that the way forward for music lay in such a synthesis of all the arts, but like that of the inner world of the Eastern 'holy man' it could only be reached by careful training:

> There have been rare souls in every age who have reached a state of consciousness in which the archetype has been perceived, and who have endeavoured to give it expression.... they have contacted the ideation in a state of consciousness where unity is, and have shown it forth in a synthesis of art-forms. (Foulds 1921: 349)

However, unlike Scriabin in his use of coloured light in *Prometheus* (1909-10), Foulds made no attempt to include the visual in his work, and tended to rely on an evocative title alone if he deliberately wished to induce a sense of the esoteric. It seems probable that if he had lived longer, or had been able to employ more resources, he would have experimented in this area, because he states in *Music Today* that the correspondence of sound and colour is 'one of my most cherished convictions' (Foulds 1934: 104), and quotes Blake and Wagner as well as Scriabin as having attempted this correspondence. Unfortunately, as in Scott's writing on the occult, the closer Foulds comes to expressing his deepest convictions, the more vague his usage of terminology, and he sinks in a morass of rather high-flown abstractions. Scott too believed that there was a link between sound and colour, and gives a table of colour/note or key correspondences in *The Philosophy of Modernism* (Scott 1917: 115). He understood that when Scriabin 'aimed at a synthesis of all the arts, he was attempting to demonstrate that Law of Correspondences [i.e. the unity of all things] - "as above, so below".' (Scott 1933: 143)

Many people would agree with Hoffman that the act of listening to music is, in itself, a mystical experience, whatever the intensity or otherwise of its spiritual content. To others, only some music has this effect, and for these listeners, so-called mystical music can be seen to be the work of two types of composer, the evangelical or the contemplative. It will be useful at this point to define and distinguish these terms because they will be relevant to the discussion of the musical language of mysticism in the work of both the Teams.

If the composer guides or confirms an audience's concept of the spiritual by presenting his composition as a system of belief, transmitted via the music, the resultant work could be described as that of an evangelical composer. Such a composer consciously attempts to communicate his or her own spiritual experiences - to convey a spiritual or esoteric message, or to describe a personal vision using a text, title or association with spiritual or mystical connotations (thus exemplifying the argument that a synthesis of words and music is more telling than abstract music when attempting to relay a spiritual message). In the process he fulfils the role of a reflector and consolidator of society's spiritual needs, as described in the conclusion to the Prologue. To label a composer as evangelical reflects the compositional mood and intent of the composer; but in the case of his or her work, its reception decides whether it is an evangelical composition. If the mystical effect is deliberate and is perceived as such by the audience, then it can be considered an evangelical work by an evangelical composer.

In the case of composers in evangelical mood, the inspiration tends to come from an initial experience which makes them want to spread the Word, whether it is a universal spiritual message, or a plea for a national music based on Christian agnostic values. The Gentlemen's evangelical theme was spiritually limited, despite moments in which they sensed the universal, because it was essentially English. They seemed to hope that spiritual realities of the English past, or the ambience of the great English cathedral tradition, framed in a celebration of the beauty of English landscape and folk song, would consciously pre-dispose the listener to a shared religious/spiritual experience. These elements had acted as triggers for their own mystical experiences which were linked to personal awareness of such glories; like born-again Christians, they wanted to communicate their vision, and preferably through a mystical text. This role still exists today, for the composer James MacMillan was reported as saying to composers at the Incorporated Society of Musicians' 1995 Conference:

> Composers should not be afraid to think in terms of spiritual values, and even of God: they had a potentially sacerdotal role in society, releasing the religious impulses within their audiences, and providing a means of transforming mankind for good. (JISM June 1995: 4)

When approaching the more obvious Christianity/nature-mysticism of the Gentlemen, their evangelical texts or titles tell all:

> The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reap'd nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The green trees, when I saw the first, transported and ravished me, their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstacy, they were such strange and wonderful things.
> O what venerable creatures did the agéd seem! Immortal Cherubims! And young men glittering and sparkling Angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty!
> I knew not that they were born or should die; but all things abided eternally. I knew not that there were sins or complaints or laws. I dream'd not of poverties, contentions or vices. All tears and quarrels were hidden from mine eyes. I saw all in the peace of Eden.
> Everything was at rest, free and immortal.
> (from the CD notes, Hyperion CDA66876 - 'a free adaptation of the opening stanzas of *Third Century of Meditations*' by Thomas Traherne (1637-1674))

Finzi set these words in *Dies Natalis* (1939), and they epitomise the type of mysticism to which the Gentlemen related. The words are beautiful - and English (the word 'orient' in the seventeenth century would have meant dawn-like and youthful rather than the later nineteenth century meaning of pertaining to the exotic East which has already been discussed); the ecstatic and metaphysical sentiments form part of the Christian ethic, but are also enmeshed with nature-mysticism. In order to convey their personal and and shared mystical experience through music, the Gentlemen adopted the didactic superiority of the priest decked in the cassock and surplice of composer, and sermonised to a lay congregation on the Word that English music contained great mystical truths. Their attitude was that of the do-gooder Empire-builder, determined to instil Western values into the natives (but in this case the natives were their own musically unaware countrymen). The Gentlemanly stance was an active one, for they believed that the concert audience needed them as interpreters or mediators: they expounded on their moment of access to the numinous so that the audience experienced it at one remove, rather than directly. Yet such was their conviction that they created an openness to the mystical revelation that had the effect of a primary rather than a secondary experience, similar to that already described on the young

Howells and Gurney on first hearing the *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis.*

There was also an element of evangelism in the work of three of the Players. Holst, for instance, acted as an evangelical mediator by intentionally presenting a primary personal experience: he seemed to reach the majority of audiences in his dissonant word-painting in *The Hymn of Jesus* on the word 'pierce' (Ex. 28), or the melting into consonance in the 'To you who gaze a lamp am I' (Ex. 29). As Henry Raynor noted, when referring to Ex. 29: 'the unforgettable, unique moments in Holst's music are always painful ... the momentary flash of light hurts the eyes ... these are moments of an ecstacy that is literally terrible in its vision of what is not human'. (Raynor 1954: 72) This sort of exquisite bite is very far from the tranquil cadential resolution of the Picardy thirds so often used by Vaughan Williams for his moments of intensity and visions of eternity; yet both types of personal visionary moment are intended for sharing with the listener. Even Gerald Abraham, whose background and interests were cosmopolitan rather than Gentlemanly, certainly experienced them as such:

> the two choirs are dwelling in a longish crescendo on two full chords a semitone apart. One has the sensation - which I take to be what is known as a 'mystical experience' - of momentarily piercing though this muddy vesture of decay to the glimpse of some eternal truth. (Bacharach 1946: 55)[1]

The Hymn of Jesus is important for, as discussed in Chapter Two, it seems to fall within the parameters of the type of mysticism which the Gentlemen felt was acceptable, because its musical forces and choral resonances fitted with the Three Choirs Festival tradition. On the surface its plainsong framework with its rhythmic freedom, its antiphonal effects, the world 'Jesus' in the title were all trappings of the Renaissance of the national musical genius as they saw it: they felt comfortable with the way in which the *Hymn*'s contrapuntal texture and the use of parallel fourths and fifths reflected their shared admiration of Tudor music. At the time Howells had called the work an example of 'harmonic mysticism' (quoted in Palmer 1992: 156). He added that 'Holst was bent on reconciling far-separated centuries', thus immediately press-ganging Holst's moment of personal ecstacy into the Gentlemanly service of reviving early English music. Such an aim was surely only an incidental one to the work as a whole, and inappropriate to the central episode of the 'heavenly dance' whose orgiastic

nature is far removed from the Gentlemen's pastoral and Tudor orientations. The idea of the dance is certainly pre-Christian and essentially Hindu, for as Boyer says in his thesis on the work:

> In ancient Indian belief ... dancing was of divine origin and was held to be akin to Yoga ... thus in the *Rig Veda* ... a creation hymn exists in which the gods, dancing apparently in a ring, set up a rhythmic flux in the primeval waters ... Occurring more frequently in occult religions than in Christianity, the stimulation of music and the vigorous dance leads to ecstacy, to a sense of union with the divine. (Boyer 1968: 48)

So the Gentlemen only recognised the elements in Holst's mysticism that suited them. They ignored the fact that before *The Hymn of Jesus*, Holst's evangelism was more concerned with publicising the particular message of the Sanskrit texts and the beauty of Hindu thought than the Renaissance message.

There was also an evangelical side to Scott and Foulds because they felt themselves to be aware of a Higher Wisdom of cosmic proportions, and 'chosen' conveyors of its message, though their evangelism was more manifest in their literary than their musical works. The Word that they preached was poles apart from that of the Renaissance. They did use titles with definite occult or esoteric connotations occasionally; for instance, Foulds intended that each of his *Three Mantras*, by their very title as well as their musical content, would create the correct mood for the ensuing act of the lost opera, *Avatara*, thus implying that the opera was designed as a mystical or occult experience. Foulds explains the occult nature of these three movements thus:

> The First - Mantra of Activity - appertains to the 'higher' third plane (Manas): the Second - Mantra of Bliss - to the fourth plane (Buddhi): the third - Mantra of Will - to the fifth plane (Atma). (Foulds 1934: 177)

As MacDonald says:

> there is no doubt that Foulds viewed himself as composing music that would actually have 'mantric' effects, similar (but presumably enormously magnified) to the Word of Power employed by a Buddhic sage in ritual or meditation. (MacDonald 1989: 46)

A composer whose expression of mysticism is subconscious, and whose intent is not to preach or convert, can be conveniently dubbed a contemplative composer whose mysticism may be obvious only to those who are receptive to it: only to these listeners are his compositions contemplative works. In contrast to the evangelists, contemplative composers hug equally strong experiences to themselves, and are deeply governed by them, allowing them to permeate their musical personality without any apparent intention of inducing a mystical experience in the listener or indoctrinating them with set beliefs. The contemplative composer's work may have no text, no explanatory title nor any overt attempt to convey a mystical or esoteric message; yet an equally intense mystical experience to that intended by an evangelist composer can be triggered by some attribute of this subconscious and instinctive musical language. This experience is a unique combination of the chemistry of the composer's own personality and self-expression, combined with the receptivity and temperament of the listener.

For instance, the effect of the Epilogue of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 6* is experienced by many as mystical; to others, as David Cox says, it would merely seem an exploration of a 'kind of ghostly fugue. [Yet] For some this movement may suggest a dead continent or an impotent searching, or the final mystery of death.' (Simpson 1967: 125)[2] In his programme notes to the symphony, quoted by Cox, Vaughan Williams denied that there was any outside association at all, saying, 'the music drifts about contrapuntally with occasional whiffs of themes and with one or two short episodes on the horns'. (Ibid.) Untypically, Vaughan Williams was apparently making no conscious attempt to communicate a mystical experience; therefore he can be seen, in this instance, as a contemplative rather than evangelist composer, who had so absorbed the musical language of his particular brand of evangelical mysticism that it became part of him and was used subconsciously in a contemplative manner. (It is always possible that he was hiding the sophistication and depth of his spiritual convictions behind a smoke-screen of elaborate simplicity.)

In contrast to overtly evangelistic works, we are partially dependent on what we know about the contemplative composer if we aspire to a full awareness of the music's mystical implications in a contemplative work. Those of the audience who know the contemplative's affiliations and beliefs are more likely to perceive the occult message from the sub-text which may well lie in the musical style. Thus knowledge of the esoteric texts of the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* (1908-12) coupled with the music they inspire can aid in understanding the remoteness and supposed abstraction of Holst's later works, such as the slow movement of the *Choral Symphony* (1923-4), the contrast of eternity and humanity in the Prelude and Scherzo in *Hammersmith* (1930) or the non-human detachment of *Egdon Heath*. When in contemplative mood, Warlock too seemed to adopt a recognizably common style for the more esoteric songs and choral pieces, which need a sensitivity in the listener to the occult overtones of the text, as in *The Bayley Beireth the Bell Away* and the *Corpus Christi* carol; certainly a knowledge that Yeats's poems have an occult sub-text which echoed Warlock's interests adds a mystical dimension to their setting in *The Curlew*.

We know, for instance, that Foulds considered quarter-tones to have an occult significance. Because he uses them at intense moments during the slow movement of the *Quartetto Intimo*, such knowledge of his beliefs can certainly convey an other-worldliness akin to a mystical experience to the initiated listener; to the uninitiated these sounds would be perceived as merely fine string quartet writing with some novel sound-effects, but no overtly mystical connotations. Similarly, it helps the listener to perceive the occult message of Foulds's music if forearmed with.the knowledge that Foulds believed that each mode, like an Indian raga, had its own unique quality and was 'capable of expressing certain states of consciousness, certain ranges of vibration, which are incommunicable by any other means at present known to us'. (Foulds 1934: 48)

However public their verbal declaration of a belief in the occult in general, Scott and Foulds did not share their private occult experiences with the readers of their books and articles; neither did Holst, and Warlock only hints at the nature of his experiments in the Irish Year. Maybe they all felt that if they had been more specifically revelatory they would be betraying

the secrecy of whatever brand of esoteric Wisdom they believed in, thus minimising its power. Such knowledge of a composer's beliefs enrols the audience, along with the composer, as members of an esoteric charmed circle, from which the Gentlemen may well have felt excluded. They were not accustomed to being outsiders, having created their own *ex*oteric circle; no doubt a sense of exclusion from another world than their own contributed towards their distrust of the Players. At least they were not threatened by a Players' *ashram* headed by Foulds and Maud MacCarthy in the manner of Boughton's Glastonbury set-up!

The Players' passivity meant that they did not regard themselves as the instigator, but merely the medium of the mystical message or, like Scriabin, the Sacred Vessel of occult inspiration rather than its source: this is the essence of the attitude of the contemplative composer. As has been seen when discussing the Players' attitude to inspiration, Warlock needed magic to induce compositional flow, and undoubtedly Holst passively accepted his Dharma to be his path in life as a composer. Scott needed a communication from Master K.H., or a lucky catch in his 'fishing' of the cosmic lake of ideas, before he could compose, and Foulds often relied on clairaudient awareness. In contrast, the Gentlemen's evangelism led to their view of themselves as active creators of a mystical experience for their audience.

It must be stressed that Gentlemen and Players could be both evangelical and contemplative, depending on their mood at the time of composition, but on the whole the Gentlemen were primarily evangelical with occasional sorties into the contemplative. In the end, the Players can be seen as more contemplative than evangelical, because of their perceived role as a passive link through which the mystical experience was directed. In discussing the similarities and differences in the Teams' expression of mysticism in music, it will be seen that evangelism and the contemplative seem to manifest different musical languages for the expression of mysticism.

It is not known whether the Gentlemen consciously tried to express mysticism in abstract music without a suitable text or title, or regarded it as problematical, but there seems to have been a consensus of contemporary opinion on what constituted such an expression. Sydney

Grew, writing in the year of Holst's death, did not think the problem insoluble, as long as it was realised that 'Mystical music, like all other mystical art, is born of emotion which has passed through the fires of passion'. (Grew 1934: 155) If Grew's attitude was typical of his contemporaries, it implies that the 1930s' concept of the attributes of mystical music were that it evinced remoteness, cosmic detachment and distance from the turbulence of humanity (like *Neptune* which Holst, helpful as always, subtitled 'The Mystic') rather than the exultation and cosmic excitement of the 'heavenly dance' section in *The Hymn of Jesus*. An idea of what Holst's contemporaries regarded as the mystical experience can also be deduced from the remarks of as different a musical contemporary as Arthur Bliss when listening to *The Cloud Messenger:*

> I experienced a sensation akin to that which overwhelms one in mountains or in high plateau country ... not a sense of grandeur or size as of extreme distance from the centre of things, as though the air one breathed were noticeably rarified. (Palmer n.d.)[3]

The interesting word in this quotation is 'rarified' which seems typical of the ideas of Holst's contemporaries of what constituted the truly mystical, and which was implicit in Grew's definition of mysticism.

Because of the difficulty of expressing mysticism, attempts to do so would seem to need constant refinement and precision whether in music or in any other art. This was always Holst's aim in both his music and his Sanskrit paraphrases: to Grew he seemed to exemplify a 'straining after simplicity.' (Grew 1914: 437) Imogen Holst felt that such an aim indicated not only an absence of human warmth, but also a presence of other planes of existence than the purely human in his work, saying: 'There can be no doubt about it that the remote distance was where he felt most at home'. (Holst I. 1968: 145) (In the occasional references to his only child in Holst's correspondence, it is clear that he was not really interested in her, so that she may not have experienced the warmth that characterised his Gentlemanly friendships.) It is this detachment that separates Holst from the Renaissance; nor was it a quality that was often present in the music of the other Players. However it was the characteristic that his contemporaries identified as most 'mystical' in his music.

Holst first evolved his musical vocabulary for expressing an occult Other in setting the ancient Sanskrit texts whose spiritual message saturated him: the result was *Savitri* (1908-9), the four groups of choral settings of the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* and *The Cloud Messenger* (1910-12). As his musical language grew out of the refining process towards simplicity it became part of him: he had no desire to be a mystic evangelist, even though he often appeared as such - he just wrote in the way that had become natural to him. The personal ecstacy that had been sensed by many listeners and choir members in *The Hymn of Jesus* disappeared. It had seemed an enormously important work at the time; a young RCM student recalled singing in its first performance, and feeling that the work was a 'revelation ... like a trumpet call in the renaissance of English creative music'. (Short 1990: 186) In contrast, in the later works, Holst does not invite his audience to share the thin air of his spiritual climate: he seems to write for himself alone. None of the finest mystical expressions in twentieth century Gentlemanly music, such as *Job*, Howell's *Missa Sabriniensis* or Finzi's *Dies Natalis*, lack ecstacy; *The Hymn of Jesus* was the last of Holst's major works to convey and inspire ecstacy deliberately, and accordingly it was the last Holst work that found general favour in the eyes of the Gentlemen.

Similarly, though the texture of works like Foulds's *Mantra of Bliss* is complex, it is still enormously refined. He echoed Holst's 'straining after simplicity' (noted by Grew) when he used the word 'Synthetic', as in the *World Requiem*'s 'Synthetic Melody' (Ex. 30), meaning a paring down to essentials; it has an esoteric meaning, which he explained in *Music Today* as a counter to one of Sorabji's arguments:

> His [Sorabji's] diatribe against simplicity betrays the Oriental's natural tendency towards extraordinary elaboration of detail. The true simplicity of which I speak here as synthetic-simplicity more nearly approaches the archetypal conception - which is one-ness. This is far indeed from the simplicity of inanity ... It is easy, unfortunately, for the unpenetrating mind to mistake for inanity the simplicity which is only the result of immense refinement, rejection and condensation. (Foulds 1934: 341)

The 'Synthetic Melody' in question has the same type of immediate appeal as that of the big tune in 'Jupiter' from *The Planets* - an immediacy that doubtless was contributory to the

popularity of both works with the general public, if not the critics. But the point that Foulds makes here is that extreme distillation of musical language is an expression of the Unity that pervades Hindu and theosophical thought, and can be expressed as a synthesis of the arts. Both he and Holst strove after refinement in their different ways with the same esoteric goal - the musical expression, conscious or sub-conscious, of such a Unity. Holst had a spareness and detachment which possibly went beyond Foulds's occasional portents of the stasis of minimalism in his 'clairaudient' works (a style which the Gentlemen would have found incomprehensibly aimless in its constant repetitive detail), but their aim was identical. Thus, again, an inside knowledge of the Players' aims and ideas is necessary before the listener can perceive the esoteric nature of much of their work as contemplative composers.

* * *

Because of the presence of evangelical and contemplative elements in the musical work of both Teams, however different the proportions in which they are found, there were some characteristics that were surprisingly similar when consciously expressing mysticism in music. The Gentlemen would all have agreed with the young Philip Heseltine when he said that the 'function of music is the development and use of a language of symbols which shall be the outward and audible signification of inward and spiritual realities'.(Warlock 1919: 117) Those realities were to be found by the Gentlemen in the spiritual resonances of the beauty of the English landscape, or the atmosphere of a great cathedral, and because of the uniformity of their aims, they tended to dip into a common pool in expressing their mystical experiences, frequently using deliberate (and therefore evangelical) musical clues. The Players only occasionally tried to express in an evangelical manner the belief in the oneness of the universe and the reality of other planes of existence which was their spiritual credo, but when they did so, there was a surprising similarity between their musical means and those of the Gentlemen.

Given that mysticism was best expressed in the imagination of the Teams' contemporaries as detachment and spaciousness, there were many clues that functioned as audience reception

aids. The wordless female chorus or solo soprano were common resorts for conveying an ethereal other-worldliness - Christopher Palmer notes the 'power of the wordless human voice to sound paradoxically *un*-human in the musical representation of un-human nature'. (Palmer 1976: 149) The most famous example is the final section of Holst's *Neptune*, but others occur in Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antarctica*, Delius's *Song of the High Hills*, Foulds's *Mantra of Bliss,* or Scott's solo vocal cadenzas in his nature poem *Rima's Call to the Birds* (Ex. 31).[4] It would be difficult to imagine more differing pieces, yet at these moments there is clearly a desire to characterise the mystical quality of the immensity of Nature, and all these composers, whether Gentlemen, Reserves or Players, resorted to the same means.

Both Teams used consecutive, open or superimposed fourths and fifths which often resulted in an almost organum-like effect, with all its spiritual associations; according to the Spectator composer Holbrooke, 'the consecutive fifths of many of these Amens [in Holst's *The Hymn of Jesus*] produce a very impressive mystical effect.' (Holbrooke 192: 168) Therefore it can be inferred that such sequences were experienced by Holst's contemporaries as an evangelical expression of mysticism. Yet Scott, who had no desire to evoke the past as exemplified by organum, certainly used strings of fifths to convey the sorcery of *Fata Morgana* in his orchestral *Suite Fantastique*. Chords built on the fourth too were ubiquitous. Whether Scott believed that a chord built on superimposed chromatically altered fourths (like Scriabin's 'mystic chord' of C F# Bb E A and D) had any occult significance is not known, because he denies such significance when talking about his own harmonic language. However, both these composers had a deeply personal theosophical vision and their harmonic language certainly employed such chords, and Scott is known to have admired Scriabin. Their contemporary Eaglefield Hull noticed their similarity, and linked the mystical with the musical: 'the only composer who approaches anywhere near him [Scott] in this [harmonic] vein is Alexander Scriabin. It seems to me there is here achieved in music an adumbration of that phenomenon which Carpenter calls Cosmic Consciousness.' (Hull 1919: 93)[5]

In Holst's case piled up fourths and fifths became almost a cliché, as in the *Hymn to the Dawn* (Ex. 32) from the *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, passages in the slow movement of the *Choral Symphony* (Ex. 33) or the song, *Betelgeuse* (Ex. 34). In the *Ode to Death*, the falling perfect fifths against a pedal bass are typical of Holst's more remote moments. Vaughan Williams often used fourths, as in the cumulative revelation of Heaven in the first scene of *Job* (Ex. 35). In all these cases, whatever the context, the listener's experience can be that of a curtain rising to reveal a vision. Foulds too uses scaffolds of fourths and fifths in his characteristic fanfares at the beginning of his early orchestral piece *Mirage* (BL Add. MSS 56473), where semi-esoteric connotations are made explicit in sectional titles such as 'Immutable Nature', 'Man's ever-ambition', 'Man's ever-unattainment', 'Mirage', 'Man humbled' and 'Man's self-triumph', and, as already mentioned, in the outer movements of the overtly esoteric *Three Mantras*.

Plainsong, as part of the spiritual associations of the past, had obvious mystical connotations for both Holst and Warlock as well as for the Gentlemen. Vaughan Williams constantly resorted to a plainsong-like freedom in his more rhapsodic nature-mysticism moments, as well as in slighter, but no less effective works such as the song, *The New Ghost* (Ex. 36). Warlock's *The Frostbound Wood* (Ex. 37) is basically a Gentlemanly song in its pseudo-mediaevalism, however negative the message of its text, and he was rhythmically influenced by plainsong in *The Curlew* despite the chromaticism of the vocal line. (Ex. 38) But there is a difference in effect in the Players' use of such rhythmic freedom. Whereas Vaughan Williams's solo string intertwinings seem serene and pastorally ecstatic, those of Warlock in *The Curlew* and Holst in the reprise of the 'Prelude' section of *Hammersmith* (Ex. 39) are remote and angular in comparison. As for Scott, though he did not use the idiom, he felt that plainsong 'tended to calm the emotions, and so gave a measure of control over the emotional body'. (Scott 1933: 193)

Another characteristic common to the Teams was the use of false relations. Scott felt that false relations had occult power: he says in *Music: its secret influence thoughout the ages* that Scriabin knew this in *Prometheus* where he had 'already discovered that harmonic

system which is pre-eminently Devic in character [for an explanation of Deva-music see p. 138] and in this work he put it to the fullest use. The effect is one of almost continuous *false relation*'. (Scott 1933: 142) Fortunately the Gentlemen seemed unaware of such unsalubrious connotations, and therefore were not discouraged from using them: Vaughan Williams often employed them either sequentially or simultaneously, presumably as a harking-back to the horizontal movement of parts in Tudor church music where they often occur at intense moments as in Byrd's *Mass in Five Parts* (Exs. 40 and 41). In the quote from *Job* (see Ex. 35) one wonders if Vaughan Williams, too, sensed a specific esoteric significance pertaining to false relations - the musical effect of an almost vertiginous revelation was certainly felt by Gerald Abraham (see p. 120) at the famous moment of the simultaneous A natural/A# at the words 'To you who gaze a lamp am I' in *The Hymn of Jesus* (see Ex. 29). The Gentlemen must have been aware of the emotional effects of such false relations as a result of their own study of, and participation in, the singing of the works of Byrd, Weelkes or Wilbye in their work with amateur choral societies. The re-creation of such telling effects could help to promote English musical tradition: that they provided a spiritual experience for their singers as well as listeners was vital to the Gentlemen's role as evangelical mediators.

Both the Gentlemen and the Players often used juxtaposition of unrelated and unresolved triads - this was after all a common trait in the music of both Debussy and Satie when creating a mystical effect and could be considered a characteristic of the continental musical vocabulary of the time. There are numerous examples in Scott's occult suite *Egypt*, to such an extent that the *Funeral March of the Great Raamses* [sic] (Ex. 42) sounds like patent borrowing from Debussy's *La Cathédrale Engloutie*. The Holst scholar A.E.F. Dickinson went further, saying that such a sequence 'intensifies the concentration on primary elements [he has been talking of primary triads] for a disturbing sense of the numinous.' (Dickinson 1974: 2) The effect is certainly removed and rapt as in the 'Amens' of *The Hymn of Jesus* (ex. 43). Foulds used such progressions throughout the *World Requiem* as in the tranquil beginning of the 'Benedictio' section (Ex. 44): in his review of the work on 1.12.23, the critic of *The Times* said that 'the most favoured progression is this [quoted in music MSS as

C major, D major and E major root position triads] and he has no compunction in filling a page with it. No doubt it had taken on some mystical significance in the composer's mind which hallowed it.' Clearly such progressions were seen as an evangelical attempt at a mystical effect by the contemporary audience. The Gentlemen apparently sensed this, for streams of such progressions are part of the texture of much of Vaughan Williams's and Howells's church music (in the latter's Requiem and Sanctus sections of the *Hymnus Paradisi* for instance).

As has been seen, it is difficult to state categorically that this or that effect in music has a definite mystical message for the listener. Nevertheless the characteristics described so far as being common to both the Gentlemen's and Players' evangelical music, despite their opposing spiritual dispositions, have enough similarity in their use and context to be worth considering as a tentative musical vocabulary of evangelical mysticism. What then were the differing characteristics of the contemplative composer which permeate much of the remaining non-evangelical music of the Players? Was there a universal vocabulary for contemplative mysticism?

In many cases the Players shared a vocabulary that was a sophisticated version of age-old musical devices used in primitive religious ceremonies; these can be found constantly in Holst's work and recur to a varying extent in the music of Foulds, Scott, and even Warlock; it is therefore worth pinpointing them in a little more detail, and exploring the possible reasons for their use. The Hindu idea of creation was that all things emerged from the vibrations of one primal sound; Holst must have encountered this idea in his Sanskrit studies, but as mentioned above, there is no firm evidence that he ever heard any Indian music, unless Maud MacCarthy introduced him to it by her own playing of authentic Indian instruments and by her singing. Unfortunately there is no record of the content of their meeting. Certainly the growth of one swelling sound may perhaps lie behind the almost inaudible beginnings of which Holst was fond, as in the low organ notes preceding the 'Vexilla Regis' section of *The Hymn of Jesus,* or later in the mysterious opening to the main section of the *Choral Fantasia*, and the double bass openings to both the Prelude of *Hammersmith* and

Egdon Heath (see Ex. 24). If he had heard any Indian ragas (or if Maud had described the effect), such quiet emergence from nothing could have been derived from the sound of the initial or *alap* section, but is more likely to have been influenced by the sense of cosmic sound - perhaps his version of the Music of the Spheres. The humming used by many meditative disciplines arose from the need to find one's own note or 'nature-pitch' as Foulds knew so well: he even includes the vowels of the primal sound as it is used in so many Yoga techniques today in his 'Hymn of the Redeemer' movement in the *World Requiem,* sung by the chorus to 'Aum', as a kind of 'tuning in' to the universe, much as Stockhausen was to do later in *Stimmung.*

The natural development of the single permeating sound, as in the tambura drone of North Indian music, could also be the basis of the numerous pedal points in the work of Scott as well as Holst and Foulds, and perhaps this is why Holst used so many long held notes under the vocal lines in *Savitri,* or a pedal point in the first section of the *Ode to Death,* or the 80-bar pedal C in *The Cloud Messenger.* A feeling of timelessness can be enhanced by the constant presence of pedal points or drones. It could be argued that from the time of Bach, pedal points accompany moments of spiritual intensity, but always lead to a moment of resolution and climax. Those of the Players tended to continue into eternity with none of the feeling of tension as encountered in Bach, and they employed them to a much greater extent than the Gentlemen. Even in Reserve John Ireland's extraordinary piano piece *Le Catioroc,* pedal points seem to capture the quiet menace of an ancient place where witchcraft was practised (Ex. 45), and have no resolution. There is an unexpected similarity in texture here to Scott's Oriental style of drone plus arabesque in his *Snake-Charmer* (see Ex. 15), *The Twilight of the Year* (see Ex. 16) and *Lotus Land* (see Ex. 18), and his *Egypt* suite constantly uses such immovable bass lines (Ex. 46). Again, at the vital moment of the Synthetic Melody (see Ex. 31) in the *World Requiem,* Foulds underlines it with a pedal D. His clairaudiently-heard suite *Hellas,* a vision of Ancient Greece originally for piano but also successfully orchestrated, is permeated by pedal points which give it an extraordinary weight and dignity coupled with the extreme simplicity of the harmony. (An extreme modern example is found in Tavener's *The Apocalypse* first performed in the 1995 Proms, which held

the audience pinioned for three hours on one pedal note.)

Unison chant, too, is a universal mystical language in religious ceremony. Holst frequently employed hushed unison chanting in the *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, in *To an Unknown God, To Varuna* and *To Vena*: in *The Hymn of Jesus* monotone is further distilled until it becomes spoken chanting. Foulds's *World Requiem* is full of such moments as in the 'Elysium' section (Ex. 47), or the second 'Requiem' section (Ex. 48). A composer as different from Holst as Warlock occasionally set mystical or esoteric words to a monotone chant as in Belloc's *The Night* (Ex. 49). Scott too uses lines of unison chanting against a pedal bass that recalls Holst, but his imagination lagged behind that of Holst - the comparison of the triteness of Scott's harmonic side-slip before his setting of the word 'pierce' in the *Mystic Ode* (Ex. 50) with that of Holst in *The Hymn of Jesus* (see Ex. 28) underlines the difference in breadth of vision between the two composers.

From such devices it is a natural step to the use of ostinati which induce stasis and lack of tension when gentle, or a kind of transcendent hysteria when strong. One has only to think of Ravel's use of monotonous repetition in *Bolero* as an example of the latter. There is a feeling of timelessness in ostinati because of the listener's sense of eavesdropping on sounds that existed before, and will continue after the piece in which they occur has finished. Warlock used rocking ostinati for an extraordinary effect of primitive keening and a kind of universal mourning beyond the petty grief of humanity in the accompaniments of the carols *Balulalow* (Ex. 51) and *Adam Lay Y-Bounden* (Ex. 52), or in his overtly esoteric texts, such as the *Three Dirges of Webster* and the *Corpus Christi* carol (Ex. 53); here the choral background oscillates gently throughout against the chanting lament of the solo voice over the body of the sick Christ-like figure of the knight on his bier. Foulds too used ostinati in many of the movements of the *World Requiem*, notably in the 'Lux Veritatis', where the bass ostinato is almost identical to that of *Gandharva Music* (Ex. 54) and continues into the 'Requiem' movement that closes the First Part (see Ex. 48), where it is combined with chant.

Holst used more ostinati than any other Player - they proliferate in the *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, usually as descending scales or repeated chords. The critics of the time, such as Gerald Abraham, felt that, carried to extremes as Holst often did, the persistence of 'the same technique of relentless pattern-drawing produces effects of blinding mystical revelation' (Bacharach 1946: 55), an effect experienced by many listeners when listening to the minimalist works of Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Eventually Holst's use of ostinato developed into a kind of aleatory technique in the persistence of accompaniments irrespective of what else was happening until the end of a section was reached: a typical example is from *The Hymn of Jesus* (Ex. 55), when it launches into the inexorable momentum that was so characteristic of Holst at such moments. It was a device that permeated his music throughout his life, and he used it when the text or idea seemed associated with cosmic detachment, glad acceptance of death and consequent opening of new vistas, as in the 1914 setting of Whitman's *Dirge for Two Veterans* where the 'sad procession' is formed from an ostinato of endlessly reiterated fourths, or in the bass pizzicato ostinato at the 5/4 section in the 1919 *Ode to Death*.

A particularly interesting example of ostinato in Holst is the three-bar ground bass of the 'Prelude' section in *Hammersmith* (see Ex. 2). According to Holst's programme note, this represented the unhurried ceaseless flow of the river; here the language is just as potent, although the message is not overtly esoteric. It is very easy to experience Holst as a contemplative composer in this work; the informed listener, both then and now, can sense an esoteric and mystical meaning far beyond the purely programmatic title. The 'Prelude' can be experienced as the detachment of the inevitable and undeviating momentum of the macrocosm; this could be inferred from the fact that the ground bass is unalterable, while the bitonal bassoon theme only floats on top of it, both elements proceeding heedless of the other on their ordained way. In contrast, Cockney humanity, as in the subsequent 'Scherzo', has thematic development, recognisable melody and normal tonality, perhaps representing the microcosm, or humanity, that can be directed, developed and manipulated. At times the prevalence of ostinati in Holst can become irritating, but it is rare that they have no musical point at all, and they seem to be one of the most obvious of his musical symbols of eternity.

Holst's ostinati are not limited to the bass but often occur as reiterated pairs of chords, as in the 'Vexilla Regis' section in *The Hymn of Jesus*, where the 'Venus'-like rocking continues independently on its way. Such effects were used constantly in the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* (*To Varuna* for instance), in *The Cloud Messenger* as well as in repetitive accompaniment figures as in *Hymn to the Dawn*, *Hymn to the Water*s and *Hymn to Vena.* As a contrast to the stasis induced by the vocabulary described above, Holst's ostinati occasionally erupt into music of an energy so primitive that it is cosmic in effect, as in *Mars* in *The Planets* or the dances in *The Cloud Messenger* or *The Hymn of Jesus*. The mystical and ritual power of the dance has long been known as an aid to bypassing normal states of consciousness. Holst first explored the idea of a 'heavenly dance' in the choral piece *This have I done for my true love*, but in *The Hymn of Jesus* (see Ex. 12) the slightly tawdry atmosphere of the temple dances of *The Cloud Messenger* (see Ex. 11) are transmuted into an extraordinary spiritual exaltation which seems utterly inevitable in Holst's favourite relentless 5/4. It is a world apart from Vaughan Williams's angelic dancers in *Job* (Ex. 56) as they expel Satan from heaven, but it expresses the same holy fire. The only other Player to share this characteristic is Foulds: a typical example is the Third *Mantra* entitled 'Of Will', whose wild 7/4 and other multiple time-signatures seem to carry on from the point where Holst stopped.

Many of the devices used by Holst in all the Sanskrit works are to be found *The Cloud Messenger*. There is an abundance of rhythmically free unison chanting, of descending and inexorable bass-lines, often appearing as ostinati or recurrent figures, such as rocking motifs, long bass pedals, and sequences of empty-sounding open fourths and fifths. The constant repetition of such devices could aid meditation and susceptibility to the mystical experience, a result of which Holst may or may not have been conscious, but the effect on the listener, as noted by Arthur Bliss (see p. 125), is of immense distance and hypnotic focusing on a mood as a whole, rather than on individual detail. Though he turned away from Sanskrit sources, Holst continued to use the musical language he had evolved in these works in the remoter movements of *The Planets* and *The Hymn of Jesus*. The contemplative usage of this language in later works, when not evangelically employed to convey mysticism to his audience, was the main reason for his eventual alienation from the Gentlemen.

Scott firmly denied any evangelical role in trying to use a precise musical language with the conscious aim of conveying his occult beliefs. He said:

> I can *not* plead guilty to having *deliberately* attempted to express through the medium of music any occult or mystical facts ... Had I been asked to express certain emotions or produce certain occult effects, I should not have known how to do so. Nor do I know what sort of occult effects the works I have already composed would produce if given a hearing. (Scott 1969: 195)

Scott was referring here to the numerous large-scale choral works produced on his resumption of composition after the Second World War, in which he set occult texts such as the *Mystic Ode* and the *Hymn of Unity*, and which were not performed. It is understandable that he refuted any evangelical attempt to convey his message, despite his public assumption of the occult role of messenger to the Masters as implied in *Music: its secret influence throughout the ages*, because he must have known that, given his contemporary musical climate, declaration of such an attempt could preclude possible performances. A composer as unsympathetic to Scott as Sorabji nevertheless paid an unexpected (if back-handed) tribute to his undoubted sincerity when in 1917, while corroborating Scott's inadequacy to the task of conveying the esoteric in music, he remarks, 'It is odd that Cyril Scott, profound and sincere occultist as he truly is, has no power of musical utterance in that respect'. (BL Add. MSS 57964)

Yet, in complete refutation of his statement above, Scott did use devices to produce 'certain occult effects' which were similar to the contemplative language of other Players. He probably felt that his occult message was implicit in the fact that he wrote music at all, and that the whole process of musical creation was an occult one, and beyond mere 'occult effects'. Many of the characteristics described above are to be found in his music, especially when there is an overtly occult text, and therefore an evangelical intention. For instance, he tried to express the inexpressible in the choral work with orchestra entitled *Summerland* (Devachan) which was published in 1939. The text is Scott's own, and describes the Indian Lotus Land where souls await the moment of their next reincarnation. All the meditation-inducing characteristics - pedal basses, ostinati, vocal portamenti, wordless

chorus, and streams of parallel fourths, fifths, sevenths and ninths, plus pentatonic melodies - drench the music as usual. But without a performance and relying on the vocal score only, it is difficult to grasp the effect of such deliberate stasis and repetitiveness: such effects foretold, as in Foulds's clairaudient music, the characteristics of the minimalist composers of a later generation who were influenced to a lesser or greater extent by the East, and the effect of whose works would be equally difficult to perceive from the score alone.

One can only presume, when considering a set of pieces like Scott's piano suite *Egypt* (which has an evangelical occult message in that it deliberately sets out to recall his supposed Egyptian past lives) that he uses a musical language intended to convey a sense of mystery and the esoteric. Written in 1913, its five movements include *In the Temple of Memphis* (see Ex. 46), whose hypnotic pedal bass of repeated chords was to become typical of Scott in his more picturesque moments. Indeed, when he set out to convey the 'mystery of the East', he often lapsed into cliché and self-quotation, for this pedal bass is almost identical to the 1912 piece *The Twilight of the Year* (see Ex. 16). The stillness and repeatedly throbbing bass, like steady breathing, which could so well have arisen from Scott's newly acquired Yoga breathing disciplines, are reflected here in the music; this is a world away from the energy and drive of a few years before as exemplified in the *Piano Sonata No. 1* (revised edition 1909), before he was fully caught up in occultism. There are echoes of Debussy in the chains of parallel minor thirds in many of the pieces, and both *By the Waters of the Nile* and the final *Song of the Spirits of the Nile* contain streams of unrelated dominant sevenths - a characteristic that BBC mandarin Leonard Isaacs was to find as nauseating many years later as 'eating a tin of golden syrup'.[6]

As mentioned earlier, Scott believed that rhythm should be absolutely free, dictated by the flow of musical thought, whether in harmonic construction or melodic patterning. Crystall believes that Scott's constantly changing metres might be linked to numbers and mysticism, and in particular to the mystical significance of the mathematical proportions of the Golden Section, and argues that there are numerous rhythmic and motivic parallels to it in Scott's *Piano Sonata No. 1*. As Scott states that rhythmic freedom had an occult significance for

him (Scott 1914), it would seem unlikely that he would have subjected himself to the rigorous mental discipline of adhering to such a compositional plan. In fact he said, 'The decree of incessant flux ... is one which pervades the universe, and the grandiose rhythm of the ocean or the babbling seductiveness of a rivulet lies in its eternal continuity.' (Ibid.: 183) This is a return to the Nature-mysticism of the Reserves rather than the Gentlemen in its emphasis on pantheistic unity, but also reflects the Hindu belief in the music of the Devas or Nature-spirits.

Both Scott and Foulds used the term 'Deva-music' to describe instinctive, natural, improvisatory music, composed almost mediumistically by those musicians who were consciously or unconsciously in touch with the Devas - for instance Scott refers throughout his writing to César Franck, Grieg, Scriabin and Debussy as typical Deva composers, conscious or unconscious. At the end of his life, while in India, Foulds was writing a piece entitled *Deva-Music* (unfinished), which Malcolm MacDonald says is in the 'luminously ecstatic' style of the *Mantra of Bliss* and the slow movement of the *Dynamic Triptych*. (MacDonald 1989: 89) He was so conscious of the link between the Devas and music that in the early 1930s he wrote a column entitled 'Challenges' in the periodical *The Musical Mirror* under the *nom-de-plume* 'Deva'.

When discussing common characteristics in the Gentlemen's and Players' mystical language, it was noted that false relations had a mystical effect in the music of both Teams, but Scott went further in believing that false relations had an actual occult source and purpose:

> only though this device, which caused the pedagogues of an earlier period to shudder with righteous indignation, is it possible to obtain that sense of 'between the notes' which is essential in the portrayal of Deva-music. True, Mr Foulds in his *World Requiem* attempted to simulate that music with the employment of quarter-tones, but not altogether successfully, since the effect rather gave rise to the idea that the orchestra was playing out of tune. (Scott 1933: 142)

For Scott it was clearly a natural step from false relations to an attempt to convey the microtonal subtleties of Deva-music, but he clearly felt that quarter-tones were too crude an

answer. As Foulds's name was known well enough at this time for Scott to mention him and his occult interests, it seems all the more extraordinary that he and Foulds did not meet and pool their resources, not only in an onslaught on the Gentlemen, but in their wider aim to create a synthesis of world music.

Having used quarter-tones in the *Cello Sonata* (see Ex. 26), Foulds experimented most successfully with them in the central movement of the string quartet suite entitled *Aquarelles* and subtitled *The Waters of Babylon*[7] - the anonymous writer of the CD sleeve note remarks, 'its plangent sequence of quarter-tones reveal for a movement the searching, exploratory mind of a mystic', thus reflecting the occult effect of quarter-tones on the listener. Foulds first employed them orchestrally in the suite, *Mirage*; he drew a pentagram by hand on the title-page of the manuscript, as mentioned earlier, which would confirm that the music had an esoteric message and possibly that quarter-tones had an occult significance for him. The effect of their expressive use is similar to the sighing portamenti in Scott's *Piano Quintet* (see Ex. 27), and it therefore seems possible that Scott too used such portamenti for the 'between the notes' effect of Deva-music.[8]

In Chapter 14 of *Music Today* Foulds describes the nature of the Devas, translated literally from the Sanskrit as 'shining ones', in particular the 'comparatively small group of devas, those whose being *is* music - the *Gandharvas*' (Foulds 1934: 280):

> [Their music is an] ocean of unheard music; Nature being a Cosmic Symphony, the power to 'tune in' and thus to 'hear' it at various levels is one that is just beginning to be apprehended by mankind and practised by a few persons widely scattered over this tiny globe. The phrase 'Cosmic Symphony' is therefore not used here in the imaginative sense of the minor poet but in the severely practical sense of the professional musician. (Ibid.: 285)

Foulds believed that clairaudience and Deva-music were closely linked, in that it was possible to convey the 'vibrations of the devic kingdom' through music by writing down what is clairaudiently heard, leading the composer and listener into rapport with the Devas. He tried to do this in a little piece called *Gandharva Music* (see Ex. 54)[9] to which he appends

this note:

> This music was heard clairaudiently on a hot summer's day (September 9th, 1915) - not heard imaginatively in the way that a composer's work is usually done, but actually and objectively. Perhaps it was the music of the breezes, the flowers and the fruit-trees at that place and time. It should not be listened to as we listen to the music to which we are accustomed, for it does not represent human emotion, but is part of the music inherent in things themselves. It is not concerned with emotion. The composer wrote down part of what he heard as well as he was able within the limitations of the pianoforte. He chose this instrument because of its obvious convenience, but the music he heard, and all the music he has ever heard clairaudiently, was in natural intonation, not tempered, and in what has been called 'Nature Pitch'. (Further information on these subjects may be found in the 'Occult Journal of an Artist' *M. MacCarthy* [Foulds's italics].) The tone-colour of the music was similar to that of the flute, highest and lowest notes alike having this timbre. The music-angels through whose being this music seemed to be contacted are called, in India, Gandharvas; hence the title.
> Other works contacted in a similar way are in preparation, viz. '5 Recollections of ancient Greek Music', 'Consilium Angelicum' [later used as part of the *World Requiem*] , 'The Glaston Chant' [lost] etc

Foulds's plea that this piece should not be heard in the manner in which we normally listen to music would have seemed incomprehensible to the majority of Western composers and audiences alike, who were used to the formalism and rigidity of a concert setting. Foulds must have realised this, for he admitted that *Gandharva Music* was 'of a naïveté almost incredible from a purely intellectual point of view. Yet I have seen veritable magic result from its performance.' (Ibid.: 288) Its effect on the listener today can be absolutely hypnotic and timeless, using means that are almost primitive in their simplicity; its shifting, subtle changes of resonance, accent, timbre and rhythm on an elemental framework again make it similar to the work of a contemporary minimalist composer. The Gentlemen would not have been interested in this music because 'it does not represent human emotion', and they would not have understood the concept of 'contacting' the music of the universe around us in a mediumistic way, or the desire to reproduce it in as near as possible in the form in which it was heard. Foulds's clairaudient music had no evangelistic purpose: it simply existed and was merely written down by him, like Yeats's automatic writing when he was involved with the Order of the Golden Dawn.

Though Scott's similar ideas on 'fishing' for music in order to compose have an element of clairaudience, Foulds was the only composer who claimed clairaudient inspiration. His experiences and their results have already been generally described; but did Foulds's clairaudient works have a common mystical language? It would certainly seem so, for Maud lists the various sections that were jointly heard clairaudiently by Foulds and herself during the composition of the *World Requiem* on the notes to the manuscript in the British Library, and they all share a stillness and stasis that would be positively hypnotic in performance. In the 'Holy Holy' section of the *World Requiem* there is a 'washing away' sound of a chromatic murmur in the bass against unrelated chords in the treble as accompaniment to the simple chordal E major chanting (see Ex. 47). The 'elect angels' section to which Maud refers when she and Foulds experienced it 'enfolding our entire house' (Ex. 57) is static too, and relies on its sense of peace by constant chord repetition. The meditation-inducing choral singing of 'Aum' is used in a mantra-like way in the 'Song of the Redeemer' section and was also heard clairaudiently.

It would seem likely from its subtitle 'Intimate Melodies from the Beyond' that the only surviving movement from Foulds's final String Quartet, entitled *Lento Quieto* and written in India, was heard clairaudiently, as was the music Foulds collected together into the orchestral suite, *Hellas*. This is, again, enormously simple music as in the 'Processional' (Ex. 58); here the prevalent open fourths and fifths are appropriate to Foulds's vision of Ancient Greece, in view of their importance in Pythagorean conception of the Music of the Spheres. It is interesting that the slow hieratic mood of Satie's 'Greek' music and the music he wrote for Josef Peladan's Rosicrucian sect (such as the three preludes for *Le Fils des Etoiles*, the *Trois Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* and the *Prélude de la Port Heroïque du Ciel*) resembles that of Foulds's simple chords and repetitive figures: yet it is not known whether he knew of Satie, who had been dead for two years by the time Foulds arrived in Paris. It seems that all the music he heard clairaudiently shared this static quality, often hovering round one tonal centre, just as the Indian ragas that he so often heard played by Maud's Indian colleagues always clung to their *sa* or tonic.

Orchestral colour was felt by the Players to be particularly important: Holst, Foulds and even Scott, in the few examples that are recorded of his orchestral music, such as the attractive scoring for wind, percussion and harp in the *Piano Concerto No. 1*, were adept and imaginative orchestrators. Their colours seemed to be absent from the palette of the Gentlemen, whose orchestral music, despite the arguably superficial experiments at the end of Vaughan Williams's life, tended to be string and woodwind biased - Elizabeth Lutyens's scornful description of 'folky-wolky melodies on the cor anglais' (Harries and Harries 1989: 53) was very apt. An acute orchestral ear was one of Foulds's most striking attributes, and remarked upon in the few contemporary reviews of his music, but his statement in *Music Today* that timbre was 'magical' in its effect does not seem to have been subscribed to by his English contemporaries, perhaps because the Gentlemen in particular were apparently not interested in creating new colours. It was not until the 1970s that the esoteric nature of changing timbres was further described, when the composer/writer Peter Hamel, who had independently continued in Foulds's direction towards an East/West synthesis, said that 'an integral state of listening [is] possible only through the rediscovery of tone-colour as the vehicle of the spiritual.' (Hamel 1976: 129) He corroborates Foulds's belief in the esoteric importance of a single note:

> anybody who has become aware of the special tone-colour spectrum of a single note, or who has even detected isolated overtones within a note, will keep trying to rediscover this natural phenomenon when listening to music. And in the process it will quickly become clear to him that some forms of music positively set out to make the tone-colours audible, while others encourage no such acoustic procedure ... the experience of tone-colour listening always had the purpose, as it still has today in works such as Bartok's, of producing an inner, spiritual, sympathetic resonance. Even today it is held in India for example, that correct inner listening is a condition of the performer's inspiration. (Ibid.: 127)

This quotation from a musician, who, so much later, is unconsciously repeating Foulds's theory of the importance of timbre, shows how far Foulds's thinking was ahead of his time.

Maybe the sense of the mystery of musical inspiration is what separates the contemplative from the evangelist composer, and induces the mystical experience in the esoterically-attuned

listener. Scott is quoted as saying, 'there is never a dividing barrier between music and the boundless horizons of the infinite, the eternal.' (Keeton 1939: 1027) It is this sense of piercing these horizons and acting as a medium for the presentation of what lies beyond that is a recurrent feature of the music of the Players. It would seem that just as the Teams shared a similar language when in evangelical mood, whatever their beliefs, so did the Players have a specific set of meaningful devices which they had incorporated into their personal language as part of their esoteric convictions, and which then permeated their contemplative music. But was this music any more effective as a result of their beliefs?

* * *

In the case of the Gentlemen, their Nature-mysticism and Christian agnosticism were driving forces behind the ideals of the Renaissance, and characterised their best and most typical music, as well as their slighter and more occasional work. Speculation is inevitable on whether the Players' occult interests were similarly productive of their best music, or whether they hampered its quality. The many broad similarities of style between them seem to arise from their non-Western, or at least, anti-humanistic conception of the role of music, but the effect of this concept on the quality of their music was variable.

Like the Gentlemen, Warlock was undoubtedly at his finest when inspired by mystical texts, but they are not always texts in the Gentlemanly spiritual tradition: one of his most eerie settings - the *Corpus Christi Carol* - is based on Christian legend, but perhaps his finest early song *The Bayley Beireth the Bell Away* reflects the occult preoccupations of the Irish Year in that it could relate to the celebration of the Black Mass.[10] His most overtly occult work (and amongst his most striking) is *The Curlew*, whose text, by Yeats in his most symbolist mood, is based on Celtic mysticism of the type also encountered in Arthur Machen. It must be noted that his finest works have never fully disappeared, though the difficulty of the choral works precludes any but professional performances. There are none of Warlock's more humdrum yet more popular works that have any esoteric connotation, so it seems that his most inspirational moments also embraced the urge to set words which had some occult

undertone. Significantly, it was towards the end of the Irish Year, and immediately after his experiments in the occult, that he found his confidence as a composer. The result, then, of his occult encounters was entirely beneficial musically, whatever their psychological repercussions.

Even when Foulds tried overtly to express the occult and the esoteric in music, he was only too aware of the dangers of such an attempt. He felt that Scott had been musically misled by his attempt to do so, for in *Music Today*, he quoted the Gentlemanly critic, W.H. Hadow,[11] as saying that Scott had 'listened too readily to the twin sirens of atonality and metaphysics.' (Foulds 1934: 277) By atonality Hadow presumably meant non-diatonic music, and by metaphysics, the lure of occultism and mysticism. Foulds, always sensible and practical, was clearly thinking of Scott when he counters with:

> it is not in listening to siren or any other voices that danger lies for the musician, but in permitting them to glamour his senses, becloud his higher Intelligence, beguile him into the spiritualist 'Summerland' and call it the ultimate heaven, entrap him in a maze of bye-alleys with the suggestion that he is treading the grand high-road, and filch away his devotion and his fidelity to his real soul's Mistress. (Ibid.)

If music was Foulds's 'soul's Mistress', he was completely faithful to her, for the evangelism aroused by his occult beliefs did not prevent him from writing good music or being able to differentiate between his own major and minor compositions. He merely made himself open to the unseen world he knew was around him as his own personal 'grand high-road'. In fact some of his best music, such as the *Three Mantras*, was inspired by the esoteric, and their very title pre-supposes an evangelistic aim of inspiring meditation and and openness to revelation in the audience. Yet he creates an equally telling mystical experience in contemplative fashion when composing abstract music that apparently did not try to convey an esoteric experience, as in the extraordinary slow movement of the *Quartetto Intimo*, with its quarter-tones, which we know had an occult meaning for him.

Despite its professionalism, one of Foulds's most evangelical works, the *World Requiem*, was poorly received by most of the intelligentsia, possibly because they were indoctrinated by

Gentlemanly ideals and disapproved of evangelism on behalf of the esoteric. From the full score in the British Library, the short excerpts broadcast by the BBC and the very basic vocal score, it would seem that it is, as always, full of imaginative sounds, but does not contain his finest music, tending to drift into Scott's country of pedal points and directionless unrelated chords. In contrast, many of Foulds's works that show Indian influences have esoteric connotations because of the role of music in Hindu spiritual life, and those that use his system of modes contain some of his best music.

When considering the sparse remains of Foulds's goal of an East/West synthesis, it is tempting to wonder whether at that time and place he was wandering, however laudably, up a blind alley and maybe allowing himself to be seduced away from his 'soul's Mistress' in his hope for musical unity between East and West. The *Indian Suite* for instance, which only exists in a private recording of a competent amateur concert, has some interesting sounds in its presentation of Indian folk tunes, but is only a novel arrangement of indigenous music. Also the scraps of full score that exist of his *Deva-Music* are still written for a Western, not a combined East/West orchestra. Because he died at the beginning of this new stage of his creative life, it is difficult to decide whether the effect of Foulds's occult beliefs on his music was entirely positive: it seems to have varied from the revelatory, as in the *Three Mantras*, to the rather bland and colourless, as in parts of the *World Requiem*. The fact that the *Three Mantras* are now available on CD would suggest that posterity is at last redressing the balance.

Scott has suffered the most from having outlived the possibly misplaced popularity of his style. Though maintaining that he did not express his occult beliefs in any musical way, he still allowed himself to become intellectually addled by them. It is as if his occult interests were kept separate from his music, because he felt merely a passive receptor and medium of his Master's wishes. His almost inert self-quotation seemed to arise from his lack of interest in the music, in comparison with its message. Despite his own pretensions to literary sophistication, he chose or wrote banal texts, and matched them with increasingly formulaic music in the later choral works, which have been understandably neglected. By the end of

the 1920s, his style had become ossified as he slipped increasingly into 'mystic' formulae such as tremolandi, pedal points and ostinati, novel perhaps at the beginning of the century, but regarded as musical clichés thirty years later. Numerous examples are to be found in larger works such as *Summerland* (Ex. 59), where endless 4-7 chords are combined with tremolandi and vocal portamenti for the 'between the notes' effect of Deva-Music to give a hypnotic impression of suspension in time, which became increasingly typical of the static quality of Scott's later work.

The critic Edwin Evans had sympathetically watched Scott's development from the early 1900s, but felt that his esoteric interests had a negative effect on his music, leading to an 'impression of arrested, or, at least, retarded, development'. (Evans 1923: 210) The occult message would seem to have become more important than its means, for the aural impression of many of Scott's later and larger works, as Stephen Banfield says, seems to indicate 'narcotic laziness' (Banfield 1985(1): 93) as far as their composition was concerned. Yet he was not lazy in that he produced quantities of literature well as music, but quality was so often lacking because he was repetitive verbally as well as musically. The main problem seemed to lie in deciding the direction of his priorities, and he seemed to be governed willy-nilly by what he perceived as his Master's dictates. Edward Lockspeiser was to hint that the root of Scott's problems was that he was too multi-faceted to achieve true artistic integration (though the greatest geniuses like Leonardo da Vinci have of course been multi-faceted but managed to achieve a wholeness which Scott failed to do):

> He has also been able to keep his mind open to varied and stimulating influences in literature and philosophy. His outlook is cosmopolitan, his interests universal. But he has somehow been unable to achieve that integration of an artistic personality which would have made his music more compelling and perhaps less neglected than it is. (in Bacharach 1946: 189)

In today's more sympathetic climate, Holst's Sanskrit works are receiving increasing performances, and are now available on CD, and the overt mysticism of *The Planets* has never lost its appeal. It seems that the contemplative language Holst evolved from his saturation in the esoteric did produce some of his greatest music, from *Savitri* and *The Hymn*

of Jesus to the later works, *Hammersmith* and *Egdon Heath*. The latter's superficial alignment with Gentlemanly themes, yet its deep gulf from them in mystical language and attitude, exemplifies the inevitability of the alienation of the Players from the Renaissance mainstream. The resultant and very sad growth of that alienation can best be observed in the varying critical reception of the Players from 1900-1939, which constantly reflected their growing distance from the Renaissance image, and from general contemporary musical thought. In particular the role of the BBC in effecting their ostracisation was a major one from the mid-1920s onwards: the stunting of the Players' reputation via the Renaissance-orientated musical press and radio will be the substance of the next chapter.

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1 In Gerald Abraham's chapter on Holst.
2 In the chapter by David Cox on Vaughan Williams's symphonies.
3 Quoted on Palmer's note to CD CHAN 8901.
4 Based on W.H. Hudson's novel *Green Mansions* where Rima is a 'child of nature'.
5 Hull was referring here to the social reformer and writer of *Love's Coming of Age* Edward Carpenter, who had read the *Upanishads* in the same Müller translation that was to prove so inspirational to Holst.
6 See Chapter 6, p.171 for a fuller quotation of this BBC memo.
7 Recorded on Pearl CD 9564 with the *Quartetto Intimo*.
8 It is interesting that Ireland's *Legend* is the only composition of the Reserves that has some feeling of Deva-Music in its sinister sliding fifths, which are aurally similar to Foulds's use of combined descending fifths and quarter-tones in the slow movement of the *Quartetto Intimo.*
9 Recorded on Lyrita SRCD 212.
10 For an explanation, see Ernest Kaye's article reprinted in Cox & Bishop's *Peter Warlock.*
11 W.H. Hadow was a Gentlemen of Oxford background who wrote *English Music* in 1931 with an introduction by Vaughan Williams. He was, like Parry, a believer in the evolutionary theory of music.

CHAPTER SIX : RAIN STOPPED PLAY

The deluge of the Second World War changed the English artistic and cultural climate to such an extent that the Gentlemen v. Players match was swamped. Politically and socially the music of the Gentlemen was in much greater demand than the works of the Players, therefore the latter were not allowed a second innings and remained unperformed. The final decision on the match should have been with the public, but the concert promoters, conductors, critics and, above all, the emergent BBC assumed the role not only of Selectors but ultimately of Umpires.

An insularity that was stunning in its musical blindness is reflected in the critical articles found in the standard music periodicals of the 1920s, which were mostly written by minor Gentlemen: infinitely less is written about the European musical giants than about English music, normally represented by non-Players. Despite their initial popularity, which exceeded public appreciation of the Gentlemen, the Players' music was increasingly neglected, and, because performances were so few, the general audiences were unable to hear and judge for themselves. Those works that did appear in concerts received unfavourable critical attention, or remained unreviewed, and were gradually forgotten.

By 1939 the Gentlemen were still flourishing, but the temporary popularity of the Players had melted away as they fled from the pitch, routed by the power of the Renaissance. Holst had deviated Eastward away from Gentlemanly language and aims, and had died in 1934, partly through overwork, with his reputation fast-frozen into that of a writer of cold or, at best, lean and emotionally unsatisfying music. Scott seemed to suffer a case of arrested development and his reputation dwindled during the 1930s, when, though very much alive, he had temporarily abandoned composition, only returning to it in the last three decades of his long life. Instead, he had become far more dedicated to the dissemination of the message of occultism via his *Initiate* series of books.[1] To all intents and purposes, then, he had retired from being a musical Player. Foulds's universal popularity, at its zenith in the mid-1920s with his *World Requiem*, had dwindled as quickly as it had grown, and he succumbed to

cholera in India in 1939. Admittedly, Warlock's more pastoral works were welcomed and his Elizabethan scholarship much admired, but the rest of his work was seldom performed, and he died in mysterious circumstances in 1930.

Though marginally acceptable in the Edwardian age, any interest evinced by the Players in the esoteric from about 1918 was regarded as dubious, and inevitably affected their critical reception as composers. Typical contemporary reactions to music and the esoteric are to be found in the writing of such differing figures as Josef Holbrooke and Leslie Heward, both Spectator composers despite Heward's RCM origins, and also in the enlightened criticism of Edwin Evans. In the immediate post-war period the distrust of the esoteric is encapsulated in Holbrooke's book of studies of *Contemporary British Composers*, which forms an invaluable repository of 1920s opinion. It was regarded as important enough to deserve publication in 1925, perhaps because his views are coincidental with those of the Gentlemen. Yet Holbrooke himself was no Gentlemanly composer, despite his operatic schemes for works on Welsh national legend, because their Wagnerian vastness struck no sympathetic chord with the Gentlemen in that their style was cosmopolitan rather than Gentlemanly. So Holbrooke's insularity was all the more startling when he was discussing Holst's esoteric interests:

> I do not like 'cosmopolitans', neither do I like foreign religions ... I wish Holst had spent less time on Sanskrit literature and more on British poesy ... is the great British race superlatively mystic, solemn, or psychical? I think not. Holst I am told is a Theosophist. His fine suite *The Planets* does not weaken that impression. But whether he is or not, I always see Holst - like the bulk of our composers - [as] crushingly solemn. (Holbrooke 1925: 163)

Holbrooke has a similar attitude to Scott whom he damns with faint praise as a 'philosopher', when talking of the mystical element of his work, saying that many of his minor piano pieces are

> quite popular and free from turgidity, morbidity or esotericism. The latter, esotericism, however, is one of Scott's qualities in his larger essays. He certainly had the exotic feeling in his music; and we do not always dislike such abandon! (Holbrooke 1925: 84)

Here Holbrooke's equation of the esoteric with the exotic conforms with the general linking of the esoteric with the quasi-Oriental without seeing any further, and his final phrase implies that the exotic was somehow regarded as 'naughty' and therefore too flighty for serious musical concerns: there is a hint of the convenient relegation to 'light music' of compositions which were regarded with distrust. In the same section he criticises Scott's harmonies as 'incessant' and his songs as 'facile', so furnishing another example of the downward slope of Scott's reputation in the 1920s.

Like Holbrooke, and indeed so many of Holst's near-contemporaries, Leslie Heward drew a superficial link between the esoteric and the Oriental/exotic. He felt that, in *Savitri*, Holst's fondness for modes (he is speaking of Dorian and Phrygian modes) 'certainly helped to give that quaint Eastern atmosphere demanded by the story.' (Heward 1923:1) This seems an extraordinary statement in that Eastern modes, as tabulated by Foulds in *Music Today*, which would have encouraged an Eastern impression, are not used at all in this work. Its themes and preoccupations are entirely Eastern, but the musical language is closer to plainsong than a raga. As for 'quaint', it is probably the last adjective that Holst would have appreciated as describing his music, but remarks such as these show how easily misunderstanding grew, and why he became more and more silent over his esoteric interests.

With characteristic sanity, Edwin Evans tried to redress the balance when speaking of the *Hymns from the Rig Veda*:

> Neither are the hymns as rendered by Mr Holst endowed with any esoteric meaning. He has no mission to add to the numerous fashionable cults of alleged exotic origin. His Vedic hymns are prose-poems set to music as concert pieces and nothing else. It will save much misapprehension of Mr Holst's work if that fact is consistently kept before his audiences. (Evans 1919: 590)

Evans was clearly aware of the harmful effect of the adjective 'esoteric' on the reputation of a composer's music, and was anxious that Holst's work should be taken on its own merits.
As far as Scott was concerned, Evans felt that the 'impression of arrested or at least retarded development may not be attributable less [Evans's syntax] to the compositions themselves

than to the static quality of the influence [i.e. Scott's occult interests] of which I am conscious in them.' (Evans 1923: 210) So the general concensus of opinion seemed to be that there, but for the pernicious influence of the occult, went potentially good composers.

Initial popularity of the Players and the categorising of 'Light Music'

1939 and the beginning of the war seemed to mark the end of the match. It now remains to trace the downward path of the Players' critical reception consequent upon the increasing alienation from the Gentlemanly composers, conductors, critics and BBC mandarins, that has been described in preceding chapters. It is easily forgotten in the 1990s that during their lifetime the Players had all achieved, however temporarily, enormous public and often critical acclaim for either one or several works to a degree never enjoyed by the Gentlemen, who tended to have a somewhat sour grapes attitude to mass popularity, clearly considering it vulgar and un-sportsmanlike. This was pinpointed as early as 1908 when Vaughan Williams consoled Holst on the failure of *Sita* to win the Ricordi prize[2]. Clifford Bax quotes his friend Holst's corroboration of Vaughan Williams's contempt for fame (see p.78):

> It's a great thing to be a failure ... if nobody likes your work, you have to go on for the sake of the work. And you're in no danger of letting the public make you repeat yourself. Every artist ought to pray that he may not be 'a success'. If he's a failure he stands a good chance of concentrating upon the best work of which he's capable. (Bax C.1925: 225)

In Holst's case, his worst fears were realised in the public success of *The Planets*; of all the Players, he seemed the most genuine in his distrust and dislike of fame, and therefore it is ironic that at least some of its movements have become among the most consistently popular English works of the century.

The Gentlemen, for all their noble 'English *Gebrauchsmusik*' attitude of working and composing for amateurs, did not succeed in capturing an Everyman audience (an exception was Vaughan Williams's song *Linden Lea* whose charm lay in the same type of artlessness that characterised Scott's *The Blackbird's Song*), and they felt threatened by the popularity of Scott and Foulds in particular. In their fear, they hit on an efficacious way of reducing such

popularity's cultural importance: any non-Gentlemanly music that reached a wide audience was demoted into the realms of 'light' or 'light-weight' music, and soon found its way into the BBC's newly formed Light Programme, where it could be safely contained. As such, its musical virtues, competence and accessibility could be acknowledged without detracting from the more substantial supposed worth of the musical productions of the Renaissance. This policy is clear on reading the Scott and Foulds files in the BBC Caversham Archives.

While Scott's salon-type songs and piano pieces were being published and marketed in vast quantities by Elkin, and, to a lesser extent, Schott, they reached an enormously varied audience. As Scott said, 'it was conceded that I could write *salon*-pieces and songs of a pleasing character, [but] my would-be more serious efforts were not the type of music that organisation [the BBC] would wish to further.' (Scott 1969: 223) Many years earlier he had noted prophetically:

> the British public can only be said to desire British music in theory, and not in practice, and that desire, such as it is, may be regarded as springing from the attribute of national vanity rather than the search for musical pleasure. England, in short, wants to have its cake, but, regarding it as something nasty, she does not want the trouble of eating it. She wants to possess great composers, but is quite content to listen solely to their 'trifles' and in some cases does not even bother to inquire whether aught but these 'trifles' exist. Even the imputation of laziness was attached to one composer because (as was supposed) he produced no works of large dimensions [Scott is presumably referring to himself]: yet, as a matter of fact, he produced many, which were, however, only performed on the Continent, being regarded as too difficult or otherwise unsuitable to be brought forward here. (Scott 1917: 122)

Scott has in this paragraph summed up the whole reason for the Gentlemen v. Players match - that it was 'national vanity' that ensured performance of the Gentlemen's music, and any Player's music that did not further that national self-aggrandisment was automatically downgraded into a 'trifle' and the rest of his work ignored.

Another problematic aspect was the determination of many critics or opinion-forming writers, while ignoring his large-scale works, to take the light music of Scott in particular as

serious music, thus further damning it in envious Gentlemanly eyes. An example of such misplaced admiration is found in 1912, when a minor Gentlemanly composer, Edgar Bainton, compared Scott's songs to those of Schubert and Wolf in a eulogistic article in the *Musical Opinion*'s series on British Composers; significantly, considering the date of writing, Scott was regarded as of sufficient importance to be selected as the initial name in the series. It is interesting that, in this comparison, Bainton was a true Gentlemanly voice in that he was trying to prove that England had a composer who was of the stature to vie with two of the continent's greatest lieder composers. At the same time he could not accept Scott's more genuinely serious work, because it was cosmopolitan in style; he launches into an attack on the *Piano Sonata No. 1*, surely one of Scott's more admirable works, complaining about its apparent lack of key and constantly changing time-signatures. Clearly Bainton distrusted characteristics which would no doubt have been regarded as continental rather than English:

> nothing but these endless progressions of the most extreme and in many cases diabolically ugly chromatic harmonies. The thematic material too, is exiguous in the extreme and as a consequence monotony results. There is none of the beauty to which Mr Scott has accustomed us in his other works ... The work is quite obviously an experiment which one sincerely hopes the composer will not repeat ... Its cleverness and skill are undeniable; but we have learnt to look for something more than intellectual pyrotechnics from the composer of 'Lotus-Land' [sic], 'Blackbird's Song', 'Lullaby' and 'Villanelle' to name only a few of the many jewels from Mr Scott's collection. (Bainton 1912: 621)

If the works cited as jewels are a reflection of Bainton's taste and judgement, it is clear that even RCM-educated composers, such as he, were happier with simplicity and lack of intellectual challenge than with anything that smacked of what Bainton calls the 'futurist school', presumably as in contemporary Europe. Yet even such 'jewels' were not initially regarded as easy listening, according to a review in *The Monthly Musical Record*:

> These wonderful pieces will not please many at first hearing. The extraordinary juxtaposition of various tonalities sounds strange to our ears; we, however, become quickly accustomed to them. And then the fact that our composers had not already discovered these striking tone-colourings surprises us. Moreover, the strictest contrapuntist must acknowledge that in Scott's harmonic, at times disharmonic music, a definite system is definitely and logically carried out. (J.S.S. 1910: 242)

It seems unbelievable that this review refers, not to a major ground-breaking work, but to Scott's popular short piano pieces. In contrast, in 1923 a Spectator composer, Havergal Brian, salutes the 'fascinating open air manner' of the piano pieces and songs, but, unlike Bainton, he feels that a large-scale work such as the *Piano Sonata No. 1* has 'rare strength and completeness.' (Brian 1923: 656) It seems as if critics and composers perceived only those elements in Scott's work that they wanted to hear. They seemed anxious to find elements to praise because a major English composer was desperately needed, but their opinions are coloured by their individual stance over the role of English twentieth century music.

Holst and Warlock had not suffered in this way because their lighter music tended to be in the Gentlemanly mould. Holst's slighter works were written for the amateur market, his Thaxted Festivals or for St Paul's School, often in a folk song or semi-sixteenth century idiom, thus fulfilling the Gentlemanly aims of brain-washing the musically uneducated into pride in a recognizably English musical style. As for Warlock, the Gentlemanly archaism of his *Capriol Suite*, originally written for small string orchestra, ensured its enthusiastic reception and it has remained popular in whatever arrangement it appears.

During the 1920s, the setting of fine English words as a solo song was enjoying a prominence unheard of since the eighteenth century, and the efflorescence of settings of Elizabethan or Georgian poetry, especially the distilled nostalgia of Housman, was one of the most approved musical forms, for it was a double celebration of English literature as well as English music, and therefore in keeping with the Gentlemanly promotion of the links between music and poetry in Tudor England in the hope of achieving a words/music synthesis comparable to that of Wolf and Mörike. In Warlock's case this was a far more viable comparison than Bainton's Scott/Wolf juxtaposition noted above, in view of the lack of literary merit in the words that Scott so often chose to set.

Amongst the many fine song-writers of the period, Warlock stood out. His lighter moods were archetypally English - songs such as *Yarmouth Fair*, *The Cricketers of Hambledon* and

Mr Belloc's Fancy (for good ale) are all concerned with typical, peripheral preoccupations of the Gentlemen in recreational mood, and in particular of one Gentleman, Moeran, who was a close friend and drinking companion for several years. Therefore Warlock's reputation, because it is based on the narrow excellence of the solo voice setting of words, did not substantially suffer as a result of the Renaissance. He may have been ostracised by some of the Gentlemen because of his behaviour and interests, but his music was generally accepted, even if its darker strengths were not fully appreciated. Yet Warlock's obituaries were mainly written by non-Gentlemanly friends, Cecil Gray and Van Dieren amongst them, and only the critic and publisher Hubert Foss represented the Gentlemen. Maybe because of the drama and uncertainty of his death, Warlock's memorial concert, two months later, was a sell-out, but it was left, not to a composer, but to a Georgian poet, Gordon Bottomley, to categorise Warlock as 'our English Hugo Wolf' (Bottomley 1931: 259) in his obituary.

Foulds was initially and safely classed as a 'light' music composer, reaching a wide audience with his *Keltic Lament* from the *Keltic Suite* which existed in numerous arrangements for various instrumental combinations, and is still occasionally broadcast today. His light music and attractive songs were published, mainly by Paxton, as were suites from his very popular incidental music to the productions of the great theatrical team of the time, Dame Sybil Thorndike and Sir Lewis Casson. In 1996, the BBC orchestral library only held the parts for his light music such as *Le Cabaret* and various suites with salon-type titles such as *La Belle Pierrette*, *Suite Fantastique* etc. which appear to be thoroughly competent, charming and completely unremarkable. As in the case of Scott, Foulds's easy efficiency in these genres was his downfall, for it gave the Gentlemen and, as will be seen later, the BBC, ample reason for tucking the efforts of both composers into the safe slot of fodder for the Light Programme. Foulds complains, in a letter to a BBC music staff member Joseph Lewis (probably in August 1931) held in the BBC Caversham Archives, that, although his big works are ignored, 'at least the lighter stuff always seems to please.' It was music that lacked a Message, let alone one couched in evangelistic Gentlemanly language. The Gentlemen did write light-weight as opposed to light music - but it was usually written for amateur choirs or orchestras, who were a sophisticated cut above the consumers of Scott's lighter work, or it

was based on folk song as in Vaughan Williams's *Greensleeves* arrangement. As Foulds wryly noted:

> Some modern composers 'in their hours of ease' turn their hand to folk-music and for some totally inexplicable and completely illogical reason this will escape the opprobrious epithet, 'light.' The composer will even earn encomiums which will react favourably upon his general reputation, and will perhaps even cover the occasional introduction of one of his major works to an audience predisposed in his favour. (Foulds 1934: 128)

The role of the BBC in the alienation of the Players

On consideration of the fall from grace of the Players during the 1920s and 1930s, it will be seen that the BBC had an enormous part to play in their defeat. One of the most telling ways of charting their decline is through examination of the BBC Caversham Archives on Scott and Foulds in particular. The tone of the files on Holst is more ambivalent, because of his honorary membership of the Gentlemen's team, and there is little of interest on Warlock.

At first 'no concert promoter would co-operate with the BBC which was regarded as a potentially fatal competitor' (Kennedy 1987: 137), as indeed it proved to be. By 1924 both Sir John Reith as overall director and Percy Pitt as Director of Music decided that the BBC should promote its own series of public concerts. At first these were not Renaissance-biased, for Pitt was not known for his interest in British music and was more interested in current continental trends. However, BBC music policy gradually altered when the Music Advisory Committee (the MAC) was founded in July 1925, and the Gentlemen began to take charge. Though the personnel shifted from time to time, it included the Heads of the Royal Schools of Music - John McEwen from the Academy, Sir Hugh Allen from the RCM and W.G. Whittaker from the RSAM, as well as Landon Ronald from the Guildhall who was, admittedly, a friend of Cyril Scott. Various musicians came and went as members, most of whom were minor Gentlemen such as Edgar Bainton, Percy Buck, W.H. Bell and Geoffrey Shaw; they were occasionally joined by representative critics such as Edward Dent or Ernest Newman.

From its inception in 1922, the musical policy of the BBC, as exemplified in the MAC, was based on a determination to reach and educate that mythical figure, the common man. With such Gentlemanly representation, the MAC felt that the role of the BBC should be primarily concerned with promoting British, as opposed to contemporary European music, saying that 'the BBC has great musical responsibility. In large measure the general well-being of this country's music is in its keeping.' (BBC Caversham Music Advisory Committee files: memo of 22.12.34) Its attitude is typified in a statement defending the continued existence of the BBC Military Band:

> At that time [August 1927] it was felt that through the medium of a popular instrument it would be possible to introduce listeners to good music and by this means they would be led to listen more readily to this type of music than when it was played by orchestras for which it was really written ... These people are rarely articulate hence the deduction that the Band is not popular ... the retention of the BBC Military Band is a cultural necessity and that in maintaining it the Corporation is carrying out its policy of raising the standard of British music. (Ibid.)

The patronising didacticism that characterised the Renaissance ethos, and contributed to the alienation of the Players, was already in place here. In this file the feeling of threat from more proficient European musicians is also ubiquitous. If, for instance, it was suggested that too many engagements were given to foreigners, the MAC were very defensive, noting that in 1932 '25% of playing time was given to British works ... this compares with 5% of playing time given by the other London concert giving bodies.' (Ibid.) They felt that 'It is the policy of the BBC to employ British artists in preference to foreign artists wherever artistic considerations permit' (Ibid.: probably 1935), and to provide 'constant propaganda on behalf of British music.' (Ibid.: memo of 11.3.37) Early in 1934 Boult gave a series of six Queen's Hall concerts devoted to British music, which was not entirely a box-office success. Composers who were featured were Elgar, Bax, Arthur Benjamin (the first performance of his *Violin Concerto*), Bliss, Bridge, Goossens, Moeran, the Gentlemanly pedagogue R.O. Morris and Walton. It is difficult to see why such a collection justified the pronouncement that the series 'established the fact that there is a definite school of British music.' (Ibid.: memo of 1.2.34)

In 1930 the Spectator composer Frank Bridge had applied for the conductorship of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, but was turned down. He is quoted in Michael Kennedy's book on Adrian Boult as having

> contempt for what he regarded as the amateurish and parochial attitudes and standards pertaining in the British musical establishment as represented at the RCM by Vaughan Williams, [Hugh] Allen and others. He saw the same attitudes and 'musical politics' in the hierarchy of the BBC and he was therefore not surprised, but nonetheless resentful, that a 'safe' choice like [Adrian] Boult should be preferred to him for the conductor's post. (Kennedy 1987: 156)

Bridge's opinion has some weight because he knew the Gentlemanly background intimately, having been taught by Stanford at the RCM for four years, but he had defected towards a more cosmopolitan style during the 1920s, thereby acquiring a less insular view of the BBC's music policy than that of his contemporaries; he was therefore of little use to the Gentlemen. Adrian Boult soon became the BBC's Director of Music after Percy Pitt's retirement in 1930. Though his new colleagues included Edward Clark, who was not an English Renaissance enthusiast, Boult's interests as an archetypal Gentleman, with a financially comfortable background and an education at Westminster and Oxford, were soon apparent in the programmes of the BBC Symphony Orchestra on European tours featuring works by Vaughan Williams, Elgar and Bax. Once he was at the helm, the future of the Renaissance with the BBC was assured, as was the suppression and neglect of the music of the Players.

The 'Wreck 'Em'

The story of Foulds's *World Requiem*, first performed in November 1923, is one of the most dramatic examples of the suppression of the works of the Players by the Gentlemen, both apart from and due to the policies of the BBC. It was described as the 'Wreck 'Em' by Maud MacCarthy, in a letter to Adrian Boult on 9.12.31, held in the BBC Caversham Archives, because its initial popularity and subsequent suppression had a most destructive effect upon the finances and reputation of the Foulds family. Foulds's meteoric rise to fame, however fleeting, was the most astonishing of all the Players, and grew, not from his light music, but almost entirely from a few performances of this single work. Its success with the general

public was possibly attributable to the immediate post-war climate and a universal need for a musical focus of national mourning.

Like Britten in his *War Requiem* forty years later, Foulds used both Latin and English texts, but took them appropriately from world sources differing as widely as Bunyan and Hindu poetry. He probably began work on it in 1919 and completed it in 1921, and promptly enlisted the championship of the newly formed British Music Society[3] and its founder, Scott's biographer Eaglefield Hull, as promoters of the work[4]. They promised that the *Requiem* would be given under their auspices and that they would do all they could to make this event a national one. The Society included Gentlemen (Adrian Boult and Hugh Allen), Reserves (Bax) and Spectators such as Goossens and Bliss. The *World Requiem* was initially given a private run-through in Edinburgh by Foulds's great friend Donald Tovey and his Reid Orchestra. Tovey prophesied success in a letter to Foulds:

> It must and shall make its mark. I shall not be surprised if it makes an immediate impression of a more popular kind than is usual with work of such calibre: and if so, its popularity will be one of the best signs of the times ... The effect of the work will be invigorating in all aspects: as representing its title and occasion it faces facts and uses symbols which are not 'dark and dumb'. (BL Add. MSS 56482)

Clearly Tovey foresaw exactly the emotional impact of the work on a war-raw audience searching for an expression of both comfort and spiritual uplift, but he also admired Foulds's practicality of detail - a characteristic Foulds shared with Holst, no doubt due to both composers' orchestral experience.

Maud had stormed into action and persuaded the British Legion to accept the work for performance on Armistice Night 1923 at the Royal Albert Hall, and it was she who, in promoting the concert, coined the phrase 'Festival of Remembrance' which is still used over seventy years later. The British Music Society apparently got cold feet, for it gave little financial help in the end, and most of the cost of the first performance was met personally by Foulds, who renounced all profits and royalties for the first five years and gave them to the British Legion - an extraordinary act of generosity considering the enormous ticket sales and

the Foulds family poverty.

The papers pertaining to the *World Requiem* are in the British Library (Add. MSS 56478) accompanying the enormous and beautiful full score in Foulds's handwriting. Paxton, the publishing firm, was impressed enough by the work's initial popular success in 1923 to regard the publication of the vocal score as a viable commercial proposition; certainly the photographs of the annual performances from 1923-6 show an Albert Hall packed to capacity. The ecstatic reactions of the audience are collected together in the British Library as a scrapbook, compiled by Maud[5]. It contains appreciative letters not only from the members of the specially formed choir, and the baritone soloist (Norman Allin) in the 1923 performance[6], but also from Bernard Shaw, hailing Foulds as a 'great composer', and from a mixed bag of other composers including Goossens, Quilter and Holbrooke. The impact of the occasion is reflected by a Royal Command, for there is a letter from the Prince of Wales's staff representative saying that HRH regretted not being able to meet Foulds in his Royal Box at the Albert Hall after the November 1923 performance, despite waiting ten minutes - Foulds was apparently prevented from responding to the Royal summons by the sheer size of the crowd.

Yet the critics united in condemning the work, puzzled by its lack of pretension and static peaceful nature. F. Gilbert Webb found that it was 'a monument of good intentions and to a considerable extent of misdirected energy'. (Webb 1923: 455) The critic of *The Times* of 1.12.23 was damning, though he conceded that Foulds

> was possessed by the greatness of the function he was filling, so much so that he was ready - too ready - to accept musical ideas that came to him under such auspices ... He scarcely arrives at a musical theme, but builds very largely on progressions. The structure is nebulous and the ear of the listener begins, after a time, to yearn for bold outlines.

Though this critic did admire one or two passages of 'distinct beauty' (including some of those noted by Maud as clairaudiently heard) the general tone is positively snide. From his remark on the 'mystical significance' of Foulds's over-used progressions, it is clear that the

latter's esoteric interests would have been common knowledge, and no doubt contributed to its lukewarm critical reception, along with its lack of conventional structure and the stasis of many passages, which were so often connected with mysticism in the critical writing of the time. 'Schaunard' in the *Musical Opinion* acknowledged that it was ambitious:

> Mr Foulds had a great theme and a great opportunity, and if he must be accounted to have failed it was because he attempted a task which only transcendent genius could have brought off ... It was not only a Requiem with which he saddled himself but a Paradiso and a propaganda pamphlet were added to it ... the propaganda brought an element of the ridiculous into the work ... his fanfares to the nations ... were sheer humbug.... his ideas outrun his powers, and the result was a work which, when it is not dull with labouring, offers no more than a series of effects. One of these days Mr Foulds ought to do better, but he does not at present suggest the composer to whom we might look for a Requiem inspired by the late war. Is not Sir Edward Elgar that man? ('Schaunard' 1923: 252)

As Elgar showed no signs of rising to this challenge, the success of the following year's performance was deemed almost sinister by the same critic who significantly regarded it as a conscious attempt to upset the hierarchy of British composers:

> When it fell to my lot to write on the first performance of Mr Foulds's 'A World Requiem' I wrote the composer must be accounted a fortunate man. The indications, certainly, were in that direction. It was his first choral work on a large scale. He was not regarded as among our leading composers. Yet the Albert Hall was full to its limit ... It had not only been blessed but commended in advance by a number of eminent musicians, among them the members of the National Executive of the British Music Society. 'It must and shall make its mark' wrote Professor Tovey [see above]. Mr W.H. Kerridge went further. 'I think it is the most wonderful work I have heard in recent years. I would rather have written the "Requiem" than anything by any composer of the last ten years.' Obviously a lot of ordinary composers - Elgar, Holst, Vaughan Williams and many others - were to be put back in their proper perspective. [The critic remembers that on the first performance he] paid a tribute to the bigness of conception of the work ... Its weakness is that it is musically dull; it has the organs of life but no vitality is in them. What Mr Foulds has really achieved is the finding of new ways of being dull. ('Schaunard' 1924: 253)

Yet it was the simplicity and immediacy of the work (labelled as dullness by the critics), despite its exotic orchestration and occasional novel sound-effects (including several passages using quarter-tones) that ensured its success. Foulds achieved in this one work a

direct rapport with a mass audience that the Gentlemen's sophistication could not encompass, for all their desire to reach the man in the street, and it must have been an extremely galling experience for them. The unease which can be sensed in the reaction of the critics must have been reflected in the Gentlemen's attitude, which was of complete disregard of the work. Malcolm MacDonald feels that there was a genuine conspiracy against Foulds as a result of the success of the *World Requiem*:

> But there was evidently intrigue against Foulds. It is known that one distinguished member of the British Musical [sic] Society Committee ... approached Earl Haig after the 1924 performance to tell him that, in his opinion, Foulds was a fraud and his Requiem a 'hoax', and that the Legion ought to withdraw its support. It did not do so immediately, but the 1925 performance was moved to the smaller venue of Queen's Hall (though there was the compensation that year of a BBC broadcast of certain extracts, recorded in Glasgow). The 1926 performance returned to the Albert Hall, but it was the last. After this the London Cenotaph Choir (specially formed for these concerts) was disbanded - despite the vigorous protests of the choristers, who loved the work - and the *World Requiem* was dropped. (MacDonald 1989: 36)

Though she does not accuse one person, there are plenty of references to this conspiracy by Maud in the BBC Archives, but unfortunately she comes over as hysterical and obsessed - however understandably. In the margins of the *World Requiem* scrapbook she writes the following observations: 'By intrigue this was stopped as the British Legion well know.[7] There was a "conspiracy of silence" over the Requiem's fate ... By 1927 the work and its composer had been successfully obliterated ... A whispering campaign, I was credibly informed, inspired by jealousy.' On the British Music Society letter of recommendation she wrote 'two or three went back on this letter ... I am informed.' Unfortunately she does not state her source of information, and one can understand the exasperation of Kenneth Wright, long-serving member of the BBC Music staff, who sent an internal memo on 21.12.31 on the subject of Maud: ' This lady is a very tiresome and persistent person.' Maybe the jealousy to which Maud refers stems from a note to Percy Pitt by Foulds saying on 23.8.1927 that 'several influential people are keen to see the *World Requiem* "nationalised" as a "standing date" for November 11th.' If this were so, the establishment of such an institution using the music of a Player at its heart could have been a death-blow for the aims of the Gentlemen, for no work could have been less 'English' and more truly

international in its sentiments and style, and therefore posed more of a threat to the Gentlemen.

The selectors for the BBC certainly had a part to play in the suppression of the *World Requiem*. Their attitude to Foulds was perfunctory as indicated in the following memo from Kenneth Wright on 21.12.31: 'the man is quite a good composer (of lighter stuff) ... The Requiem is not great writing but is certainly competent as far as I could judge from hearing half of it played on the pianoforte by him.' Like Leonard Isaacs, when condemning Scott's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, after a half-hearted piano try-through[8], Wright had formed a judgement of a big choral/orchestral work on a superficial reading of only part of the work. In this case he immediately relegated Foulds into the safe slot of a 'light' composer.

The BBC's objections can be summed up by Aylmer Buesst's reaction to the work in an undated memo of the early 1930s:

> Its obvious sincerity, and the ability and skill which go to its making demand encouragement and eulogy. And it is with the greatest regret that when faced with the task of giving this eulogy one realises that it cannot be done - the work simply is not good enough. And this is the reason why it has fallen into oblivion since its performance in 1923. Apart from the defects in the libretto, the music itself is boring; one would call it 'empty' music. A series of accompaniments without a strong theme to them. And endless repetitions. And always in the same key. Yet strangely enough one feels that it ought all to develop to something, one is astonished that it does not. The composer's orchestral sense too is excellent, so that one can only wonder that with all his apparent competence and ability, he has not been able to write bigger and better music. I cannot see a future for the work.

The Australian Aylmer Buesst was Assistant Director of Music at the BBC until 1933, had a cosmopolitan background and therefore lacked the missionary zeal of a Gentleman. As a result this seems an honest and puzzled reaction from a musician locked in the contemporary Western criteria of 'good' music which must never be static, who dismisses subtleties of timbre and colour within the surface stasis as merely being good orchestration, and feels stillness is boring. But there is no air of hidden agenda or conspiracy here.

Nevertheless Maud continued to believe that there was intrigue against the *World Requiem*. The following is from a letter, held in the Caversham Archives, dated 10.11.31 from Maud to Adrian Boult on the subject of the Festival of Remembrance. On the top of the letter is scrawled 'the Legion gave over the ENTIRE creation of the Festival to me ... I received no fee nor John either.' The letter continues:

> We created the Festival ... I don't know if you know any of the inner history which led not only to the Legion dropping the Foulds Requiem Festival, but to the general boycott of the work? It is a disgusting business in which no decent fair-minded man should like to have a part ... Some day the whole thing will come to light. But I wish you'd do something to get a little fair play for a fellow artist even if it should happen that you do not like him as a man!

A month later on 9.12.31 Maud wrote again with even more accusations:

> Some back-door business was brought to bear on high officials and the whole thing was stopped as if my husband had been a imposter. It was not only stopped but every reference to it seems to have been stopped or stamped out since. [She gives an example of the conductor whose performance with massed bands on Armistice Night 1931 of extracts from the *World Requiem* was stopped at the last moment with no explanation] I found out that this injustice ... was engineered by one jealous person.

Boult did not identify the 'jealous person' when he coolly replied on 14.11.31 to the first letter, 'I'm afraid I know nothing of the inner history you refer to'. He was only a little more forthcoming on such 'inner history' later on 8.2.34 in a letter to W.H. Haggard. The latter had complained of Foulds's neglect[9] especially in the face of 'the oft-repeated claim of the BBC that it is doing its best for British music' which he feels is 'complacent to a degree'. Boult replied that Foulds posed 'a very difficult problem ... we are usually faced with a complexity of factors, considerations, issues of which the outside public cannot possibly be aware. Therefore decisions are sometimes felt to be unjust or prejudiced.' In Boult's significant reference to hidden issues he could have meant an official, but unrecorded, policy of condemnation of Foulds possibly arising from Maud's intransigence, but more probably from a combination of jealousy at Foulds's success, determination to sabotage it as a threat to Gentlemanly aims, distrust of Foulds's esoteric beliefs, and sheer snobbish rejection of him as outside the old-boy network. In the file there is a *Radio Times* cutting on the 1927

Festival of Remembrance: there is not even a mention of the *World Requiem*. There is an interesting corollary that when a broadcast of the *World Requiem* was considered for the BBC's 1995 series of 'Fairest Isle' programmes, the orchestral parts were found to be lost.

Foulds's reputation never recovered after the *World Requiem* fiasco. In 1927 he slunk abroad to Italy and then Paris, only returning briefly to England before his departure for India, where at least he was valued by his All-India Radio audience: in the British Library collections of Foulds papers there are a series of appreciative letters on Foulds's work in India from an Indian, K.J. Karabji, who understood Foulds's goal of an East/West synthesis, and from Walter Kaufmann, the programme planner of All-India Radio in the Bombay branch, who admired Foulds as a guru figure. Clearly Foulds was only honoured as a prophet in another country. Before he went to India, Foulds had often asked Boult for performances, including requests for the *Three Mantras* and *Dynamic Triptych*, which are amongst his finest works: Boult replied on 25.2.31 that 'we had to decide each time that for certain reasons we do not feel justified in including it.' Again there was this reference to a hidden agenda of unspecified 'certain reasons'. No doubt Boult was backed by Gentleman Victor Hely-Hutchinson's[10] report saying the *Dynamic Triptych* was 'utterly dull. Incidentally I don't think quarter-tones - in this work - cut any ice at all. They are like everything else in it, an academic device.' This opinion seems extraordinary when faced by the glitter and vitality of the finale[11] which is anything but dull. Boult even had the temerity on 14.5.31, when refusing Foulds a performance of the incidental music to *St Joan*, to say that it 'doesn't do you justice'; considering the enormous popular success of both play and music which led to its performance under Foulds's baton at a 1925 Promenade concert, this seems a bizarre judgement unless based on the 'certain reasons' above which remain undivulged today. Foulds commented bitterly on the situation in a letter to Boult on 16.8.1933: 'while my principal serious works have received the approval of some of the greatest names in the musical world, and also of practical conductors it would appear, judging from past experience, that any serious work of mine has a poor chance of winning approval of the BBC Selection Committee.'

Scott's meteoric rise and fall

Amongst the other Players, the waxing and waning of Scott's reputation is the most dramatic, rising Icarus-like to be the highest of those of the Players; but the wax melted speedily and he was to fall the furthest. As early as 1902 his *Heroic Suite* was conducted by Richter in Manchester, and Scott remembers that Henry Wood 'was a good friend to me in the early stage of my career, for he gave many first performances of my orchestral works.' (Scott 1929: 553) Such championship thrust him into the limelight to such an extent that in 1903 Edwin Evans described Scott's immediate popularity thus:

> This talented young composer had leaped suddenly on to our musical platforms and presented quite a new phase of English music which the educated public has hailed with delight whilst most of the critics are still wondering what it all means. [He concludes that] Mr Scott is one of the most refined musicians we have. At his present age of twenty-three, it is not surprising that this refinement should suffer from occasional exaggeration, but even when it does so it does not degenerate into pose. (Evans 1903: 163)

The general feeling of this report is relief that at last an English musical Messiah was on hand to save English music - this was the time that *The Seeds of Love* were only just sown and were yet to be harvested by the Renaissance. Nevertheless, as Scott recalls, he was viewed with a certain amount of suspicion: 'By the time I had reached my late twenties I was already regarded as the musical *enfant terrible* of the Edwardian Age.' (Scott 1969: 122) However there were several Prom performances, including the premiere of his overture to Maeterlink's play *La Princess Maleine* in 1907, *Two Poems for Orchestra* in 1913 and untypically a *War March* dedicated to the Prince of Wales in 1914. But as early as 1912, Bainton wondered about the fate of the *Symphony No. 2* which was 'performed some nine years ago at one of the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts and (so far as I am aware) never again since - a remarkable fact considering that it was hailed by an almost unanimous press as a masterstroke.' (Bainton 1912: 620) Scott was resigned to the inevitability of no further performances of this work, and extracted from it his *Three Orchestral Dances* Op.22[12]. In his role as a fellow neglected composer, Holbrooke quotes from Eaglefield Hull, Scott's biographer who said that Scott's *Symphony No. 2* was

> 'given by Sir H.J. Wood at the Promenade concerts [in 1903] - with success, though (for reasons difficult to divine) it has not been given again, in spite of many requests in the papers.' [Holbrooke continues:] This happens to all our composers ... While British music is played in this hole-and-corner fashion - with no art lover or patron behind it - it will not alter for Scott or any other suffering composer in this country. (Holbrooke 1925: 90)

During the 1920s when Scott was in his forties, his reception and status were less certain than before the war, though neglected fellow-composers, like Havergal Brian, had a natural empathy with his plight as his reputation began to decline. Brian maintained that 'if Berlioz were alive today he would write like Scott' (Brian 1923: 854), and that in Scott 'we have music of genius which is an honour to contemporary art and particularly so to British art, and which is too much neglected'. (Ibid.) He realised the importance of the tastes of conductors when he asked in 1923 for a conductor to give Scott the same 'generous attention which [Sir Henry] Wood has given to the modern English group at his Promenades, or the generous sympathy [Albert] Coates has given the works of Holst, Vaughan Williams and others in London and America, or the wide sympathies of [Sir Dan] Godfrey.' (Brian 1923: 758)

In contrast, Edwin Evans sadly referred to his original enthusiastic assessment of Scott, and decided that 'in common with others [he] sometimes doubted whether that promise had ever come to fruition'. (Evans 1923: 210) But balanced as always, he gave a full picture saying:

> we are sometimes disposed to forget to what extent he has been a pioneer. It is neccessary to look back upon the state of English music, and, indeed, of all music, at the time when Cyril Scott's works were first heard, in order to appreciate to what extent certain elements which we now take for granted then betokened a remarkable independence of thought and originality of invention. His harmonic freedom which astonishes none to-day, was shared by very few musicians indeed when the brilliant young student returned from Frankfort [sic] to England. (Evans 1923: 211)

However, there were efforts to reinstate Scott: the Carnegie Trust looked belatedly at the 1907 *Piano Quintet*, and as late as 1925 awarded him the Trust Prize[13], describing it in the Trust's report by W.A. Anderson as:

> Strong, vigorous, rugged, written with obvious mastery of its resources and its medium; a notable addition to our repertory of chamber music. It is uncompromisingly modern in style, but there is nothing tentative in its method; it advances with a firm step, confident of carrying its audience with it. (quoted in Keeton 1939: 14)

Too much hope had been placed in the Frankfurt Group in general and in the youthful Scott in particular. Disappointment as Scott failed to mature into a major English composer was openly voiced by many in the 1920s: the *Musical Times* critic (probably Thomas Armstrong) says of Scott's piano piece *Badinage* that 'it goes on and on with the same chord in different positions until the listener is driven through boredom via irritation to fury. When one remembers some of Cyril Scott's earlier works, this sort of thing is tragic.' (Armstrong 1928: 907) It must be said, on inspection of the piece, that this criticism is entirely justified - the tendency to 'go on and on' was typical of Scott's middle and later years, whether in music, the written word or in his repetitious and rambling interview in the National Sound Archive on 14.6.62.[14]

Despite disapproval at home, Scott was still popular abroad in the 1920s, and many of his larger works were published in Germany. In *Bone of Contention* and *My Years of Indiscretion* he often refers to the frequent performances on the Continent of his major rather than minor works, in contrast to their lukewarm treatment in England. This popularity is corroborated by Eaglefield Hull who said in his biography of Scott, 'abroad his songs are almost unknown and he is judged exclusively by his more serious works'. (Hull 1918: 24) After all, the first performance of his opera *The Alchemist* in 1928 had been in Essen, in Germany, at a time when England was officially desperate for an opera by an English composer. He was so popular in America that he was invited to make a very successful United States tour in 1921, playing his own works: the *Musical Opinion* of March 1921 lists a series of glowing criticisms including the *Philadelphia Record*'s opinion that Scott's own performance in his *Piano Concerto No. 1* 'presented him as the interpreter of the most advanced work ... Unlike much of modern composition, however, it is a work abounding in beauty.' The 1923 article by Edwin Evans quoted above reminded readers that

> over a good section of the continent, until three or four years ago, only two English composers were known, Elgar and Cyril Scott. In Salzburg for instance, last year, musicians who wished to impress English visitors with the fact that they were not entirely ignorant of English music, made all the conversational play they could with those two names. (Evans 1923: 208)

It is interesting that Elgar should be mentioned here, because Scott recalls:

> I had only met Elgar once for a few moments and never knew that he took the slightest interest in my works. And yet, when [Bernard] Shaw [in his role as music critic] had on one occasion said to him: 'Why, Elgar, for a British composer you have become quite daring in your harmonies of late,' he had answered: 'Yes, but don't forget, it was Scott who started it all'. (Scott 1969: 147)[15]

What Elgar presumably meant by 'started it all' was that Scott initiated the breaking away from the stultifying English academicism found in the teaching of harmony in the musical institutions, which was based on Mendelssohnian/mid-Victorian traditions and still very much in evidence when Scott first appeared on the scene. In an interview many years later, Reserve composer John Ireland paid tribute to Scott, saying to Murray Schafer that Scott was 'the first to break away from the academic school.' (Schafer 196: 28) Scott himself summed up his position with uncharacteristic modesty:

> I had some forty years ago indirectly helped to extricate British music from the academic rut in which it had got fixed, and having performed that office, it might well be that *that* was all I was destined to do along musical lines in this particular incarnation! (Scott 1969: 218)

Despite the implication that his musical role in this incarnation was unimportant, Scott was very bitter about the attitude of the BBC, which clearly continued into the early 1950s when he gives an ironic description of the BBC's celebration of his seventieth birthday:

> Sir Steuart Wilson, then Music Director of the BBC, was good enough to face the delicate ordeal of paying tribute to the honoured guest. Being amongst the notabilities who consider me 'a back number', his speech was a masterpiece of eloquent evasion. Ingeniously avoiding any allusion to my work or merit as a composer, with consummate skill he contrived to convey the impression that he was saying nice things about me, when actually he believed there was little nice, musically, that *could* be said.' (Scott 1969: 223)

Scott's BBC files extend until his death, and the selection committee were occasionally smitten with guilt as birthdays came and went, but less and less was broadcast apart from the occasional programme of his lighter music. Before 1939, he was still regarded with residual respect, as is obvious in the following memo on the *Violin Concerto* (1928) from Aylmer Buesst which is undated, but written between 1933 and 1936:

> It is a pity that the great natural gifts, the knowledge, and the technical attainment wh.[ich] go to the making of this work should not have been used to better purpose for to me it is all but so much wasted effort. Great as is the demand for a violin concerto I cannot see this ever appealing to either player or public. It is diffuse, derivative, and in general, tedious. Yet there are passages of great beauty in it, but unfortunately they do not get anywhere. I feel that insincerity of purpose is largely responsible - the craving to appear 'modern' at all costs. Hence the total lack of character ... It is with regret that I judge it thus, and I trust that others will be given a chance to prove me quite wrong.

Nevertheless on 21.11.37 the Griller Quartet broadcast Scott's new string quartet, and on 3.4.39 Kenneth Wright, though rejecting a proposal to broadcast the *Viola Sonata* for his sixtieth birthday, was not too scathing, saying that it was 'interesting as an example of Scott's later manner - luscious chordal accompaniment to charming melody, modern but in the degree to which our minds are these days accustomed.' The feeling that Scott's music was old-fashioned and irrelevant was still tentatively and reluctantly expressed up to 1939, for the image of the young 'modernist' composer of pre-1914 took many years to dispel. The strongest objections to his music did not occur until after the Second World War, when Scott had become a musical dinosaur, and have none of the remnants of appreciation that characterise the pre-war memos. On 23.2.51 Eric Warr in particular was brutal in describing the *Irish Serenade for String Orchestra*: 'This music is spineless, unhealthy and pathetically ineffectual. It contains hardly any passages that could not be assembled by an ill-taught student after a few weeks fumbling at the piano.' Warr's description on 18.9.53 of the *Violin Sonata* is only slightly more temperate: 'It is sadly the mixture as before - a melodic line, wandering undecidedly and fussing ineffectively when allegro. A clinging accompaniment consisting mainly of harmonic effects does nothing to clarify the meaning of the solo part.'

There is a constant condemnation of music that does not 'get anywhere'; for example Leonard Isaacs said of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* that it was

> a messy and unworthy piece of music. Its first impact is one of 'atmosphere' but after 10 pages one realises that one is getting nowhere. The melody has no shape, there is a total absence of contrapuntal interest, the monotonous metre of the words is faithfully reproduced in the music ... the parallel motion becomes nauseating after a time ... I have never come across a more unfulfilled piece of music. A page full of unresolved dominant sevenths is like eating a tin of golden syrup. (BBC Caversham Archives, Scott: memo of 4.11.1953)

Younger composers were still aware of Scott's past stature - Arthur Benjamin in particular. On 27.10.53, in his report on the *Second Symphony*, he adjured the selection committee to 'face the fact that Cyril Scott is one of the tragedies of British music. With the best will in the world, the BBC could not perform this sort of amorphous piffle.' He admits on 6.10.54 when considering the *Clarinet Quintet* that he was 'out of sympathy with this style, so improvisatory, so "atmospherical" so devoid of interesting counterpoint; but in view of the composer's "past" I simply don't know what to say??' Though these reports are outside the 1900-39 parameters of this study, they are relevant as a continuation of the criticisms that were already bubbling up around the time of Scott's sixtieth birthday in 1939.

The relegation of Holst

After the success of *The Planets* Holst was typically in an intermediate position during the rest of his lifetime: some works were entirely acceptable, and many which found popularity were given performances in the Proms, including the ballet music from *The Perfect Fool* in 1923, and part or the whole of *The Planets*. Others were quietly ignored, and most of Holst's music suffered a gentle decline. Cecil Gray was less than gentle, however, in summarising Holst's position when reviewing the *Choral Symphony* in 1925:

> While Vaughan Williams has progressed steadily in each successive work since the 'Sea Symphony', Holst presents the melancholy spectacle of a continuous and unrelieved decline; while the development of the former has been accompanied by an increasing independence of literary or pictorial conceptions and a corresponding decrease in his instrumental demands, the degeneration of the latter coincides with an increasing reliance upon a text or programme and large orchestral and choral

> combinations... the music of Bacchus and his kin ... would be more suited to a procession of Prohibition agents ... [and the finale produces] some of the dullest, most pretentious and bombastic music which has ever been written.
> Is it necessary to say, in conclusion, that the above remarks are not the expression merely of a single personal opinion, but that of a very large number of people, including even some who have formerly admired much of this composer's music? (Gray 1925: 290)

Though Gray's vehement pronouncements can never be entirely regarded as typical of his contemporaries, he was very influential and aware of public opinion, therefore the last paragraph could well be an accurate reflection of Holst's reception in the late 1920s. It was a long way to have fallen in a few years from the success of *The Planets*, but though conductors as Gentlemanly as Adrian Boult championed the work, the attitude of the Gentlemen is typified in Vaughan Williams's rather grudging and superficial tribute to his friend in *Gustav Holst: an Essay and a Note* written originally in 1920[16].

This article is extraordinarily unbalanced and defensive, highlighting those aspects of Holst which conformed to Gentlemanly ideals, and disregarding the rest. Vaughan Williams pushed Holst's superficial loyalty to the nationalist cause to the illogical extent of claiming that he was a 'modern' composer because 'he has a mind which is the heir of all the centuries and has found out the language in which to express that mind' (Vaughan Williams 1963/87: 130); he concentrated on the brilliance of his orchestration, his work with amateurs, his love of Bach, the Elizabethans and English folk song - most of which were also Gentlemanly attributes. He damned with faint praise Holst's 'mystical frame of mind' (Ibid.: 141), noting, without comment on the quality of the music, the existence of the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* as an example of that mysticism. He defends rather half-heartedly the austerity of Holst's harmony; it is interesting that this characteristic was a source of discomfort to the Gentlemen as early as 1920, and later to be the basis of criticism of Holst. He is uncertain about the 'very individuality of his thought which requires such a personal technique [that it] causes a flaw in his work ... But the very fact that these lapses are noticeable only goes to show how individual his music is.' (Ibid.: 146) In 1934 Vaughan Williams added to this *Note* and tried again to grapple with *Egdon Heath* as he had many times before (see also pp.45-46):

> I used sometimes to think that Holst occasionally pushed his love of definiteness too far. I remember once discussing 'Egdon Heath' with him. I suggested that the very clearness of the melodic outlines of that piece were at variance with its atmospheric nature; indeed that a less robust melody would have been more successful in impressionistic suggestion. (Ibid.: 153)

In 1938, the critic Ralph Wood (a minor composer and pupil of Howells, and therefore sympathetic to the Gentleman) summed up Holst's position as seen by the critics of the time:

> Ten years ago few discussions of the status of contemporary British music would have omitted the name of Gustav Holst ... Yet three years after his death, [when] his music is as contemporary in every technical and spiritual sense as ever it was, where is Holst's reputation now? ... His music never boomed in the way that Bax's and Vaughan Williams's has done ... First performances of the works of his maturity (such things as 'Egdon Heath' and the Choral Symphony) were treated as occasions of major importance but subsequent performances had a way of being unconscionably belated. A few weeks after his death the B.B.C. broadcast the first performance of his 'Hammersmith' ... Since that day it has, I think, not been heard of ... and the same could almost be said of the composer himself ... The chamber opera 'Savitri' gains an occasional provincial presentation. 'The Hymn of Jesus' once so celebrated, seems to have reached total oblivion. Not all the encomiums bestowed on it by notable critics have preserved the 'Ode to Death' itself from the grave. (Wood 1938: 401)

The article then pays tribute to Holst's character as a man and a teacher, just as the Vaughan Williams article does, but condemns him as lacking in any 'characteristic flavour', any sense of 'organic development', which Wood regarded as a 'very serious flaw'. Most telling of all is his criticism of Holst's use of ostinato:

> Passage after passage in 'The Planets' (as elsewhere) is of incredible impotent rigidity. A formula perhaps arresting in itself is found and then clung to helplessly until it is abruptly exchanged for another, and so on: the absence of elasticity, of subtlety, of genuine modulation of texture is appalling. 'Venus' could have been written by an enthusiastic and ingenuous dilettante; 'Neptune' (with its pleasant bi-tonal calculations and preposterous finish) seems the product rather of a mathematician or scientist than of a musician. (Ibid.: 402)

The suppression of his music is implicit in the Holst memos and letters in the BBC Caversham Archives' rather scant Holst files. The first file deals with 1927-30, before the advent of Boult, when Gentleman Stanford Robinson was the main BBC conductor[17]. Holst is treated with courtesy and friendship, and works such as *The Morning of the Year* were

actually commissioned by the BBC in 1926, though Kenneth Wright in a memo of 2.2.27 to Holst was reluctant to place it in a programme. His reluctance was justified in that on inspection, the work seems a coy and sanitised version of what was supposed to be 'a representation of the mating ordained by Nature to happen in the spring of each year': as Imogen Holst remarks tersely: 'Unfortunately some of the audience expected an orgy on the lines of 'Le Sacre du Printemps'. They did not get it.' (Holst I. 1938/1988: 122) It was dedicated to the English Folk Song and Dance Society and uses pseudo-folk tunes - clearly Holst knew what was required of him to conform to Gentlemanly requirements if he wanted a performance, but his heart was no longer involved in writing in this idiom. In addition Wright was uncertain about Holst's later music - he says in a memo of 19.7.28 that a group of Holst's later, sparer motets 'did not invoke any enthusiasms whatever. I think therefore that we will forget about them for the time being.'

The second file dating from 1931-4 is mainly concerned with rehearsal arrangements for *Hammersmith,* which was originally written for Military Band and was therefore in keeping with the MAC's ideas over the maintenance of the Band as a good link between the BBC and the common man. Holst's attitude is interesting in this file - he clearly regards himself in his letters and postcards as *persona grata* in his role as an honorary Gentleman, who constantly asks for small favours and services for himself and his pupils and expects them to be met. Nevertheless there is general reluctance to perform his later works: Stanford Robinson said to Wright on 16.6.31 that the *Choral Fantasia* should not be broadcast:

> I have played through this work which lasts I should say, about 18 minutes, and I think it would be a hopeless proposition for broadcasting. It would probably be very impressive in a cathedral with a loud organ, but by wireless I think it would sound tedious. I do not recommend a performance.

Such a response would not have been dreamt of ten years previously, for conductors would have then been prepared to take the risk because Holst was still on the fringes of the Renaissance brotherhood. Boult, who was a personal friend of Holst, was later to sum up the BBC' s attitude to his music in a memo of 19.11.43:

> The neglect which his works suffered immediately after his death has, I think been gradually put right by us, for all his important works have been played within the last years, but we have since their first performance, ignored all his late works which I think I am right in saying he considered his best.

Boult admits that he concurs with Holst's general opinion of the late works. It seems that lip-service was paid to Holst's stature by single performances of new works, but duty done, they were not repeated, therefore the public had no chance to decide on their merits. Holst's strongest characteristics were by now completely at odds with Gentlemanly aims. By 1934, according to Michael Kennedy, Holst's music was regarded by musical administrators as 'box-office poison' (Kennedy 1987: 170), and despite his death in the same year there was no commemorative Prom concert.

Despite the lack of written evidence, it is highly implausible that the Gentlemen did not feel threatened by the Players and their music, especially that of Scott and Foulds. From the amount written in the musical journals on Scott, the popularity of his salon-music, and the national impact of Foulds's *World Requiem* they must have registered them. They ostracised them, not by confrontation, but by courteous, well-bred cold-shouldering and quiet neglect. So much has to be inferred from hints and veiled implications in the pre-1939 evidence of their alienation, in contrast with the post-war bluntness of the rejections of Scott and Foulds in particular. The Gentlemen could never openly admit to their refusal to countenance music that did not fit their ethos - they were far too diplomatic and intelligent - or too Gentlemanly - to confess to such prejudice. Instead they prevaricated behind a smokescreen of passive disapproval; they could not arrest the Players for treason against the English Renaissance cause, but they made sure that they received no musical nourishment in the shape of performances.

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1 *The Initiate: some Impressions of a Great Soul* 1920, *The Initiate in the New World* 1927, and *The Initiate in the Dark Cycle* 1932.

2 *Sita* came second to Naylor's *The Angelus*.

3 The Society had no connection with the current British Music Society. It was formed in 1918.

4 The Society's supportive letter, dated 29.4.21, signed by Hull, is in the BBC Caversham Archives.

5 There is a second copy in the BBC Caversham Archives.

6 Norman Allin was a world-famous singer of the time.

[7] The British Legion have no note at all of the performances of the *Requiem*, maintaining that their records do not go back beyond 1927 (which seems more than a little surprising).

[8] See BBC memo of 4.11.1953 quoted on p.171.

[9] In a letter to the *Musical Opinion* of February 1934 p.42.

[10] Educated at Oxford and the RCM.

[11] Whole work is recorded on LP LYRITA SRCS 130 and the finale on LYRIQUE 001.

[12] Recorded on CD MARCO POLO 8.223485.

[13] Recorded on BMS tape 411.

[14] On NSA BBC LP 32634.

[15] Shaw, who after all was a discerning, if partisan critic, was apparently prone to play Scott's piano compositions saying: 'Scott is the only British composer in whom I can detect a real style'. (Scott 1969: 148)

[16] Reprinted in *National Music and other Essays.*

[17] He was educated at the RCM.

EPILOGUE: SCATTERING THE ASHES

In the end, the Ashes went to neither Team, but were scattered after the demise of both Gentlemen and Players. The need for an English national music was made irrelevant by the global disillusion after the Second World War, vanishing along with the last traditions of Empire and the mindless patriotism of the First World War. The Gentlemen were succeeded by composers such as Walton, Britten and Tippett whose voices were those of individuals, composing for themselves and not for a Team.

Ironically Britten quickly earned the continental respect for English music that the Gentlemen had failed to secure. Britten's music could not have been more English in its operatic themes - *Peter Grimes* and *Albert Herring* in particular - but it was an Englishness that was not evangelical. Britten was not musically celebrating his love of England with the ulterior motive of putting English music on the map (with the exception of the commissioned celebration of *Gloriana*), or because of his national fervour, but because he wanted to express in music his personal love of the bleakness of East Anglia. There is nothing southern and soft-edged in his vision, because it is not the Gentlemanly vision of Albion, peopled by humanity, but of the impersonal forces of Nature - of the 'great Bear and the Pleiades' in fact. His music took its place internationally because its spiritual values, themes and language were universal enough to appeal to a wider and non-insular audience unreached by either the Gentlemen or the Players.

Maybe the Gentlemen's evangelism was their downfall and prevented the development of such an individual voice amongst undoubtedly gifted composers. Though the music of the ageing Vaughan Williams was still much performed after 1945, the language of his later symphonies became less dependent on Tudor polyphony, church modes and folk song cadence and therefore less Gentlemanly in idiom as he seemed to sense the out-datedness of his national music message. But he never lost his humanist attitude to the forces of Nature: Scott the explorer was still the human figure in the wastes of the *Sinfonia Antartica*.

As for the BBC, it moved away after 1945 from the need to promote an English national music, which would have seemed fustian and inappropriate, to an era of reflection and absorption in continental trends and fashions, thus trying to enter a kind of European musical common market rather than maintaining the Gentlemanly aspiration to the role of a cultural rival to Europe. As in its tardy arrival on the nationalist scene, England still lagged behind in its belated promotion of its own more cosmopolitan-voiced composers such as Lutyens, Berkeley or Maconchy, but there was an awareness and acceptance of international schools unheard of between the wars. The panel of readers considering works for first broadcast performances included more non-Gentlemanly composers than before, such as Arthur Benjamin, Mosco Carner or Lennox Berkeley (though Howells was still amongst them), and fewer Gentlemenly administrators and conscious arbiters of public taste.

This broader awareness was reflected in the popular writing on music of the time. Thus, in *British Music in 1951,* edited by Ralph Hill, there were the expected chapters on the work of British orchestras during the year, and on Thomas Hardy and Music, but they rubbed shoulders with a chapter on the music (and instruments) of India by an Indian musician, Ayana Deva Angadi. The composers who were considered representative of *British Music of Our Time* (published in 1946 under the editorship of A.L. Bacharach) were the familiar names of Delius, Holst, Warlock, Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Bliss, Moeran and Bax. Nevertheless Frank Bridge was welcomed back into the fold, cosmopolitans Goossens, Lord Berners and Constant Lambert each merited a chapter, and Walton and Britten were recognised as England's new voice - 'the music of Benjamin Britten points boldly to the future.' (Bacharach 1946: 219). However, Foulds is not even mentioned, and Scott is grudgingly given a couple of pages in a chapter entitled 'Mixed Gallery' where he is summed up by Edward Lockspeiser as:

> Gifted with melodic invention, an original sense of harmony, and a natural instinct for the orchestra, Scott had in him the main requirements for a good composer ... [yet] there is often a showy commonplace streak in his music - almost the counterpart of poster-art - which clashes badly with the literary or mystical inspiration of his works and which mars his original and vital talent. (Bacharach 1946: 189)

Here, at least, it is not Scott's mysticism that is the prime target of the criticism.

Meanwhile the music of the Gentlemen gradually slipped into the usual trough of neglect that awaits most composers immediately after their death. But in the last ten years or so, now that the Renaissance aims seem representative of another age, the Gentlemen's music can be judged on different criteria, un-hampered by an overt nationalistic baggage, but appealing as a romantic antidote to our own materialistic surroundings today. The nostalgic dying fall of a folk song cadence is still potent - it does have the universal appeal for which the Gentlemen strove; but it attracts for a different reason, as it is no longer aiming at the strengthening of nationalistic pride. Its appeal resembles more the charm of a costume drama written in a language that, though irrelevant today, can still be moving for many listeners: thus Finzi and Howells enjoyed a modest revival in the 1990s. However, the Gentlemen would have been disconcerted by the ubiquitous use of church modes, *tierces-de-Picardie* and pseudo-mediaeval clichés in the music for commercials and television country-life series, a use they might well have found degrading, for though their musical language has finally reached Everyman, as they wanted, it is not in the manner that they intended. They wanted to educate the musical masses to take pride in their musical heritage; instead the characteristics of their style are constantly heard in a diluted form and at second-hand, churned out by competent media composers who produce meaningless clones of Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Greensleeves*.

Many of the creeds and philosophies that interested the Players have a much higher profile today than during their lifetime, because today's socio-cultural framework is very different from that of the Edwardian years when the Renaissance was gathering strength. Along with the New Age came renewal of popular interest in the occult and the esoteric that was perhaps less intellectual than at the turn of the century, but more widespread. Scott's writings are still swallowed whole with today's appetite for holistic medicine and health foods through the outlet of specialist bookshops; his books on these subjects are still in print along with his occult works, while his music moulders. (Marjorie Hartston Scott told me in the autumn of 1997 that a French Canadian television company is eager for details on Scott,

not as a musician, but as a pioneer in his writing on occult and holistic health matters.)

As far as Indian music is concerned, awareness of the attractions of non-European music has grown and its study has been incorporated into the school music curriculum for some time. However the educational attitude is still perfunctory; for instance, an article in *Music Teacher* on current GCSE listening requirements in ethnic music reports that children are taught that 'if it goes twang and sounds out of tune, say it's a sitar.' (Bowman 1996: 23) The public's prejudice and unwillingness to accept the beauty of an alien musical tradition, due to conditioning by the Gentlemen, is gradually being broken down, and concerts of Indian music are well attended, both on the South Bank and in the provinces. The mutual admiration and interest of Menuhin and Ravi Shankar for each other's musical culture would have seemed a natural corollary to Foulds's aims of an East/West musical synthesis, which would have been respected nowadays. In fact, Foulds's beliefs in finding one's 'own note', clairaudience and the occult effect of timbre might well have led to his assumption of *guru* status amongst younger musicians. Certainly his and Maud's use of phono-therapy would have been seriously considered in today's availability and variety of music-therapies.

Because of his Gentlemanly connections and the popularity of *The Planets*, Holst was never entirely hidden from view. The neglect of his later works is now being gradually redressed, and their popularity increases, especially amongst amateur choirs, partly through the recordings of the Holst Singers. Many of the Sanskrit and other works that were neglected by the Gentlemen, such as the *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, the *Choral Symphony* and the *Choral Fantasia*, are now on CD along with most of the smaller choral works. As for Warlock, as long as there are still song recitals his songs will be performed, and there was recently an issue of a fine disc of his carols including some of his choral masterpieces. In addition there has been considerable interest in the occult side of his life and personality, from the rather sensational book by his son Nigel Heseltine, to the sober and informative biography by Barry Smith. But in musical terms Scott still remains in obscurity; the only exceptions are that his lighter works have appeared in 1996 on a CD of piano music[1], followed by a second disc containing a mixed bag of rather unrepresentative orchestral

works.[2] Most of his larger-scale works remain unperformed and unrecorded, and languish in the National Sound Archive or the British Music Information Centre. Whereas there are many undoubtedly attractive works amongst Scott's output which deserve hearing, it is difficult to imagine that there are lost masterpieces.

The main tragedy arising from the Players' alienation is not the relegation of Scott but the neglect and partial loss of the music of John Foulds. As has been noted before, there are now a few recordings available in addition to occasional broadcasts, and the enthusiastic, though small, band of Foulds's admirers is gradually growing. None of the small proportion of his work that is extant is superficial, however deftly entertaining, and his serious works are startling in their power and lack of pretension. His is a genuinely original voice, whose quality arises from his deep immersion in his esoteric beliefs.

There are many ironies in the hidden suppression of the Players by the Gentlemen, but the most obvious is that in today's European climate there is still no English composer from 1900-1939 who has the popular status and appeal of a Stravinsky, a Prokofiev or even a Poulenc. Though Vaughan Williams had written in other styles than the 'pastoral', as in his Neo-classical works such as the *Concerto Accademico*, this side tends to be ignored by many English music-lovers and the appeal of even his 'pastoral' works tends to be limited to England and America. The works of the rest, Gentlemen, Reserves, Spectators or Players alike, are probably interesting rarities abroad rather than staple concert fare. The Players were, to a greater or lesser extent, prophetic of some of the musical fashions of the latter part of the twentieth century, when the musical climate would have been more propitious for them than that of their lifetime. The textures, ostinati, subtle changes of timbre and stasis of minimalism have even reached the popular market, as in the case of Michael Nyman's music for the film *The Piano*. Yet as has been seen, many of these ingredients are found in Holst and even Warlock, and to a much greater extent in Foulds and Scott. Music of a ritualistic nature and apparent simplicity in Tavener's recent work *The Apocalypse* has already been mentioned; it had much in common with the very qualities of hypnotic stasis and simple harmonies which the critics found so frustrating in the *World Requiem*, but which the 1920s

audience found so moving.

If the Gentlemen had not felt so threatened by the Players, nor been so blinkered by their belated nationalism, but had accepted that there was room in English music for variety of language and purpose, then the Renaissance aims might not have been so over-promoted to the detriment of any other kind of music. The English musical scene of the first half of the century might have been richer, less single-dimensional, and therefore more balanced and thus more acceptable on the continent. Perhaps, over the years ahead, the Ashes will be swept up into one single musical urn. If the Selectors are then impartial and exploratory, they might risk performances of some of Scott's larger later choral works, re-explore the chamber music and the large-scale piano sonatas, recognise Foulds's *Essays in the Modes* as being a major twentieth century piano work, and place the *Three Mantras* in big orchestral concerts. Then the public will have a chance of being the Umpires, will disallow the indecisive (though predictable) outcome of the match in 1939, and will decide that there is room in English music for both Teams. In this event, the more appropriate outcome would not be the implicit Gentlemanly victory of the 1930s, but an honourable tie.

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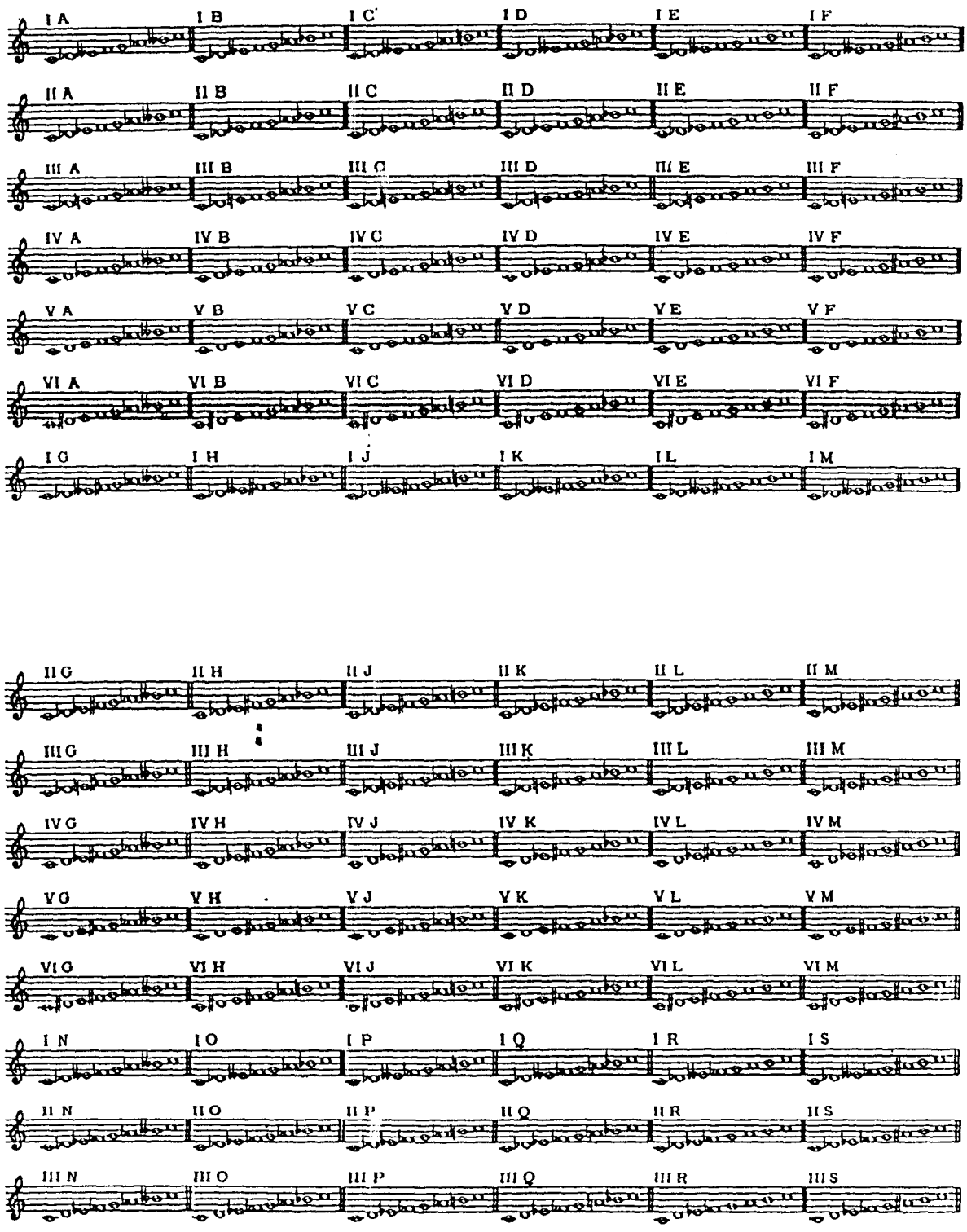
1 On TREMULA 104-2.

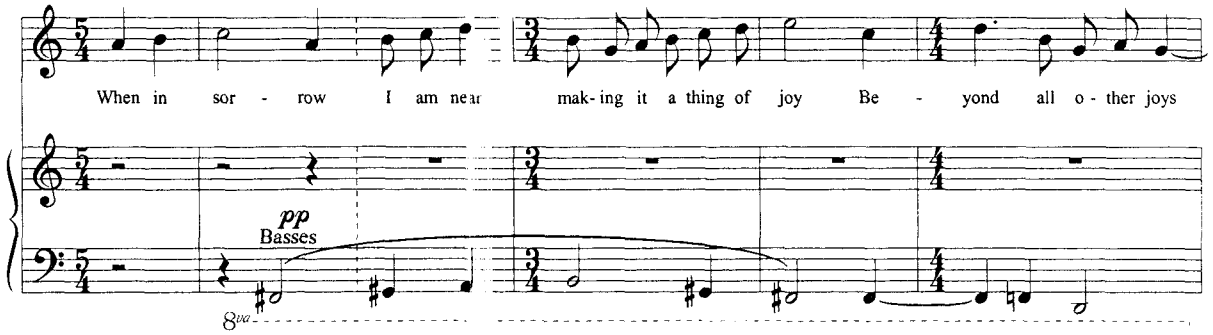
2 On MARCO POLO 8.223485.

APPENDIX

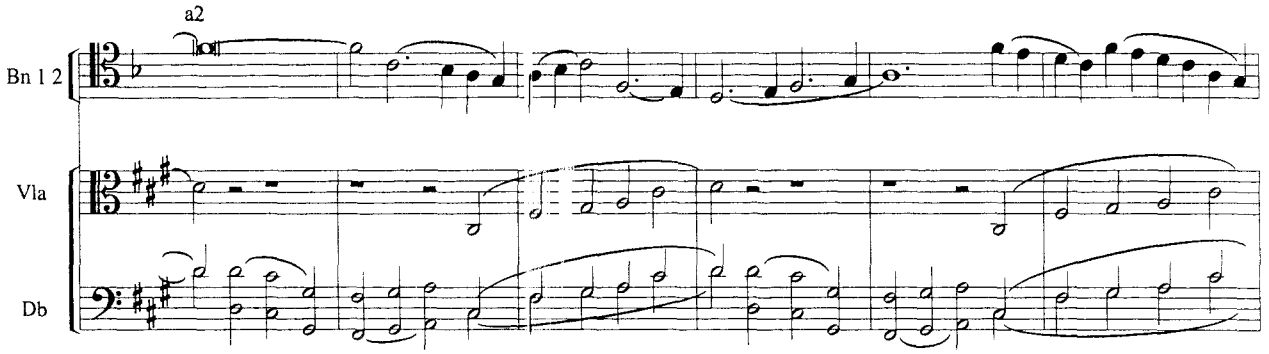
A TABLE OF NINETY MODES



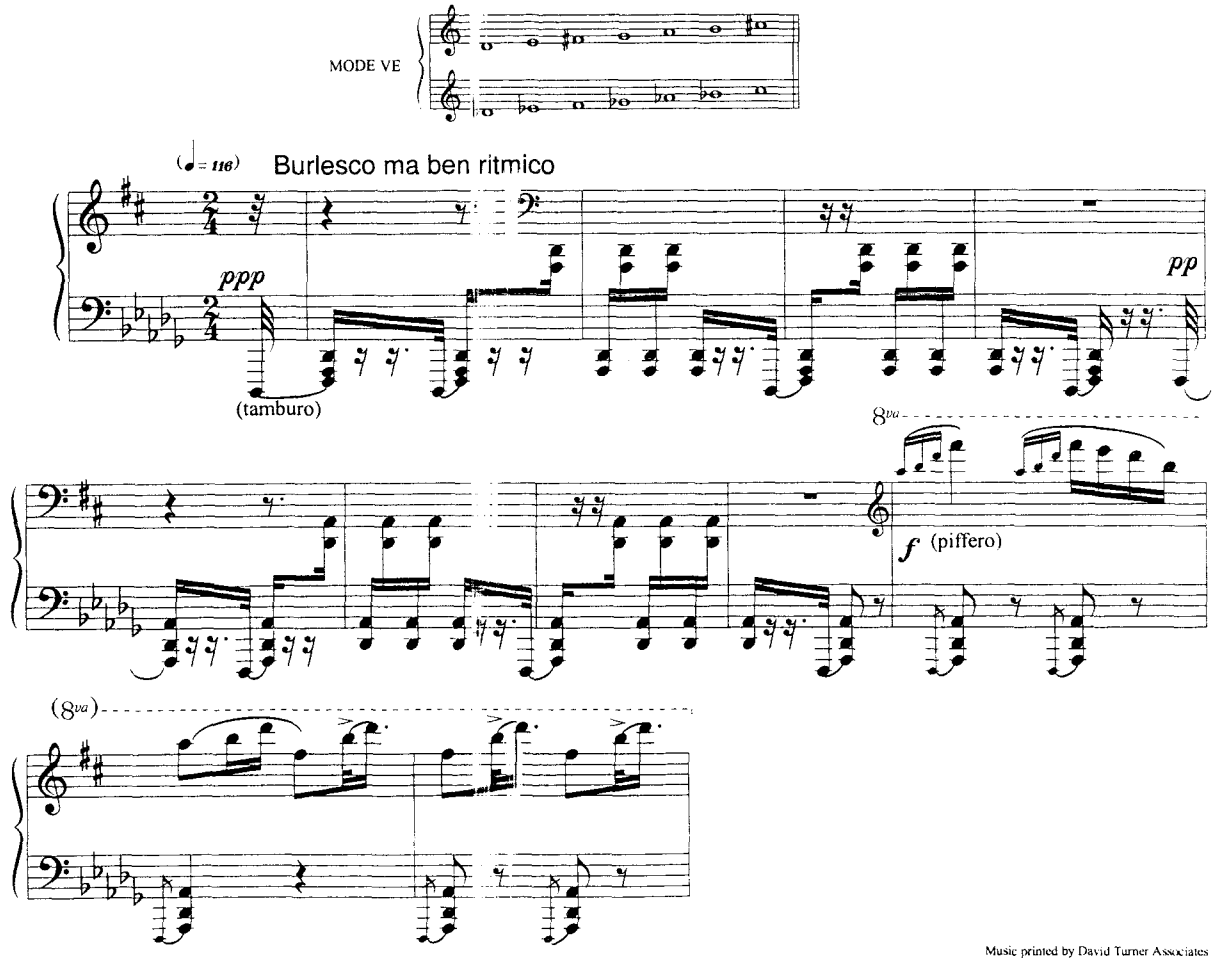
Ex. 1 Holst *Savitri*



Ex. 2 Holst *Hammersmith*

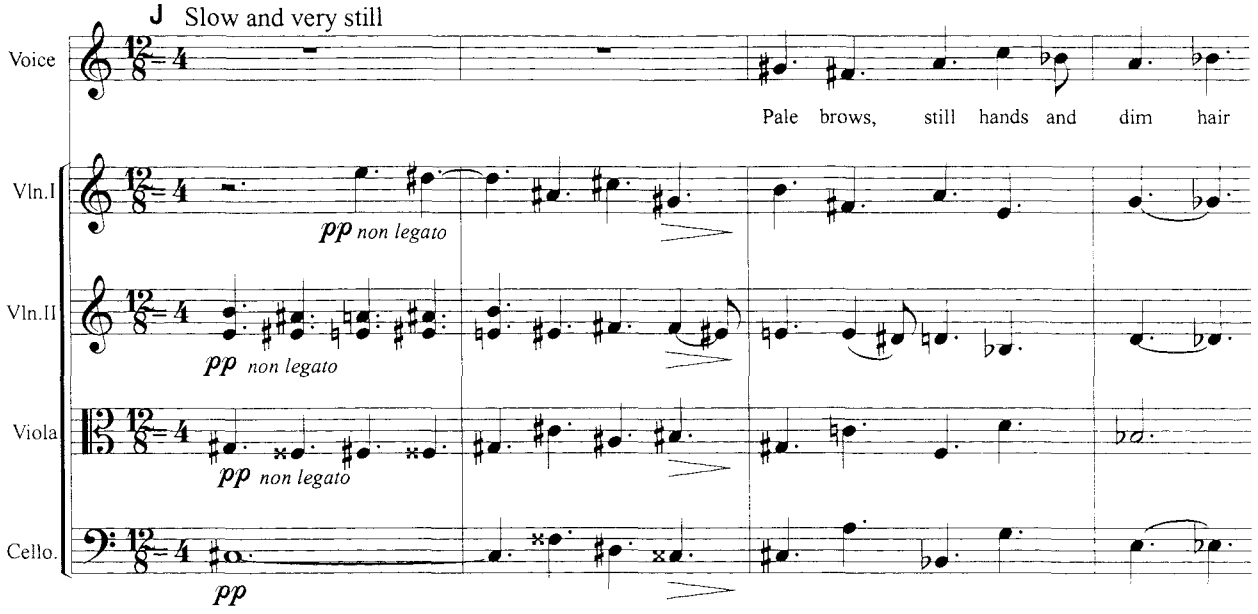


Ex. 3 Foulds *Essays in the Modes* - *'Military'*

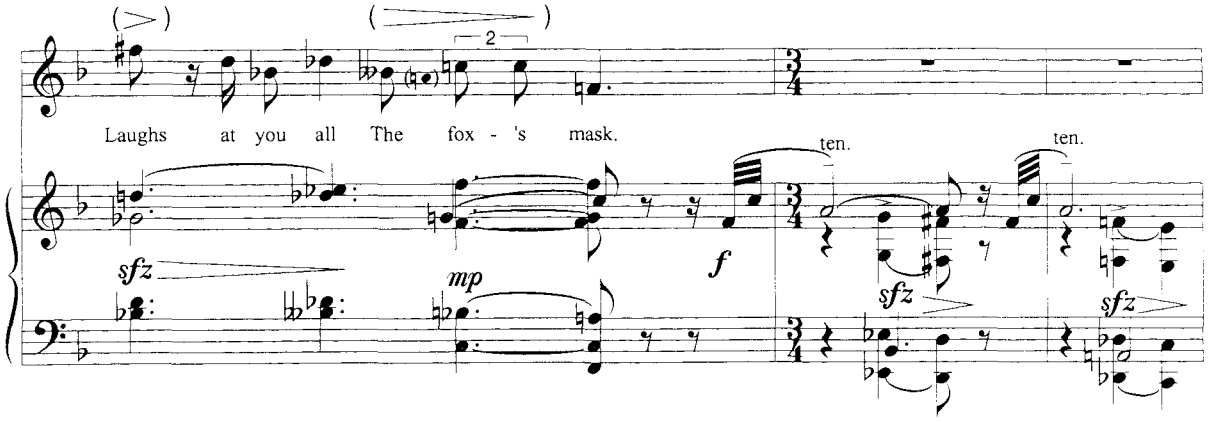


Music printed by David Turner Associates

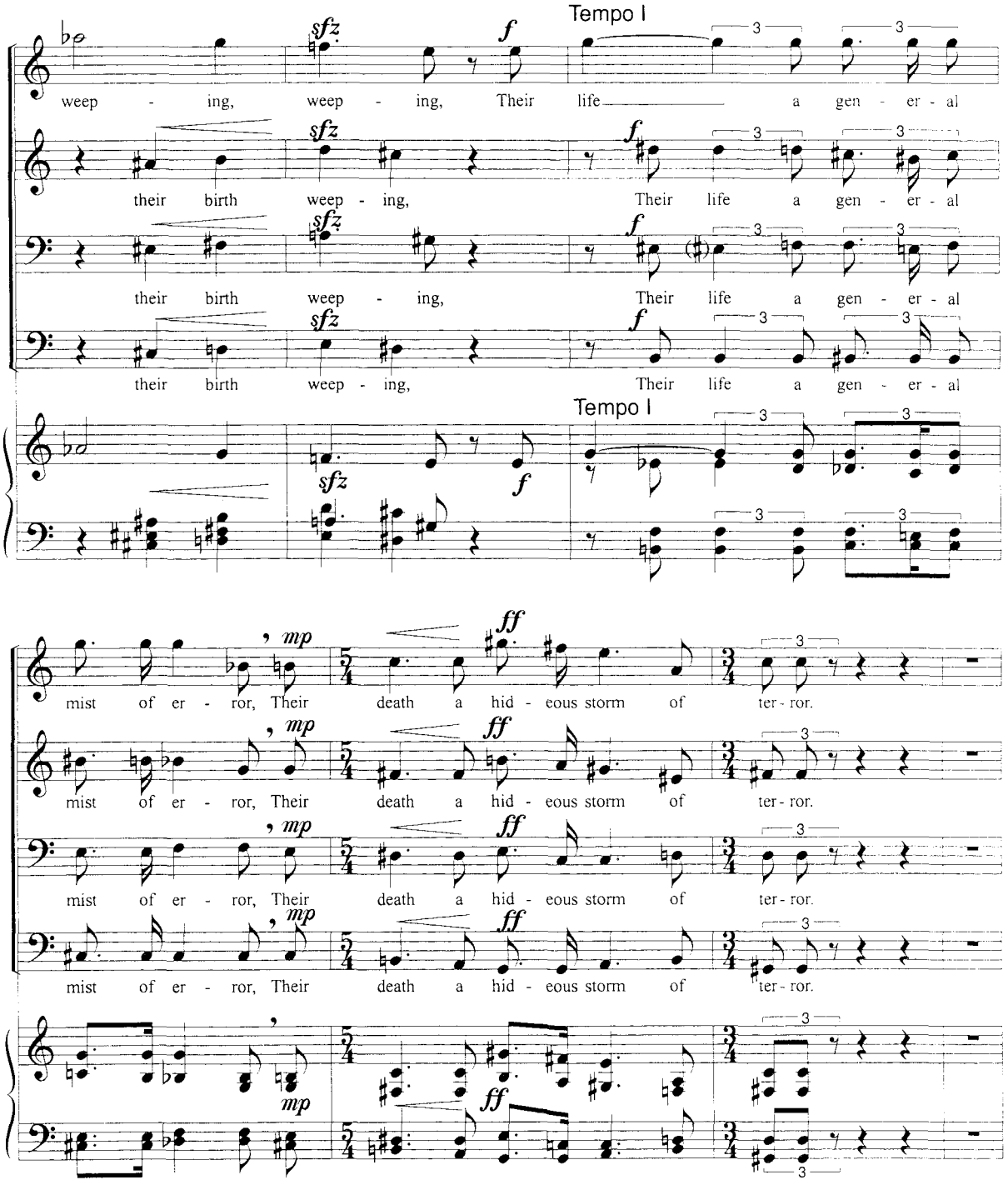
Ex. 4 Warlock *The Curlew*



Ex. 5 Warlock *The Fox*

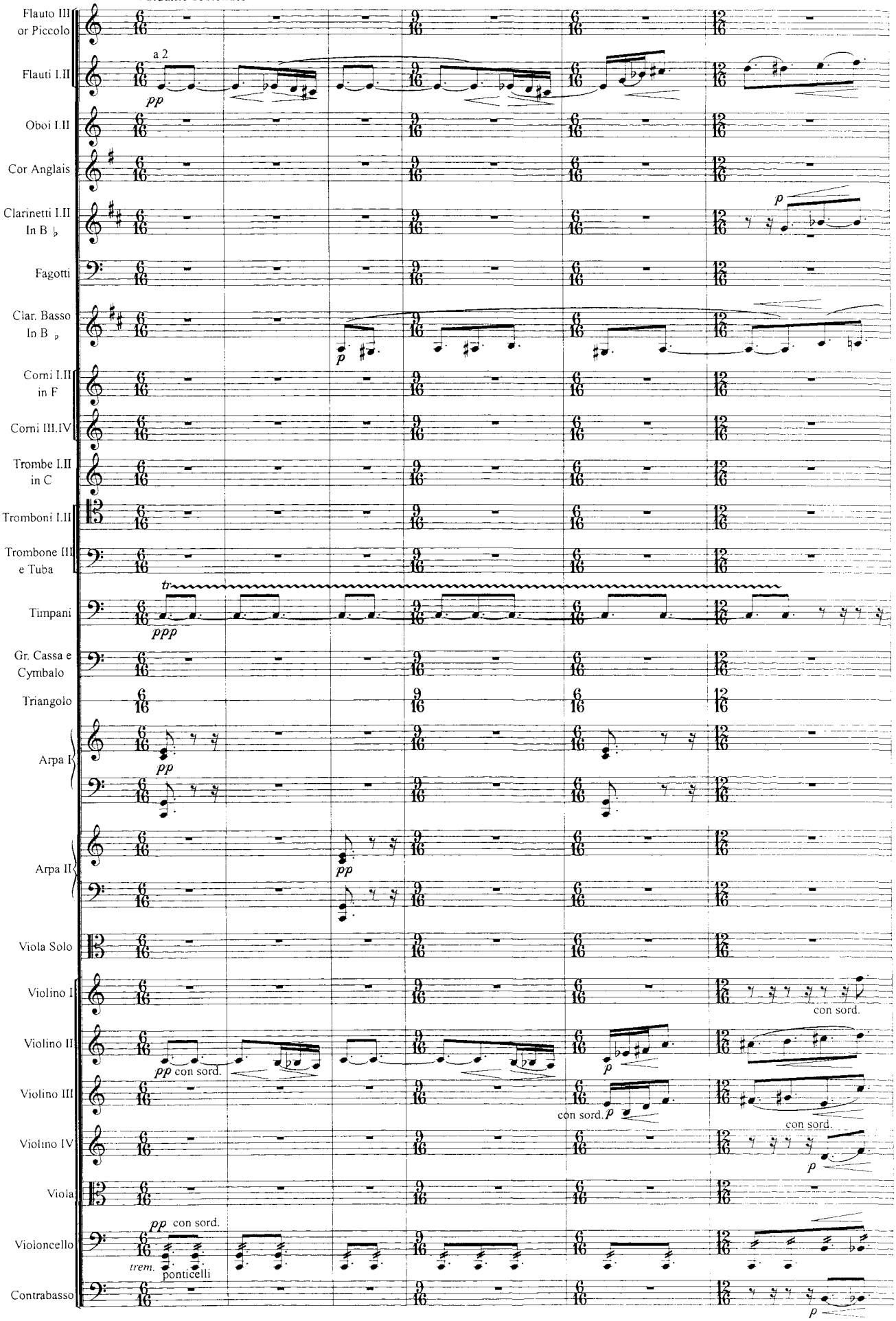


Ex. 6 Warlock *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi*

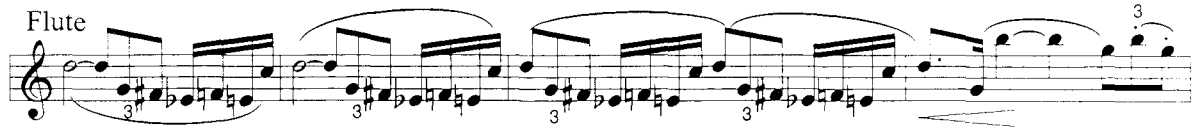


Ex. 7 Scott *Aubade*

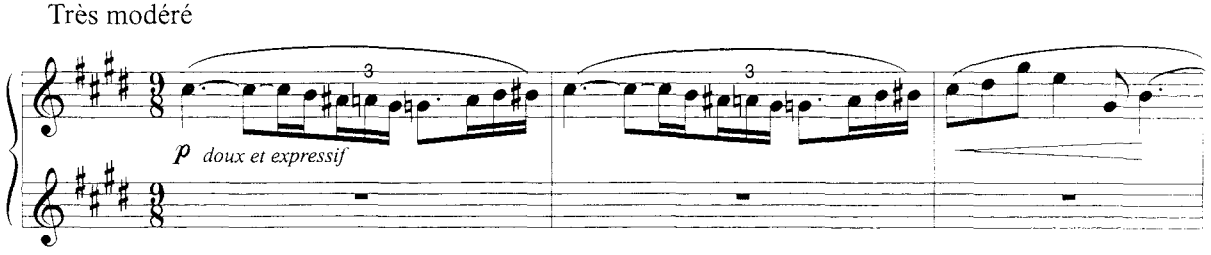
Cyril Scott Op.77



Ex. 8 Scott *Idyll for voice and Flute*

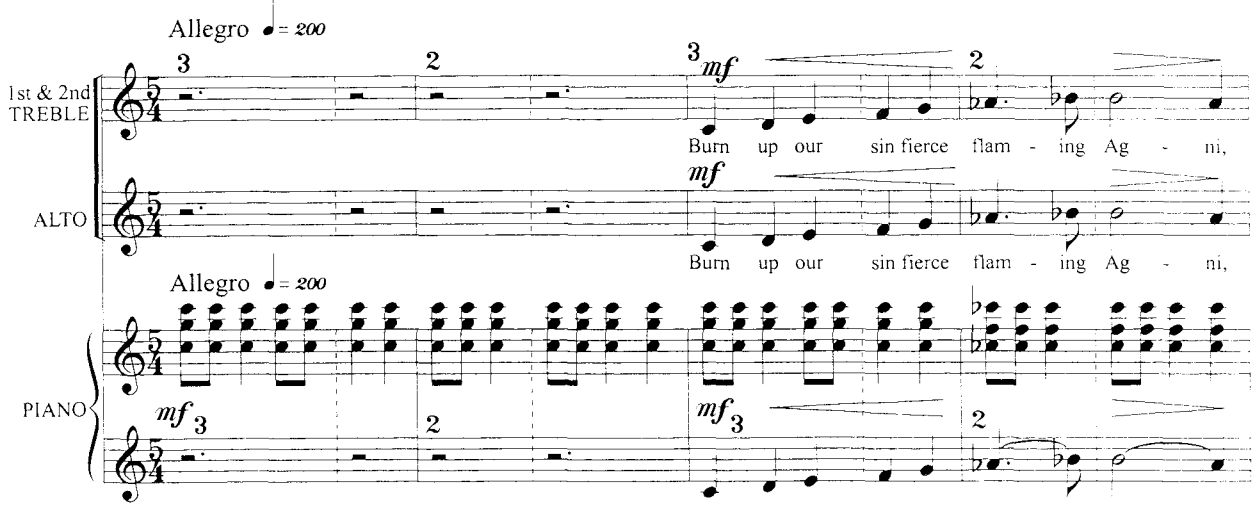


Ex. 9 Debussy *L'après Midi d'un Faune*

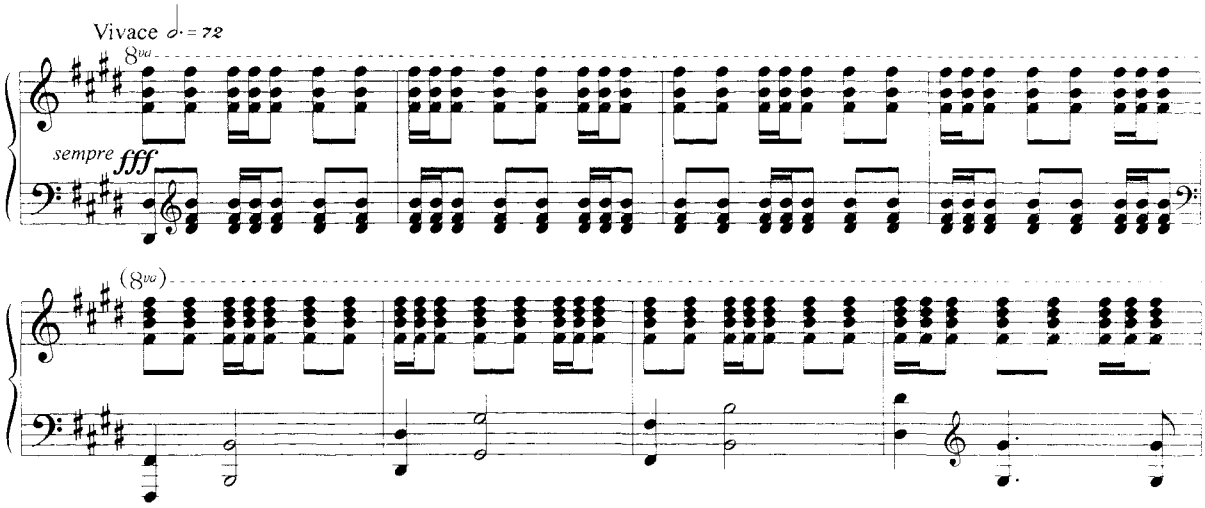


Ex.10 Holst *To Agni (Hymns from the Rig Veda)*

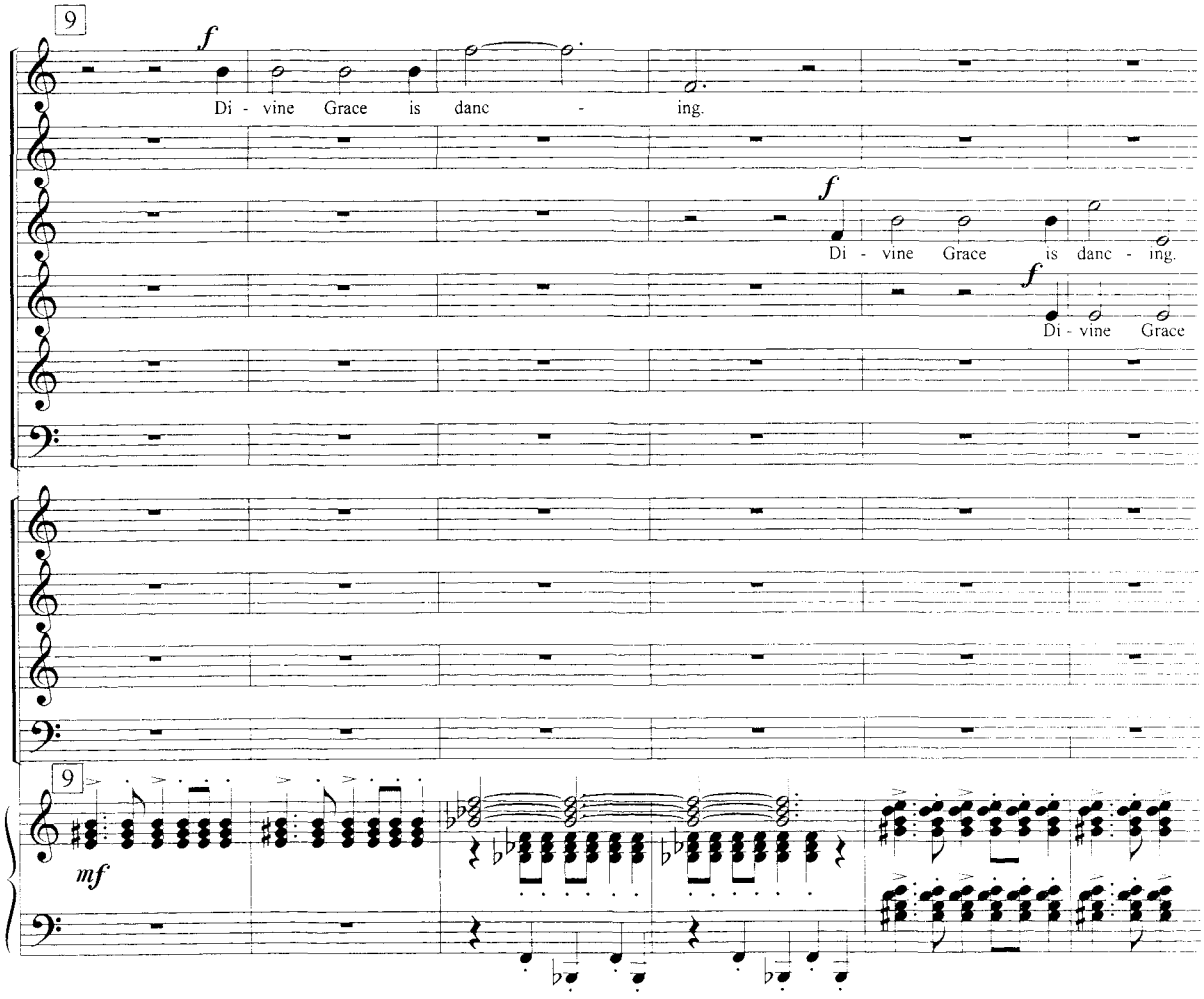
Note. In the following hymn the bars are divided into 3 beats followed by 2 and 2 followed by 3 alternately with few exceptions. The figure at the beginning of each bar denotes which of the two comes first.



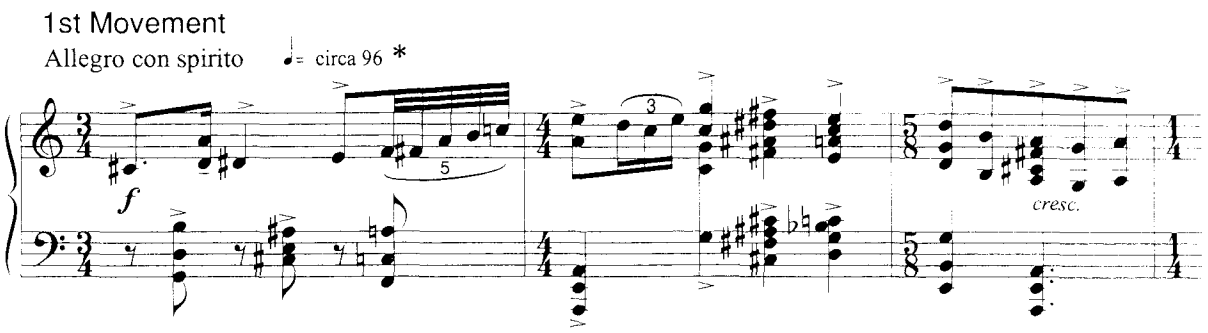
Ex.11 Holst *The Cloud Messenger*



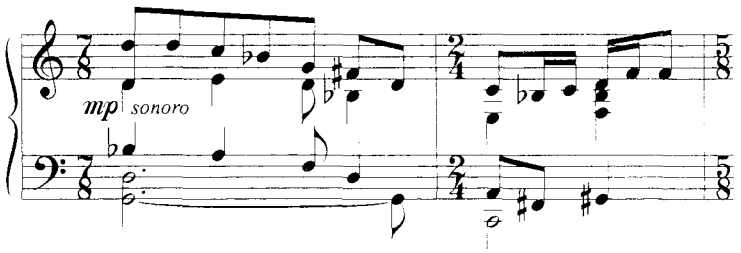
Ex.12 Holst *The Hymn of Jesus*



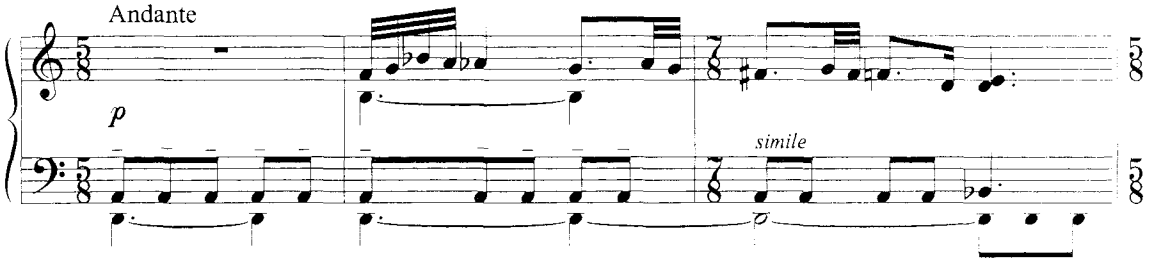
Ex.13 Scott *Piano Sonata No. 1 - First movement*



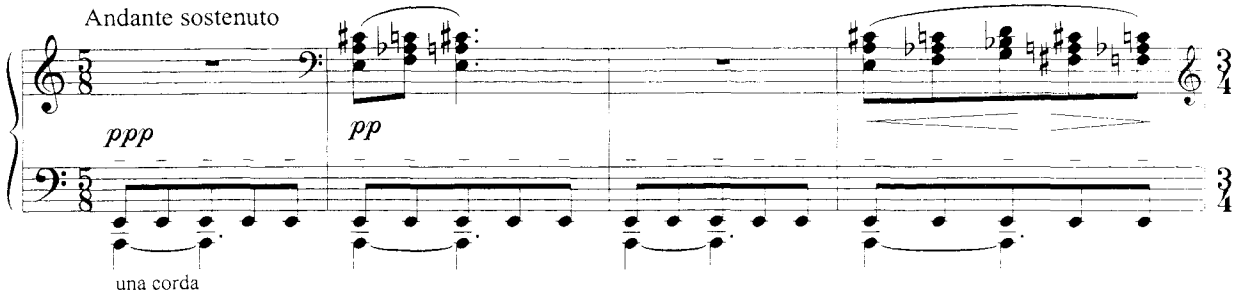
Ex.14 Scott *Piano Sonata No. 1 - Leitmotiv*



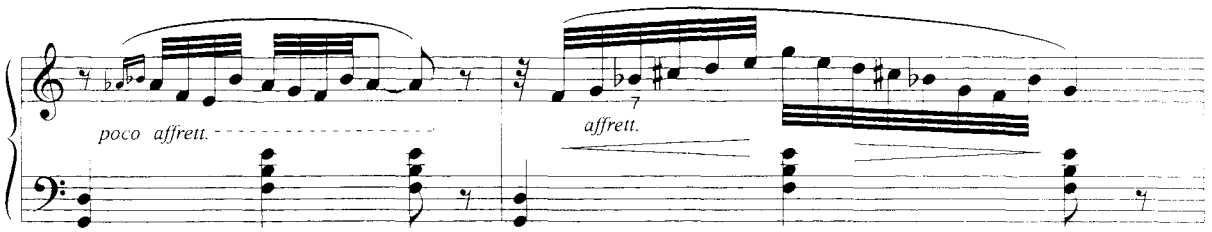
Ex.15 Scott *The Snake-Charmer*



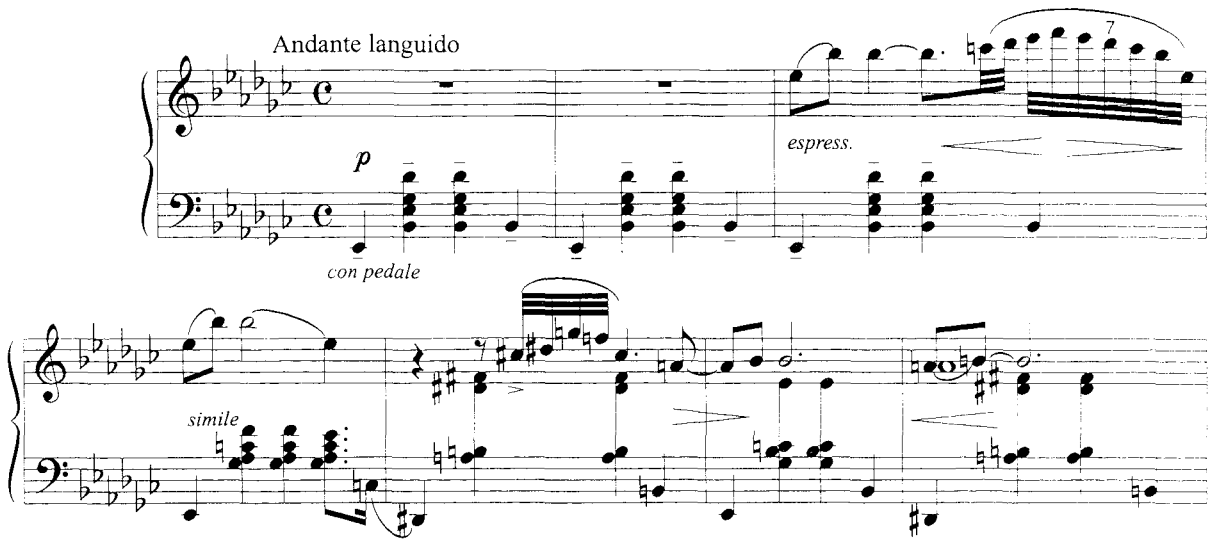
Ex.16 Scott *The Twilight of the Year*



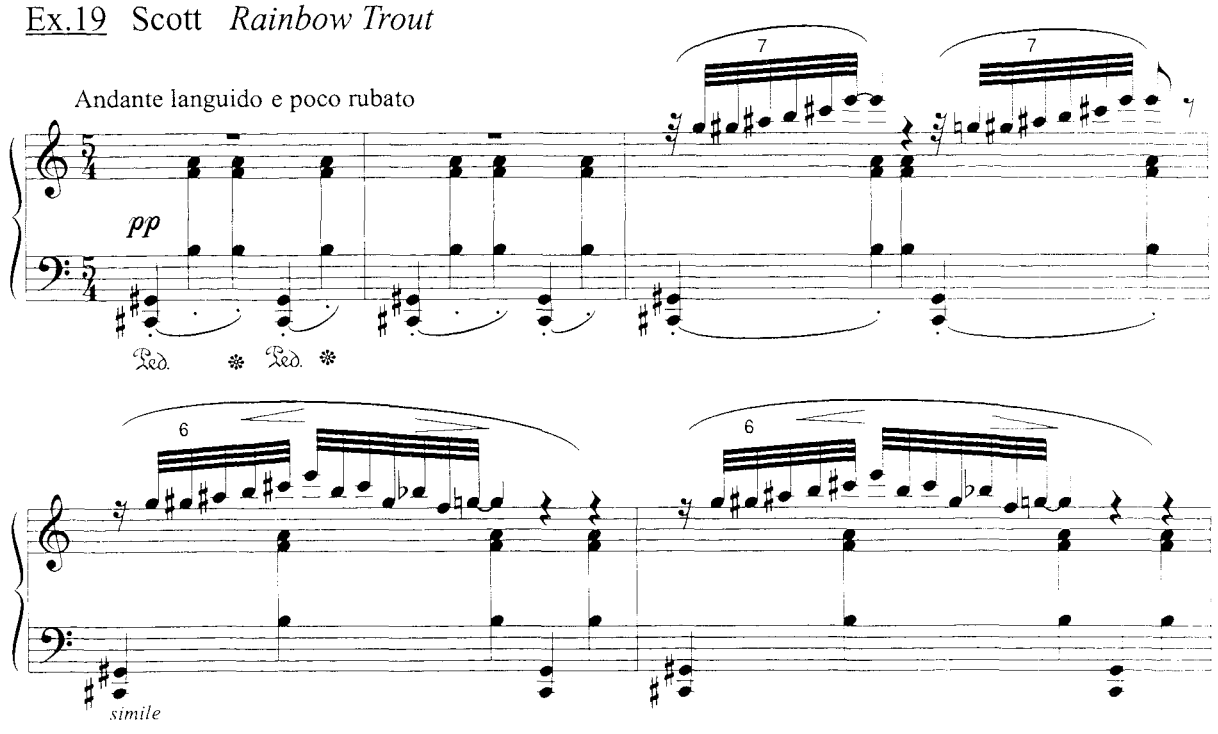
Ex.17 Scott *The Piper in the Desert (Karma Suite)*



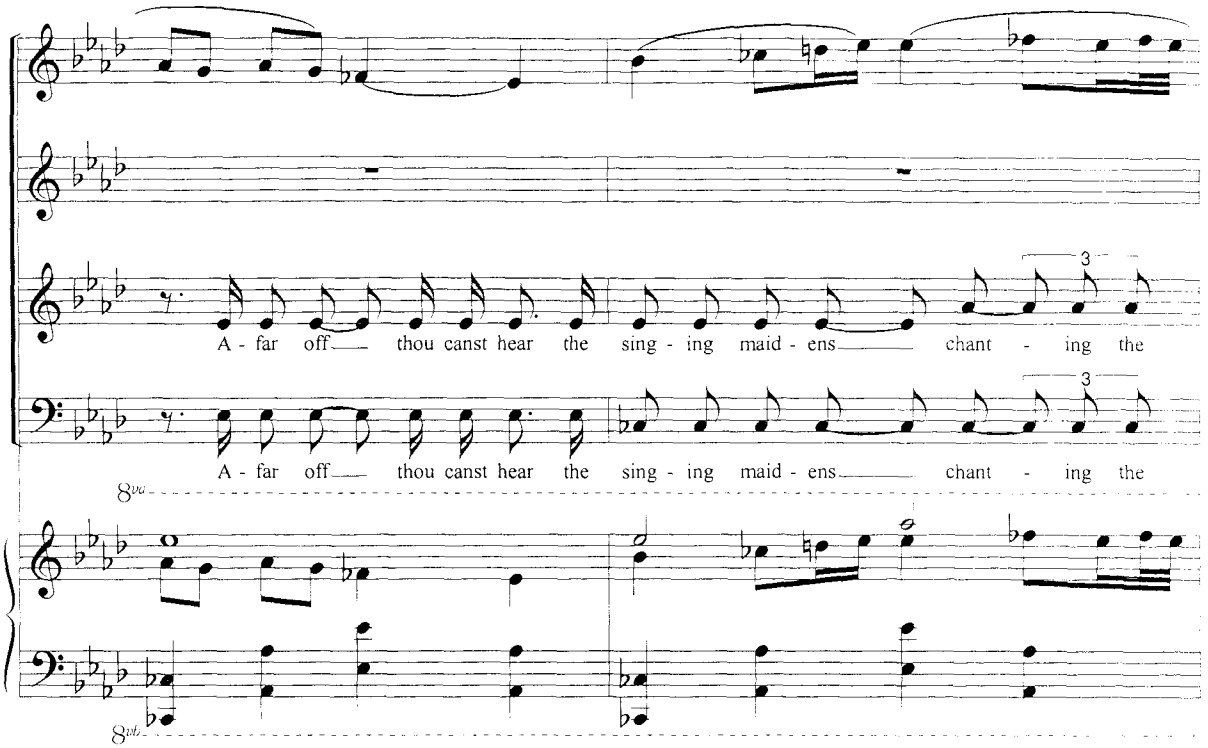
Ex.18 Scott *Lotus Land*



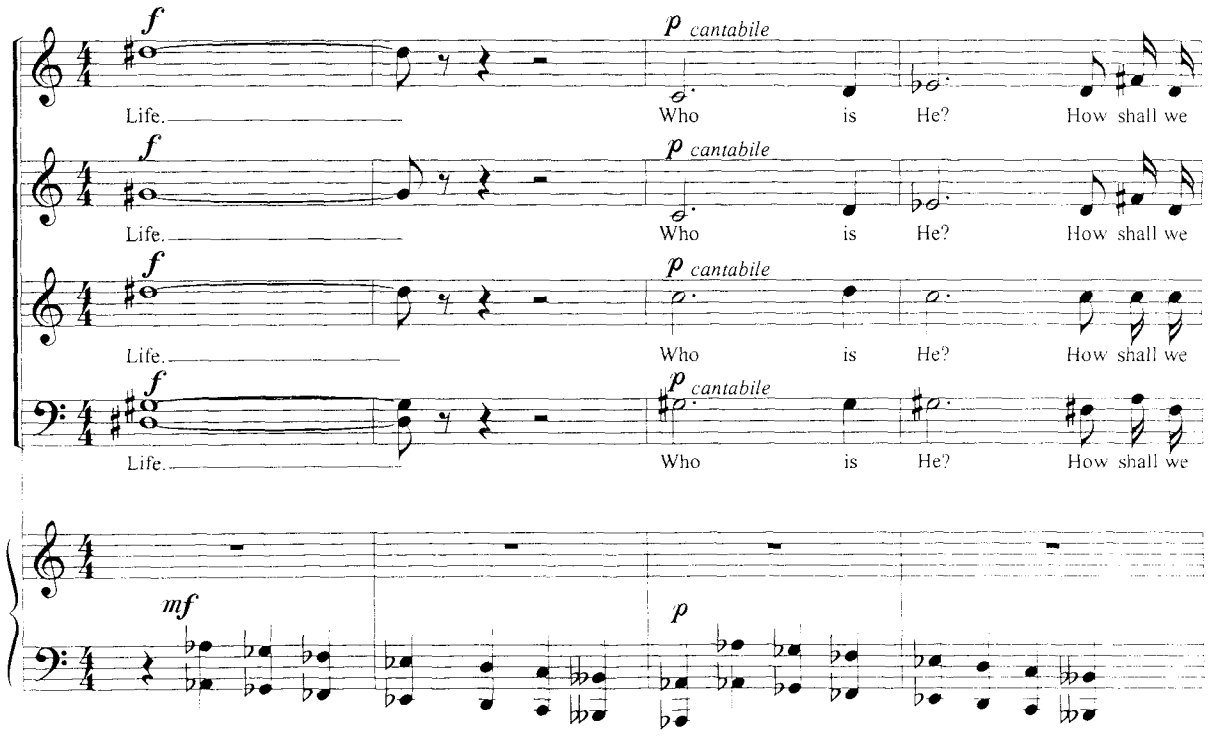
Ex.19 Scott *Rainbow Trout*



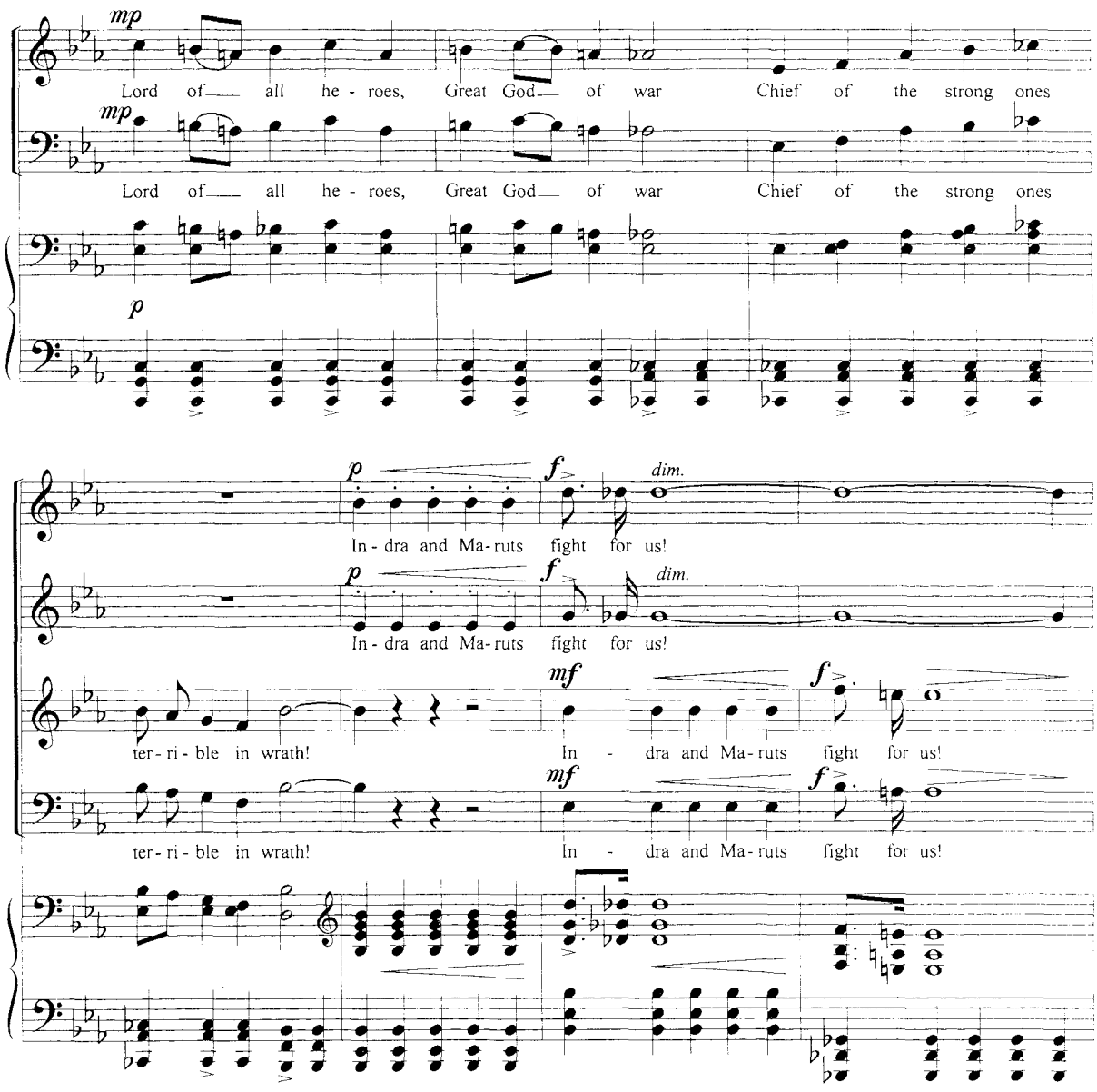
Ex.20 Holst *The Cloud Messenger*



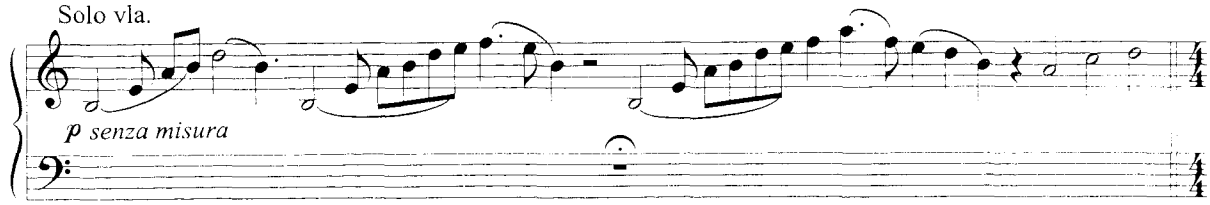
Ex.21 Holst *To the Unknown God (Hymns from the Rig Veda)*



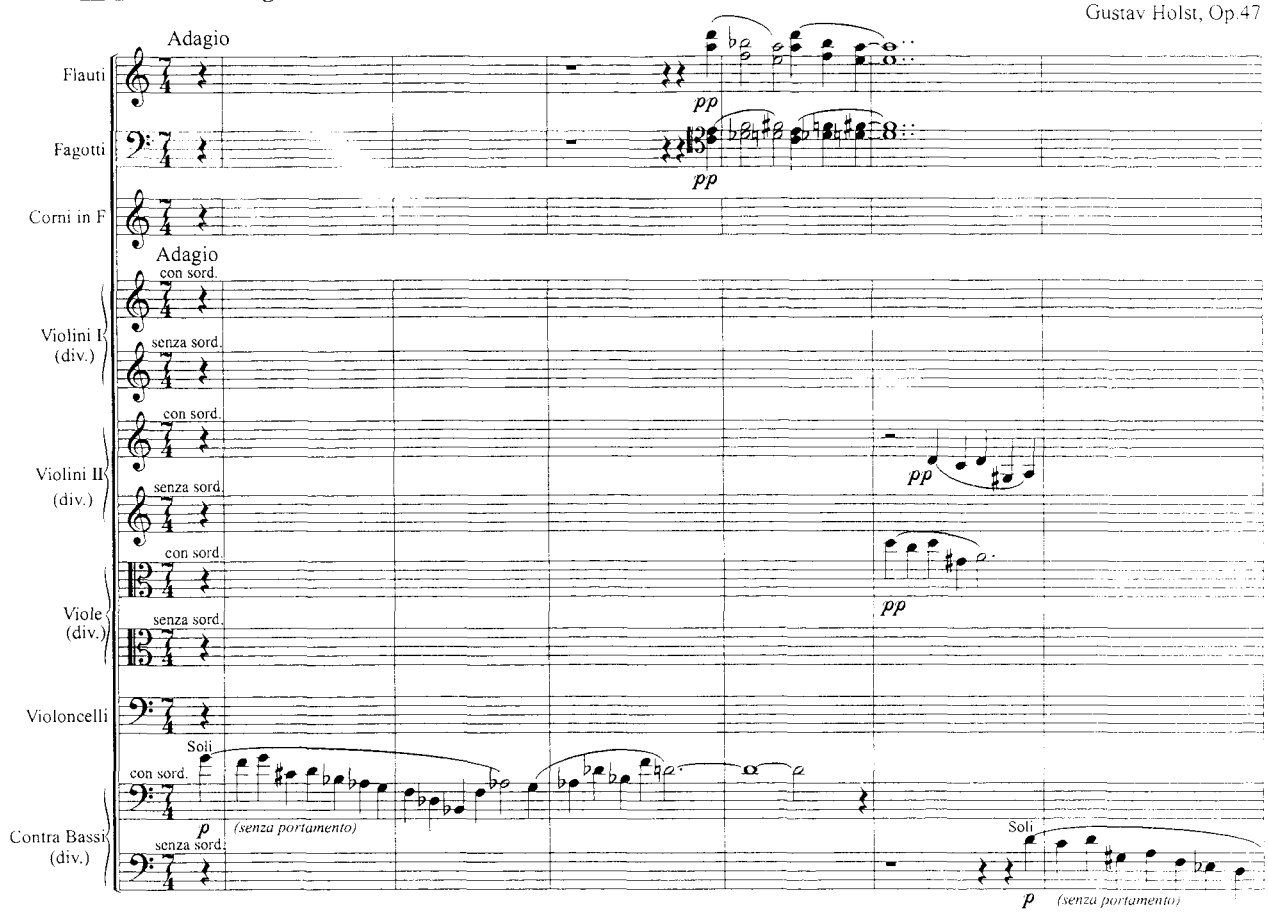
Ex. 22 Holst *Battle Hymn (Hymns from the Rig Veda)*



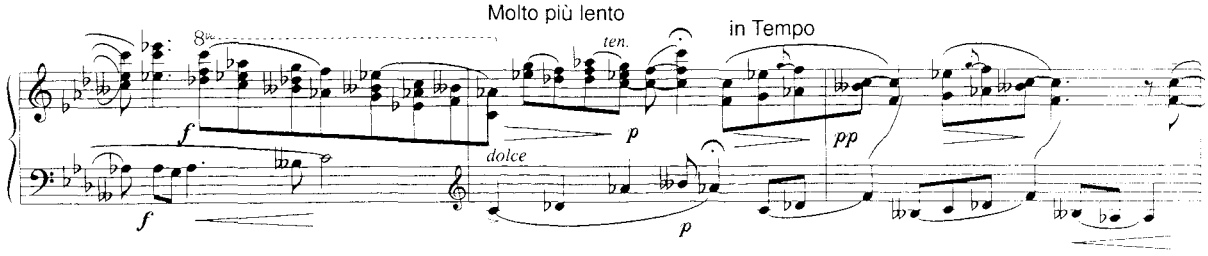
Ex.23 Holst *Choral Symphony - First movement*



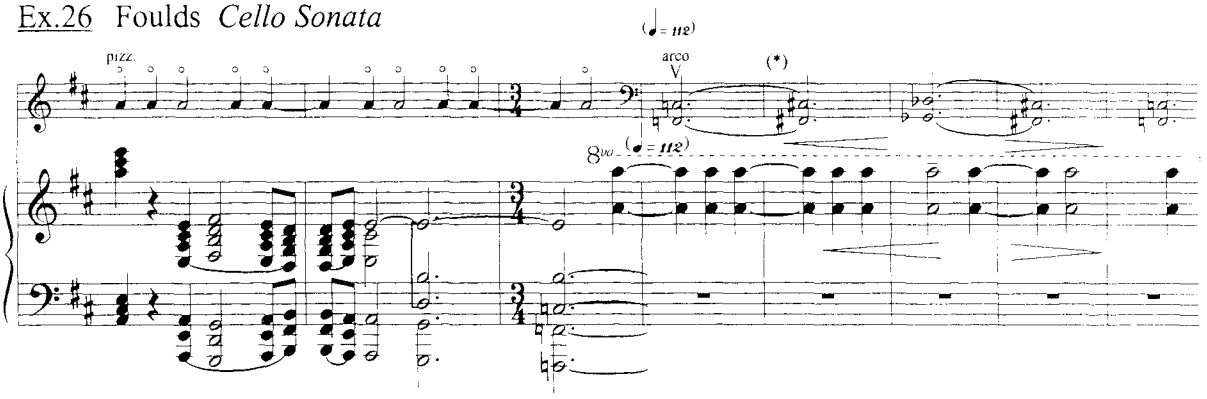
Ex.24 Holst *Egdon Heath*



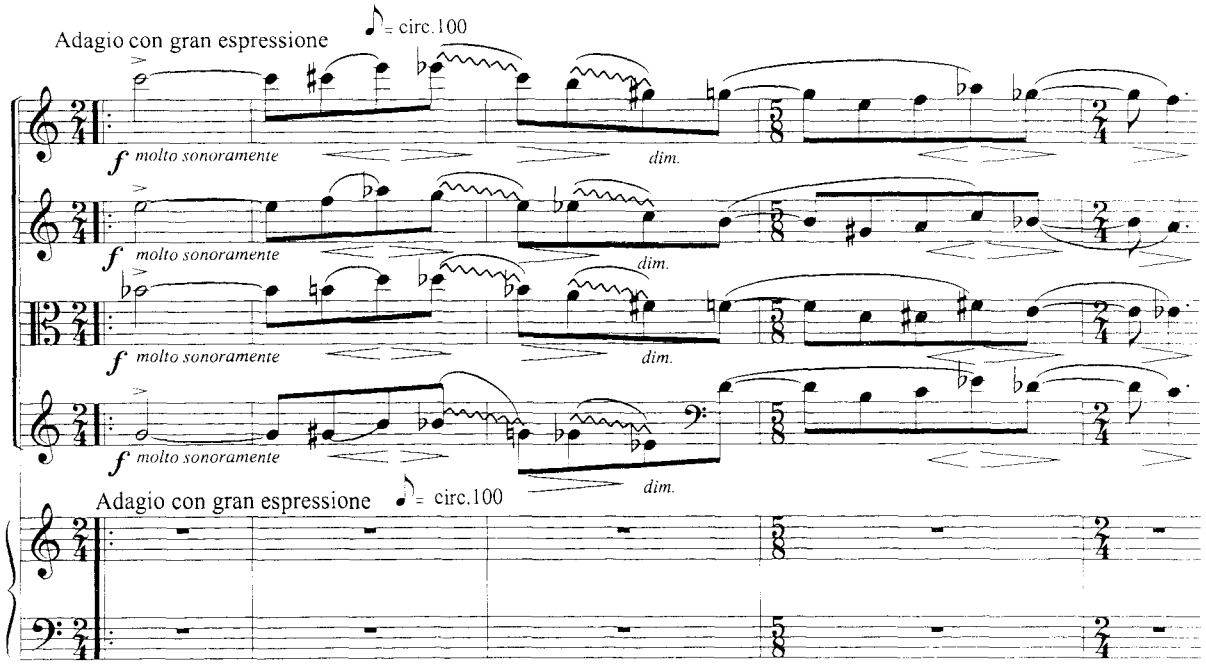
Ex.25 Foulds *Essays in the Modes - 'Exotic'*



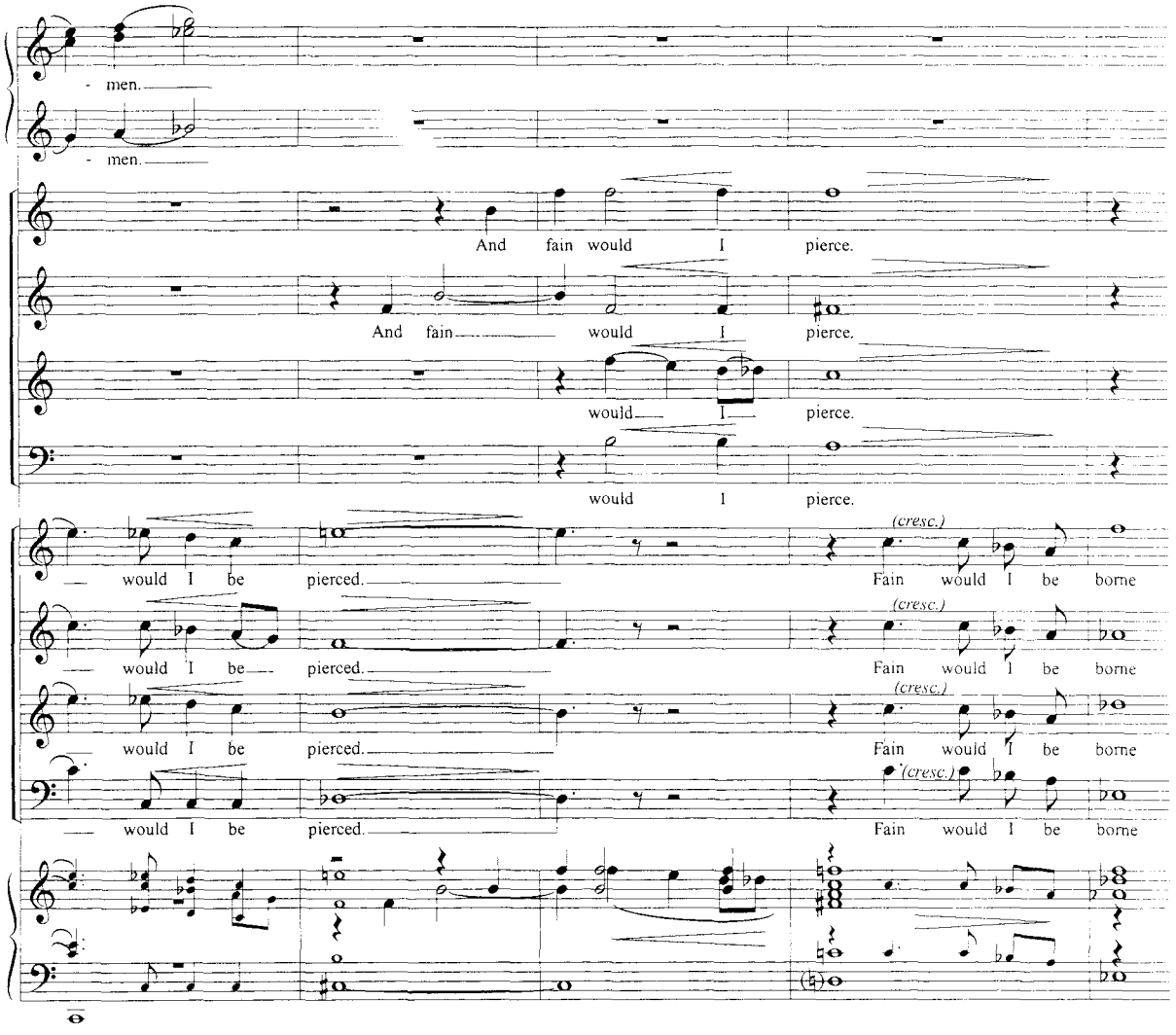
Ex.26 Foulds *Cello Sonata*



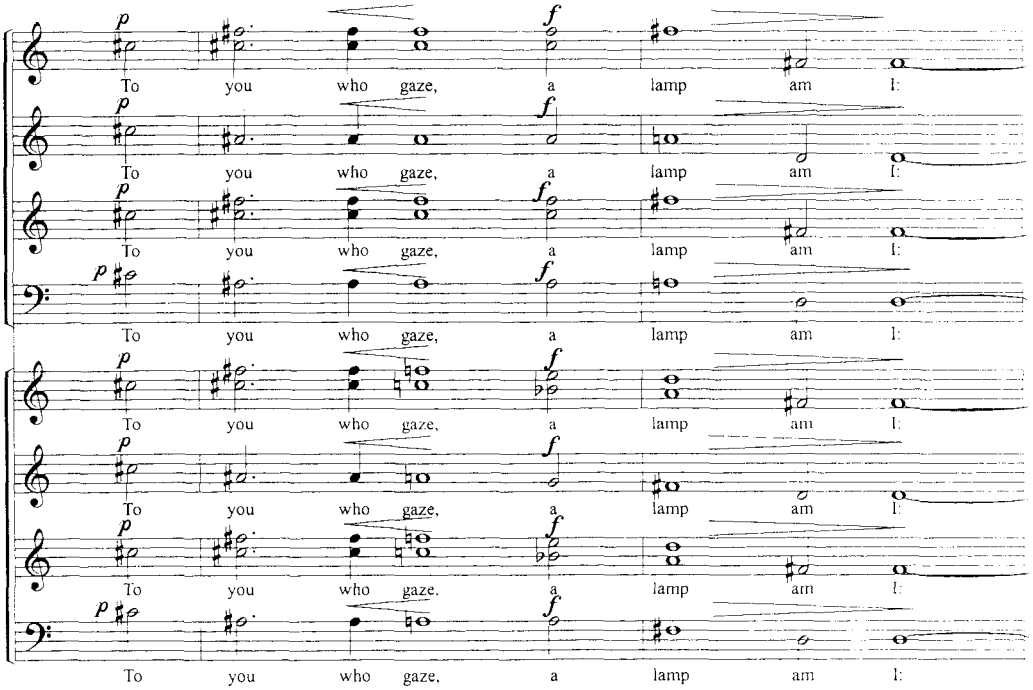
Ex.27 Scott *Piano Quintet*



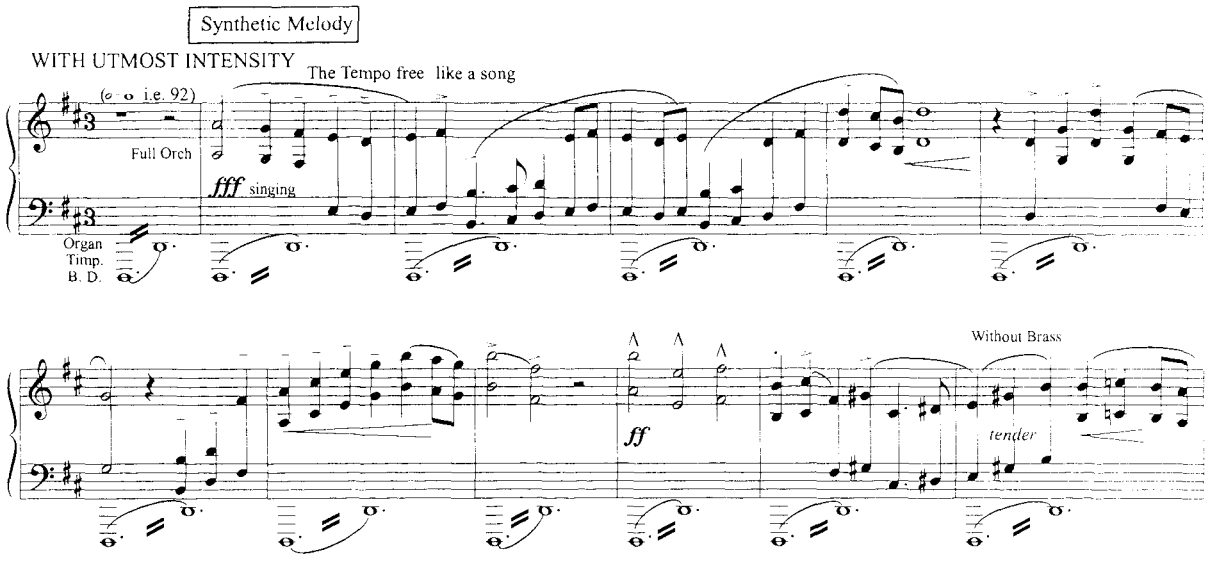
Ex.28 Holst *The Hymn of Jesus*



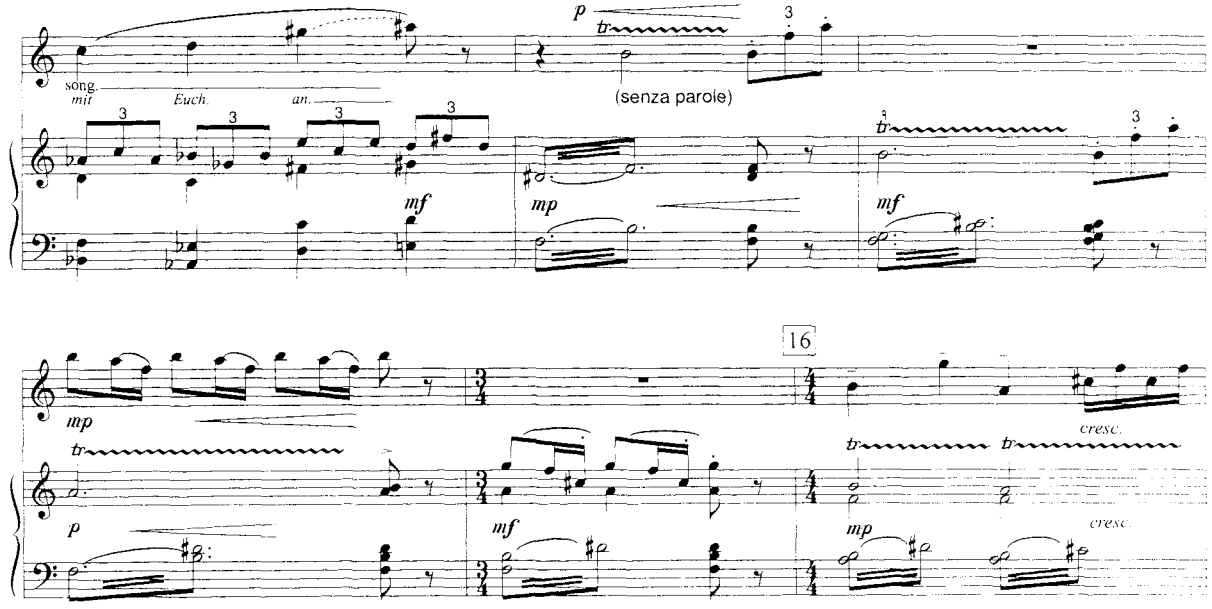
Ex.29 Holst *The Hymn of Jesus*



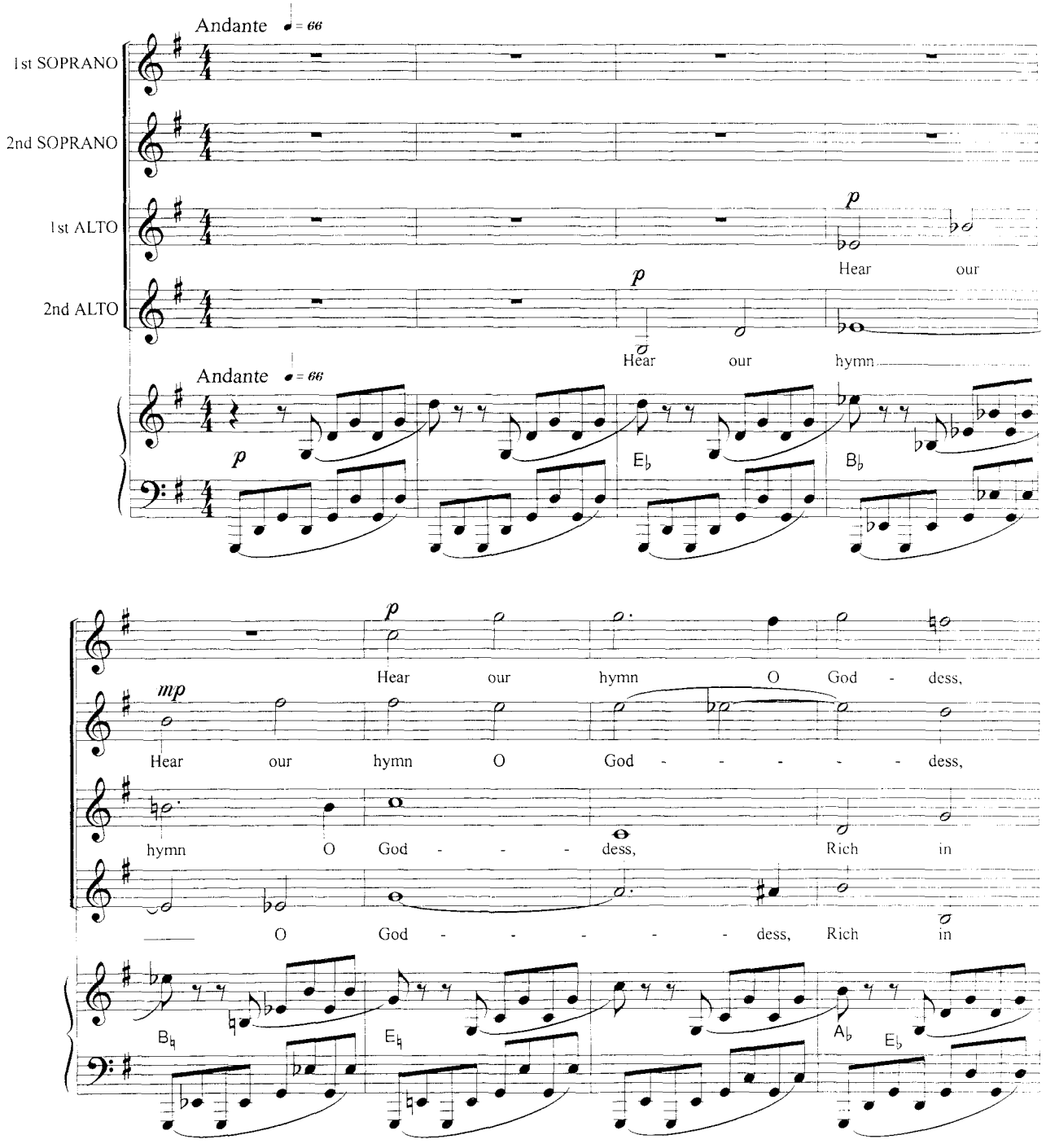
Ex.30 Foulds *World Requiem*



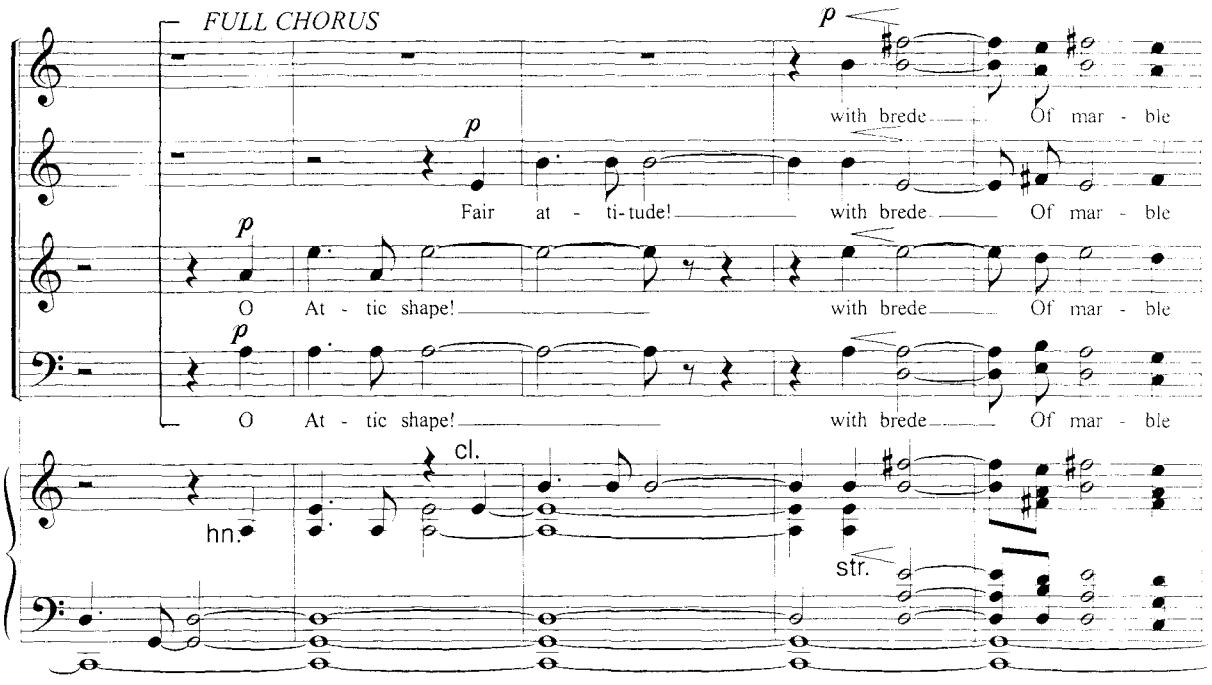
Ex.31 Scott *Rima's Call to the Birds*



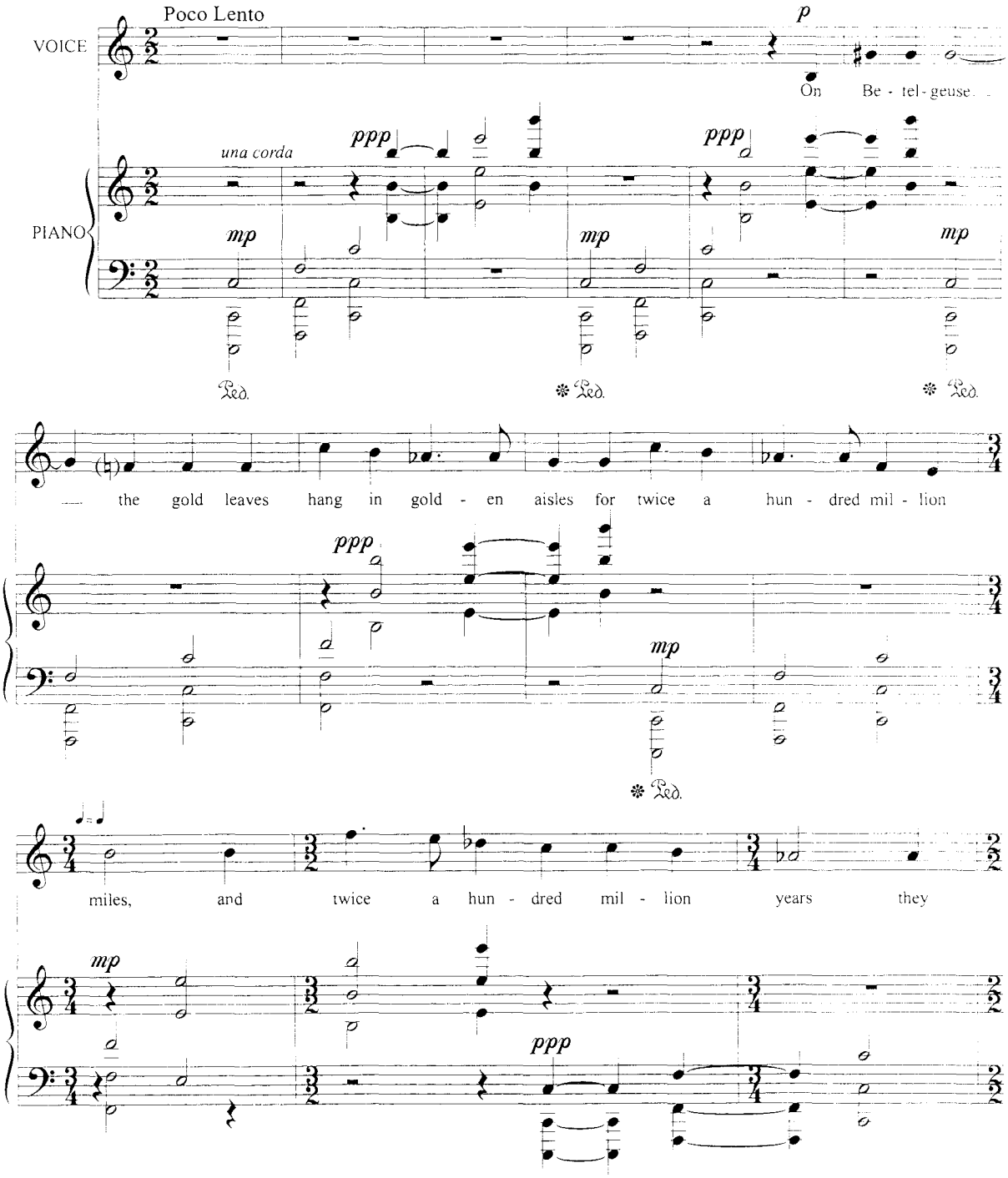
Ex.32 Holst *Hymn to the Dawn (Hymns from the Rig Veda)*



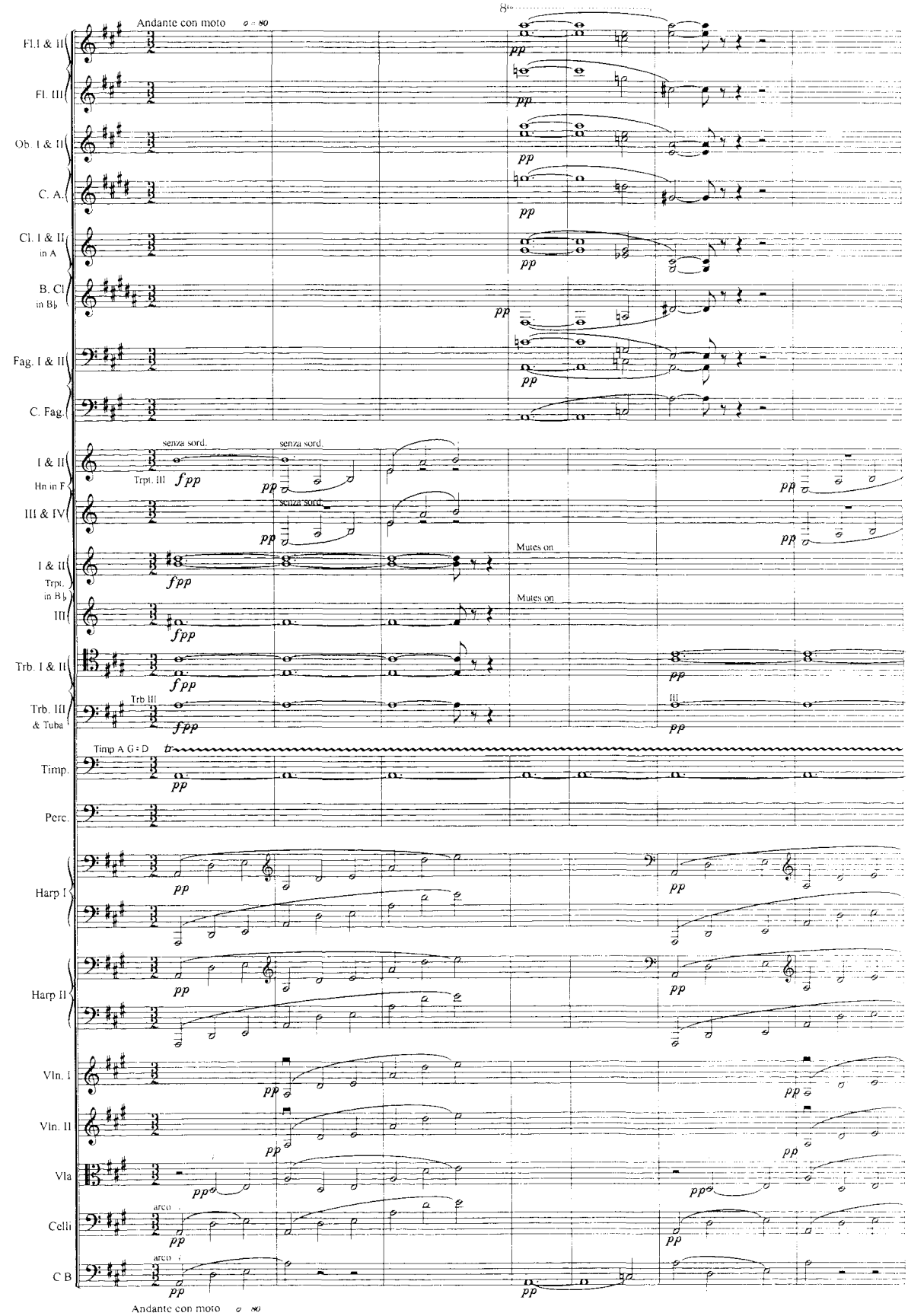
Ex.33 Holst *Choral Symphony - Slow movement*



Ex. 34 Holst *Betelgeuse*

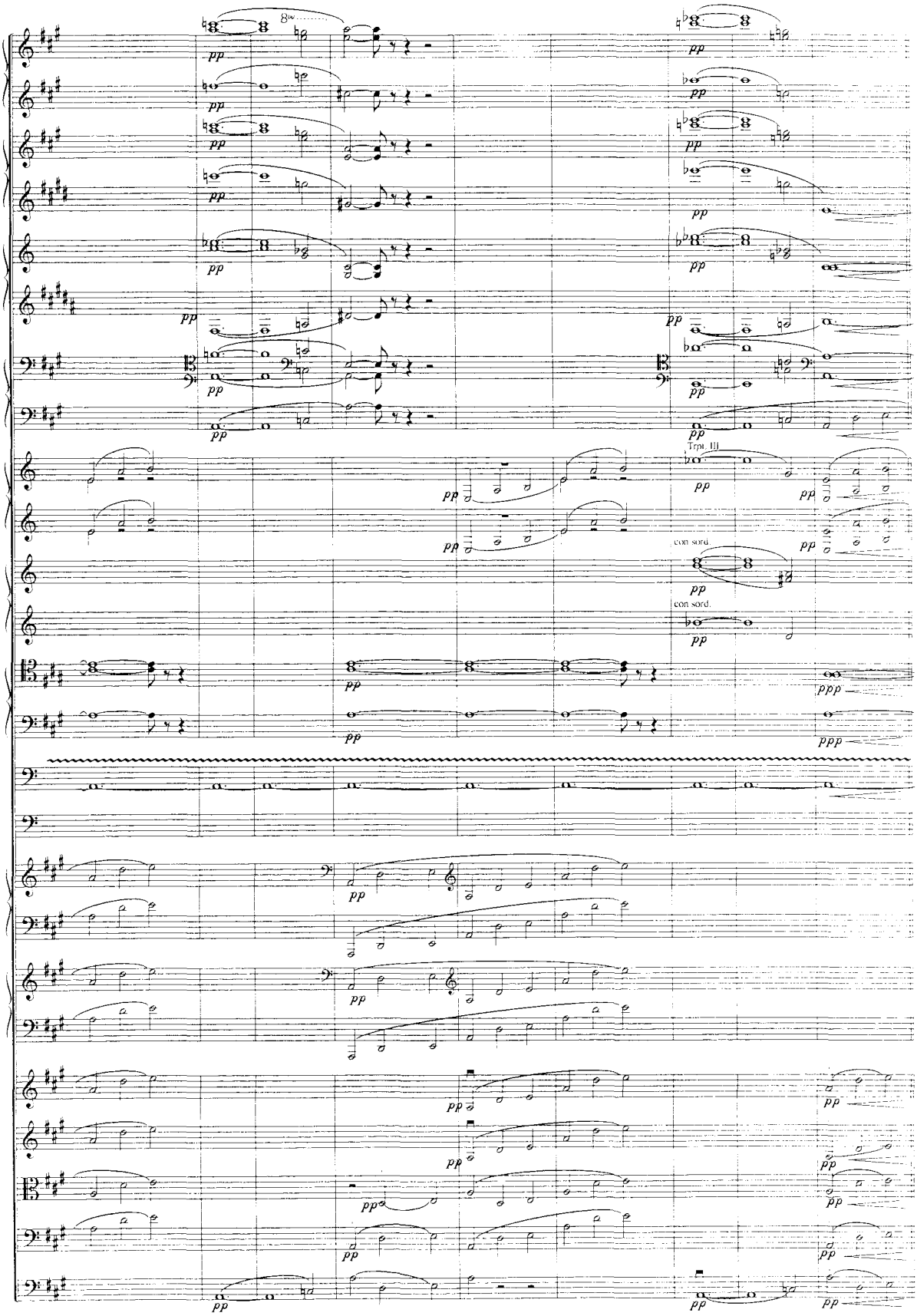


Ex.35 Vaughan Williams *Job*

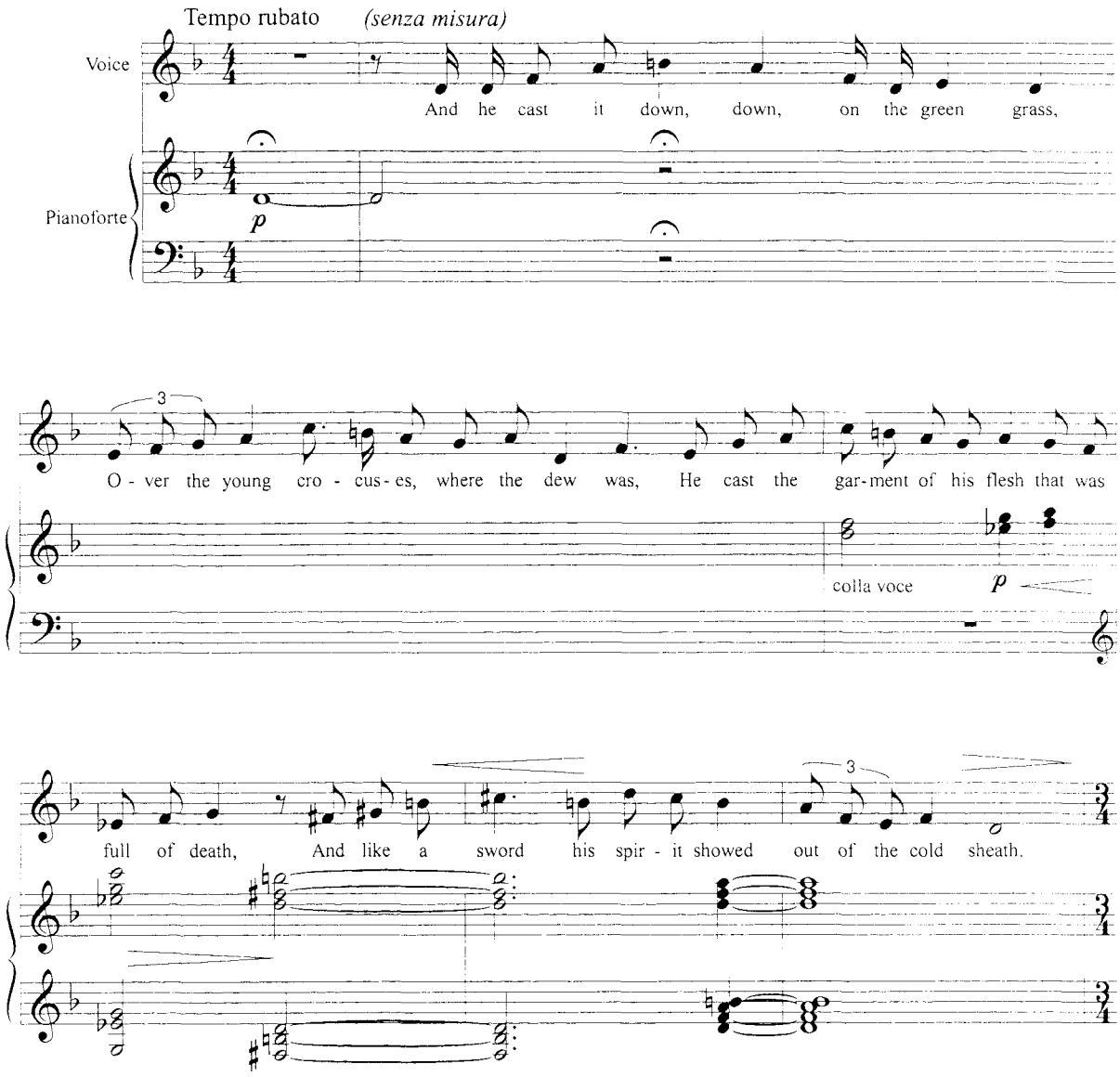


Ex.35 concluded on next page

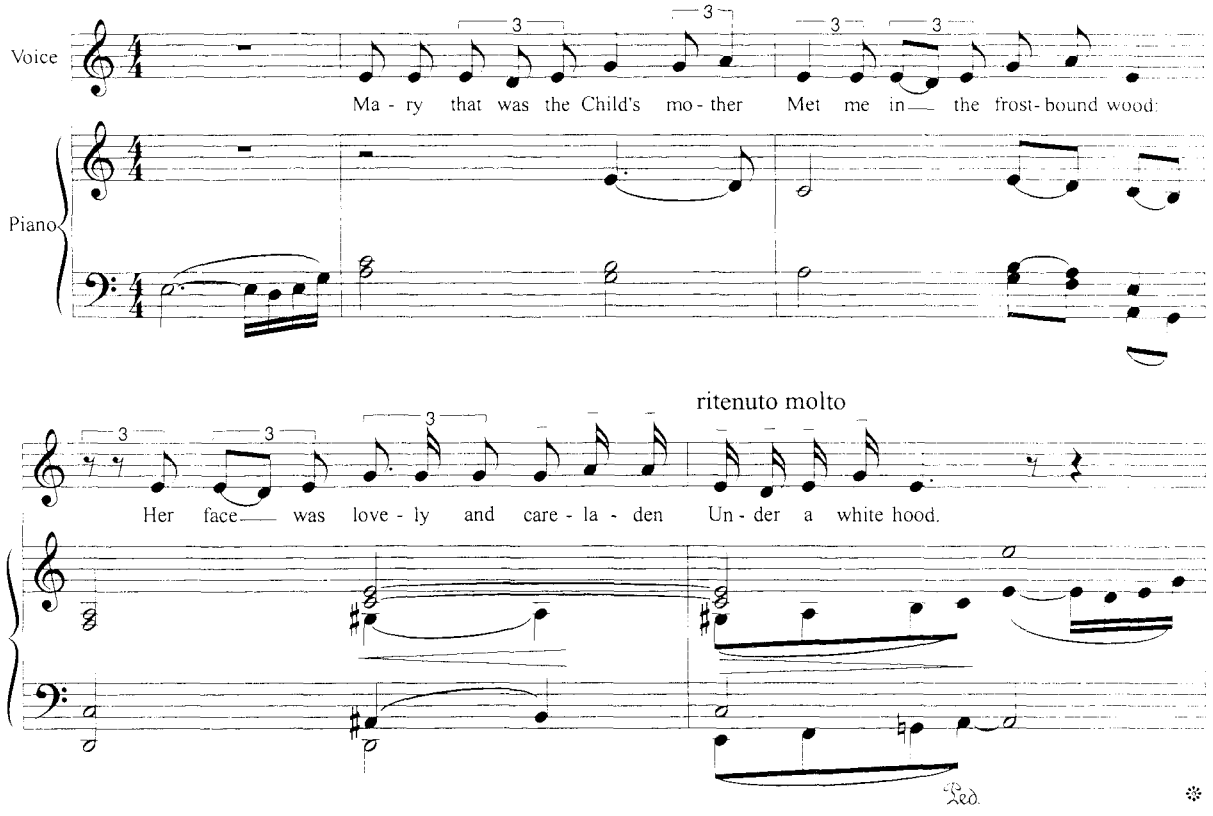
Ex.35 (cont'd)



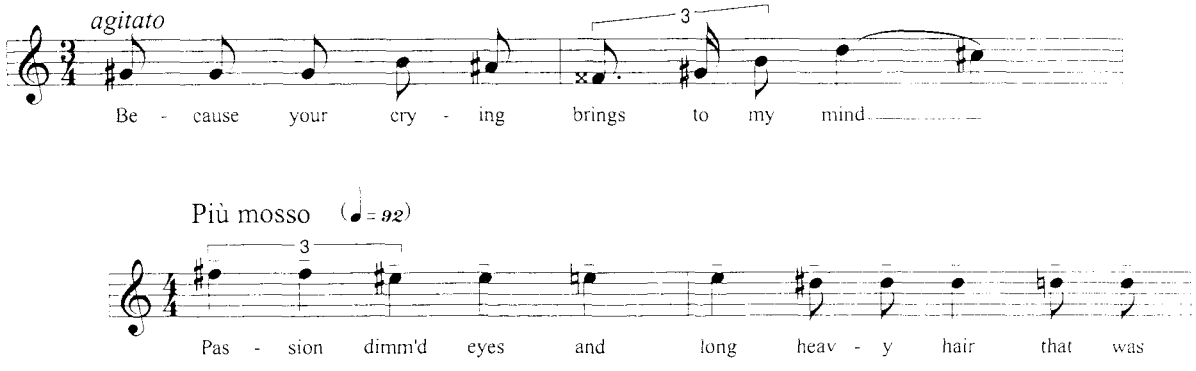
Ex.36 Vaughan Williams *The New Ghost*



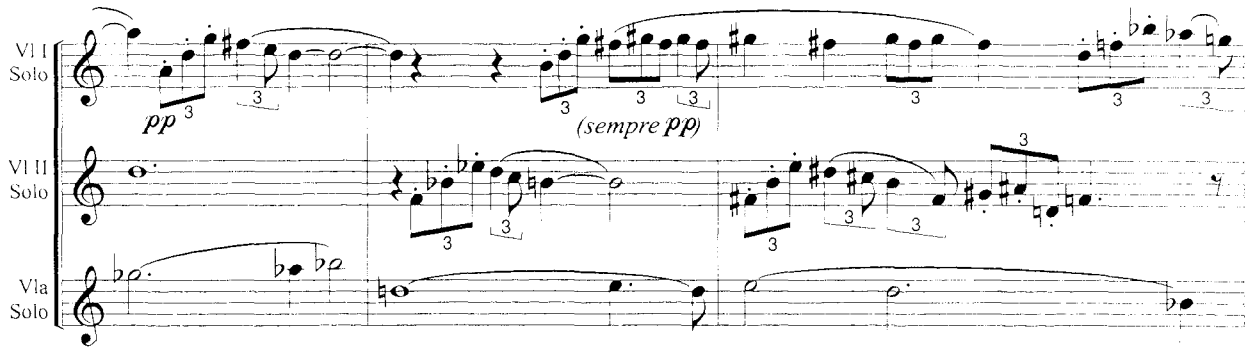
Ex.37 Warlock *The Frostbound Wood*



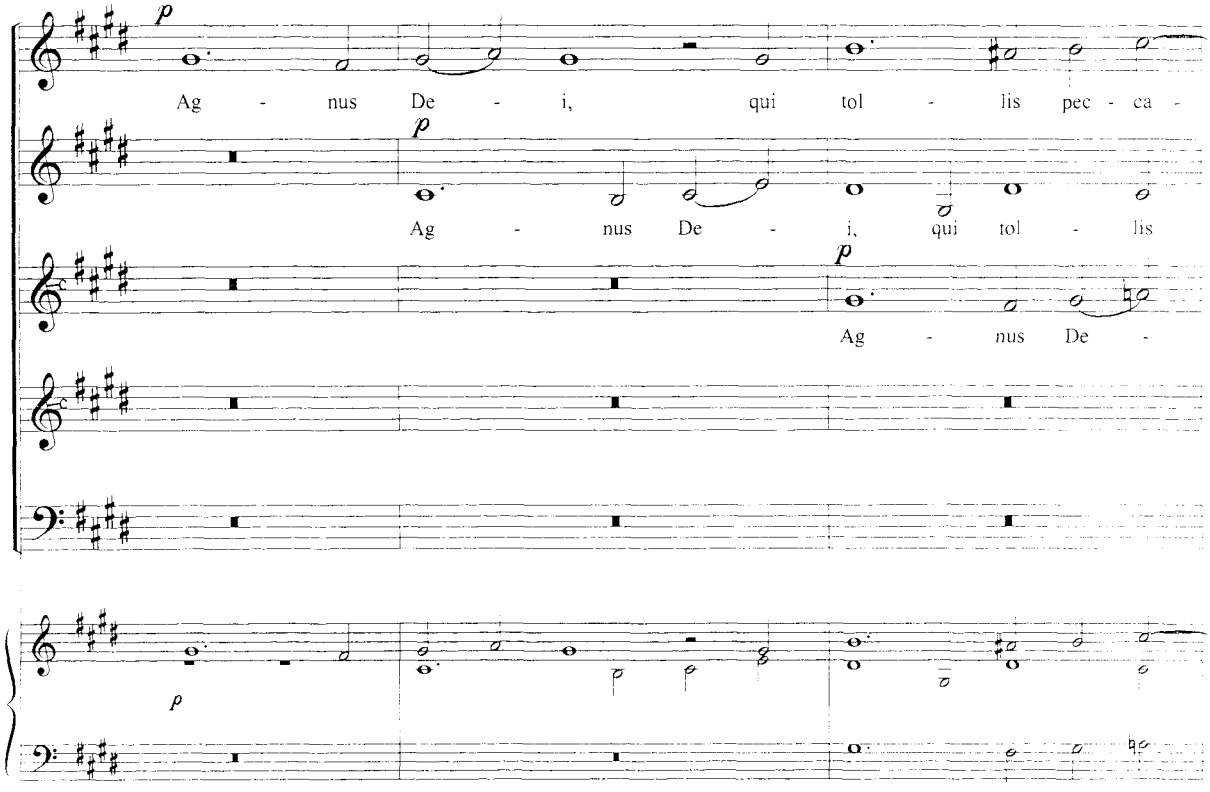
Ex.38 Warlock *The Curlew*



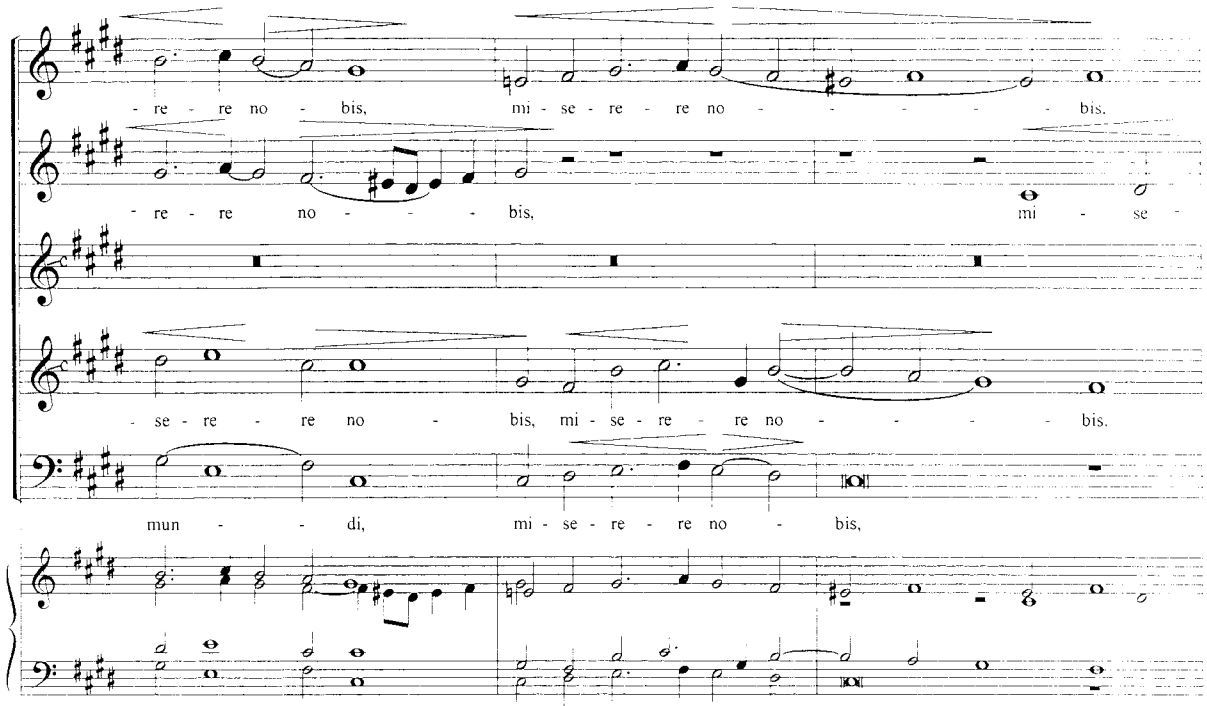
Ex.39 Holst *Hammersmith*



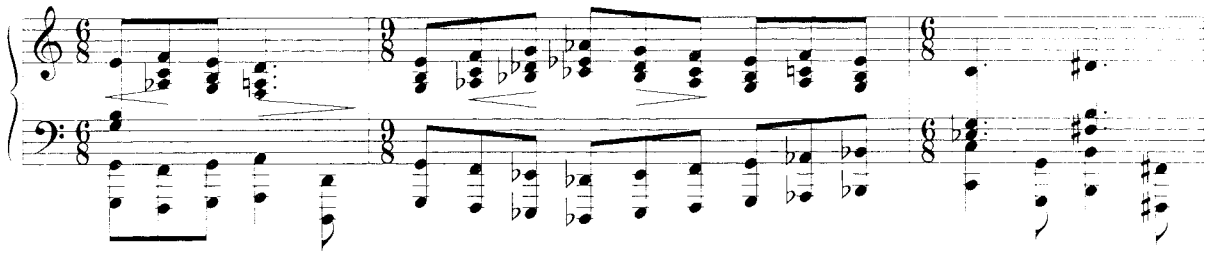
Ex.40 Byrd *Mass in Five Parts*



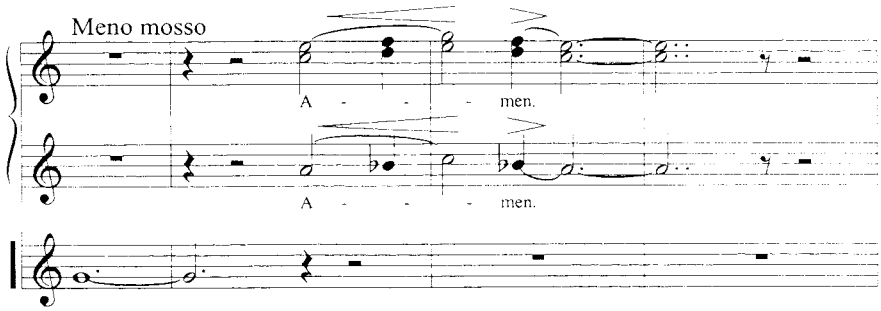
Ex.41 Byrd *Mass in Five Parts*



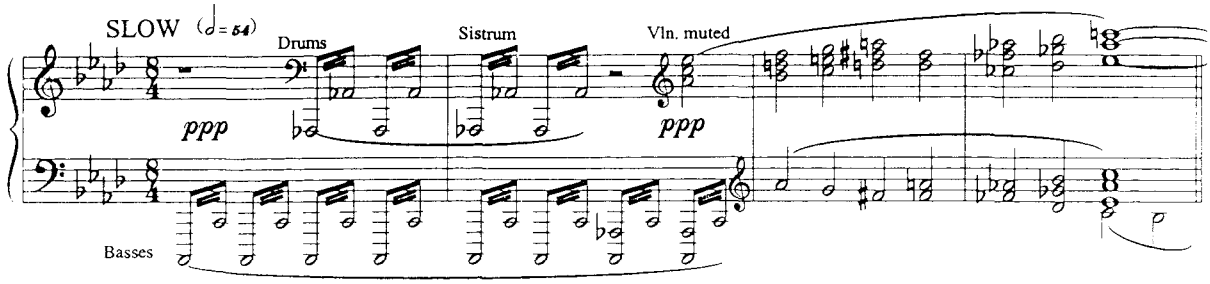
Ex.42 Scott *Funeral March of the Great Raamses [sic] (Egypt Suite)*



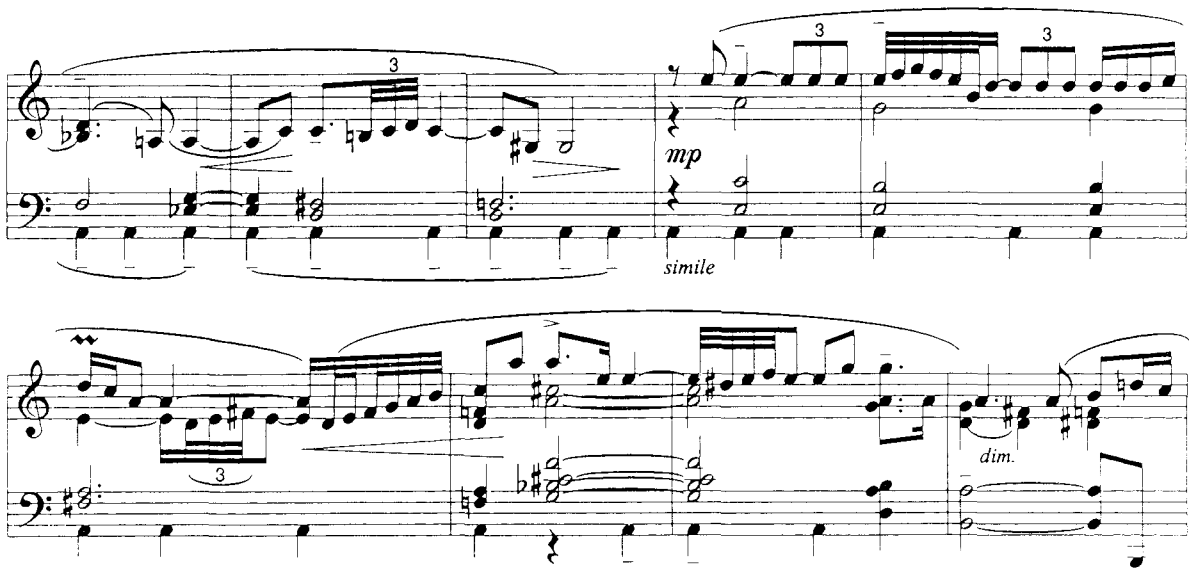
Ex.43 Holst *The Hymn of Jesus*



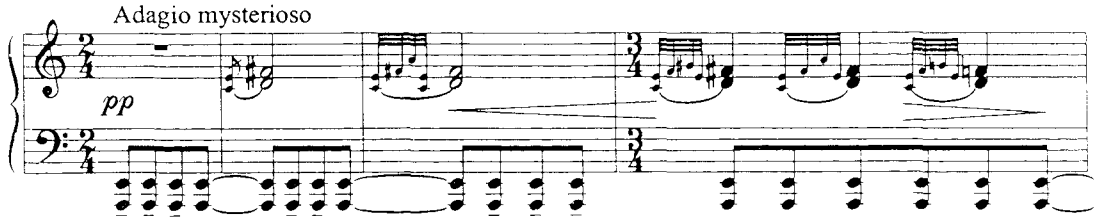
Ex.44 Foulds *World Requiem - Benedictus*



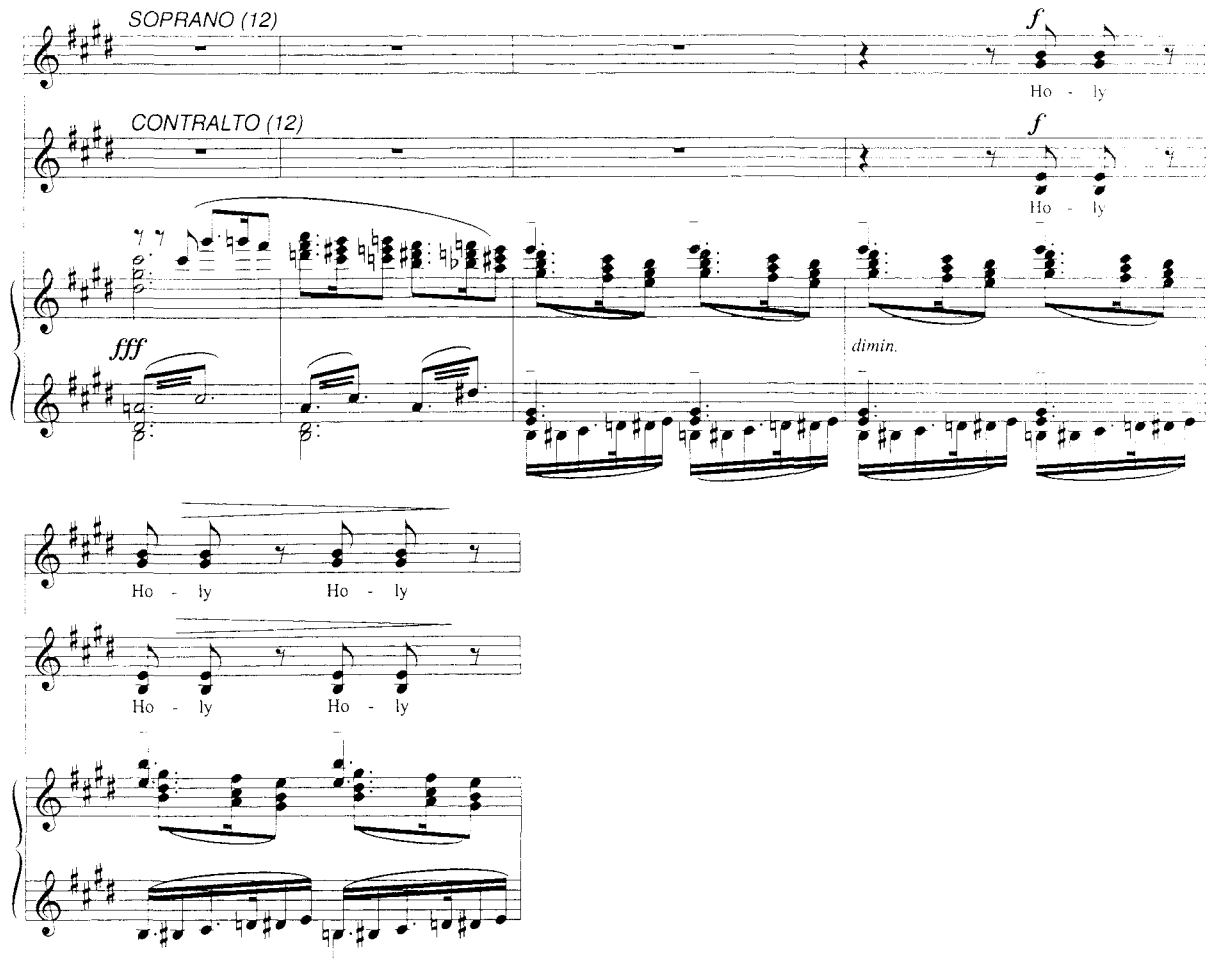
Ex.45 Ireland *Le Catioroc*



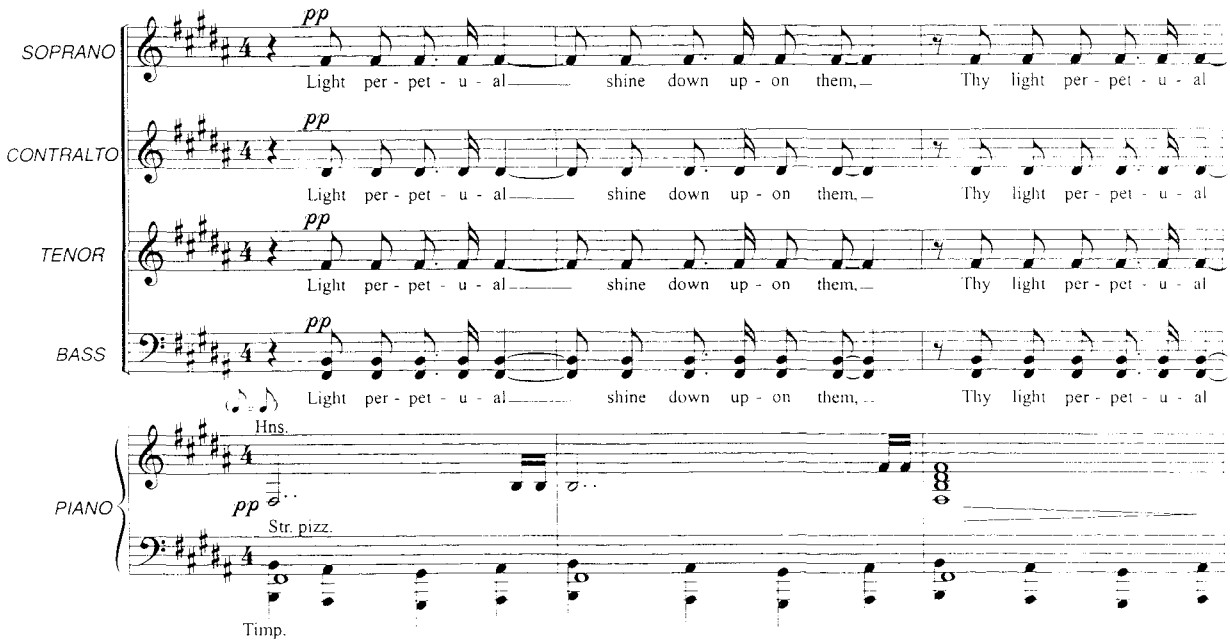
Ex.46 Scott *In the Temple of Memphis (Egypt Suite)*



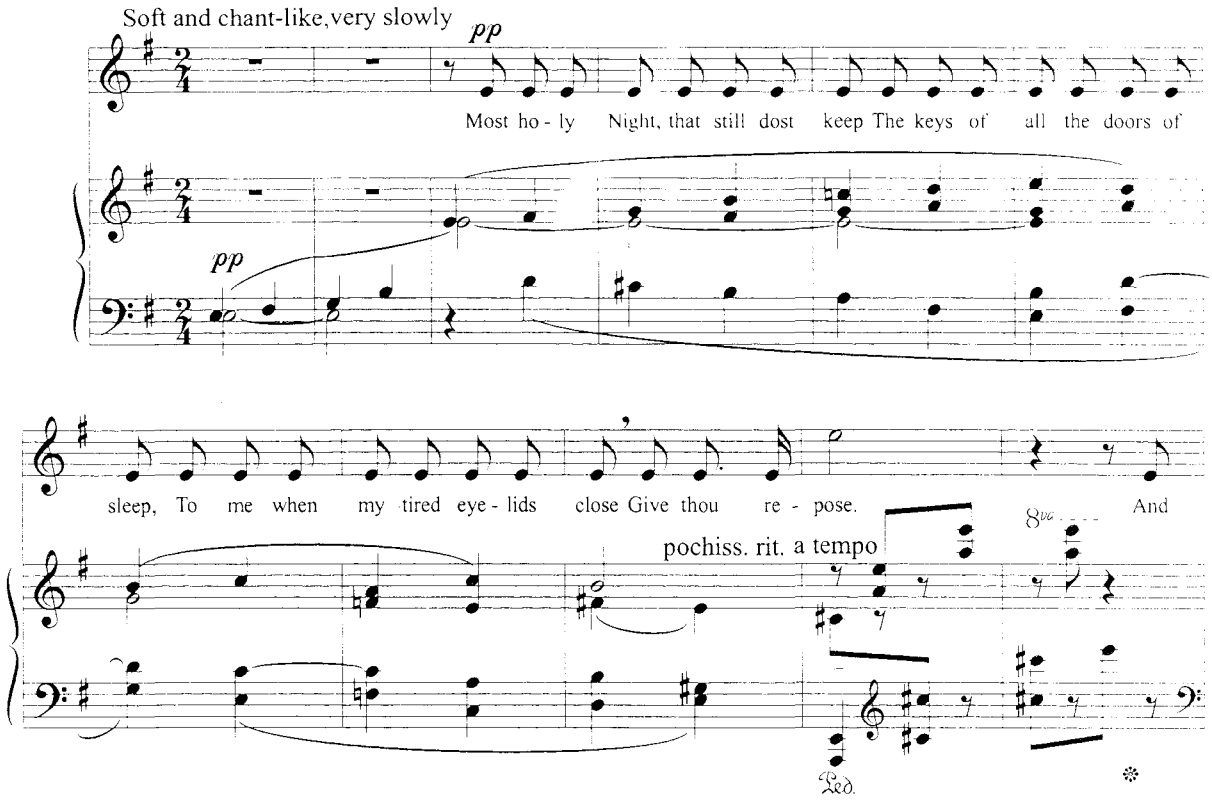
Ex.47 Foulds *World Requiem - Elysium*



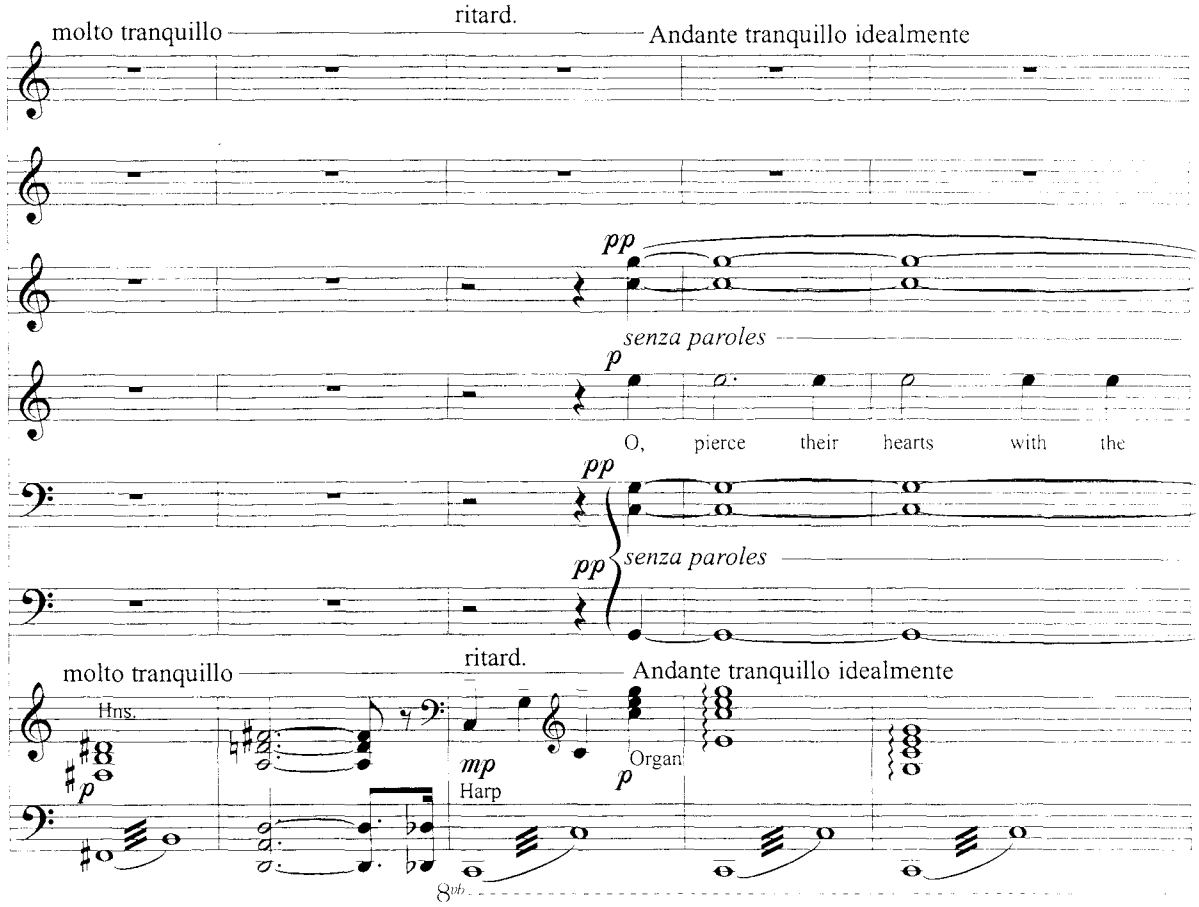
Ex.48 Foulds *World Requiem - Lux Veritatis*



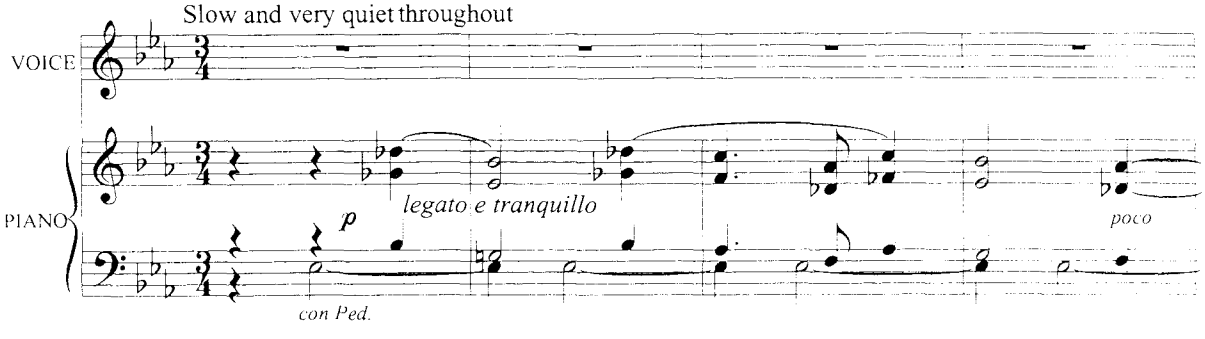
Ex.49 Warlock *The Night*



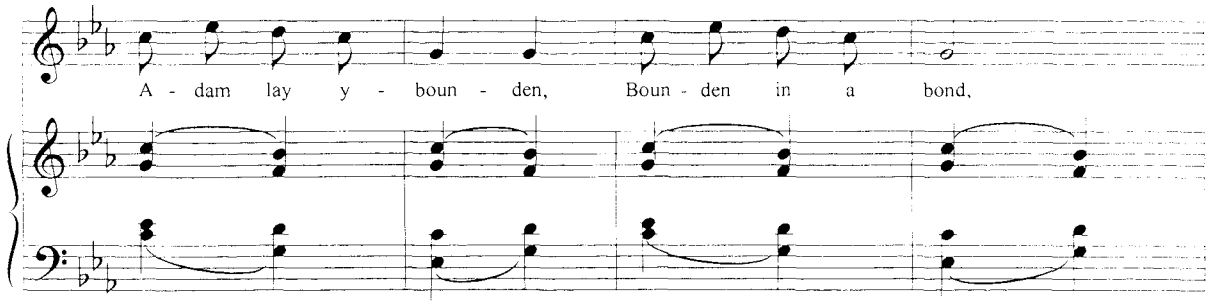
Ex.50 Scott *Mystic Ode*



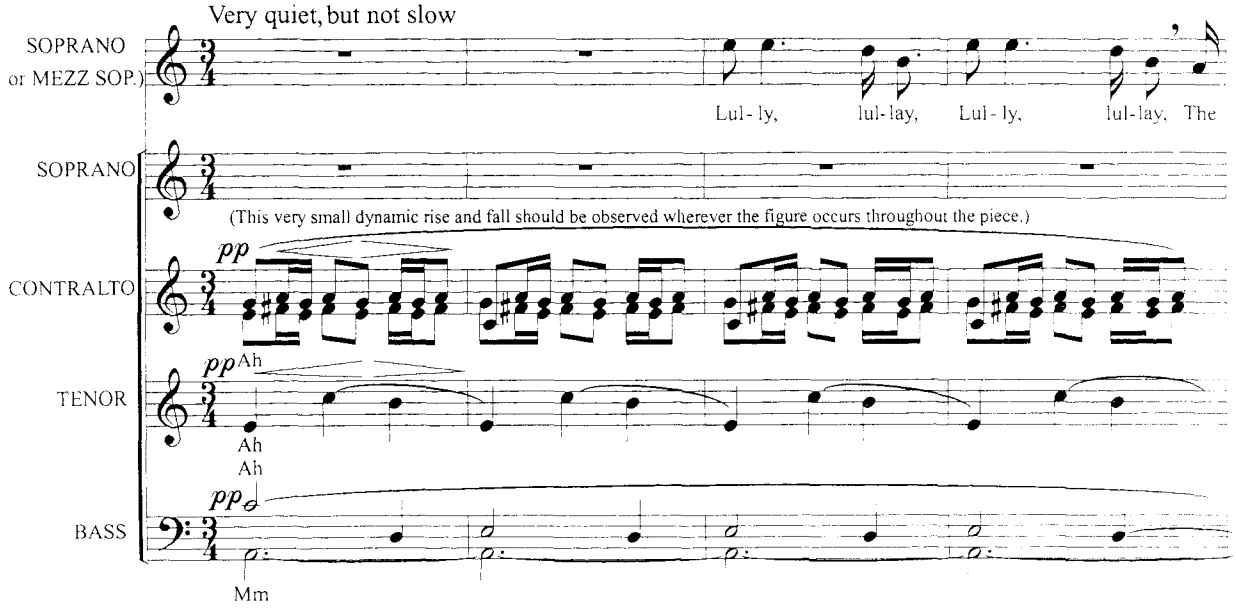
Ex.51 Warlock *Balulalow*



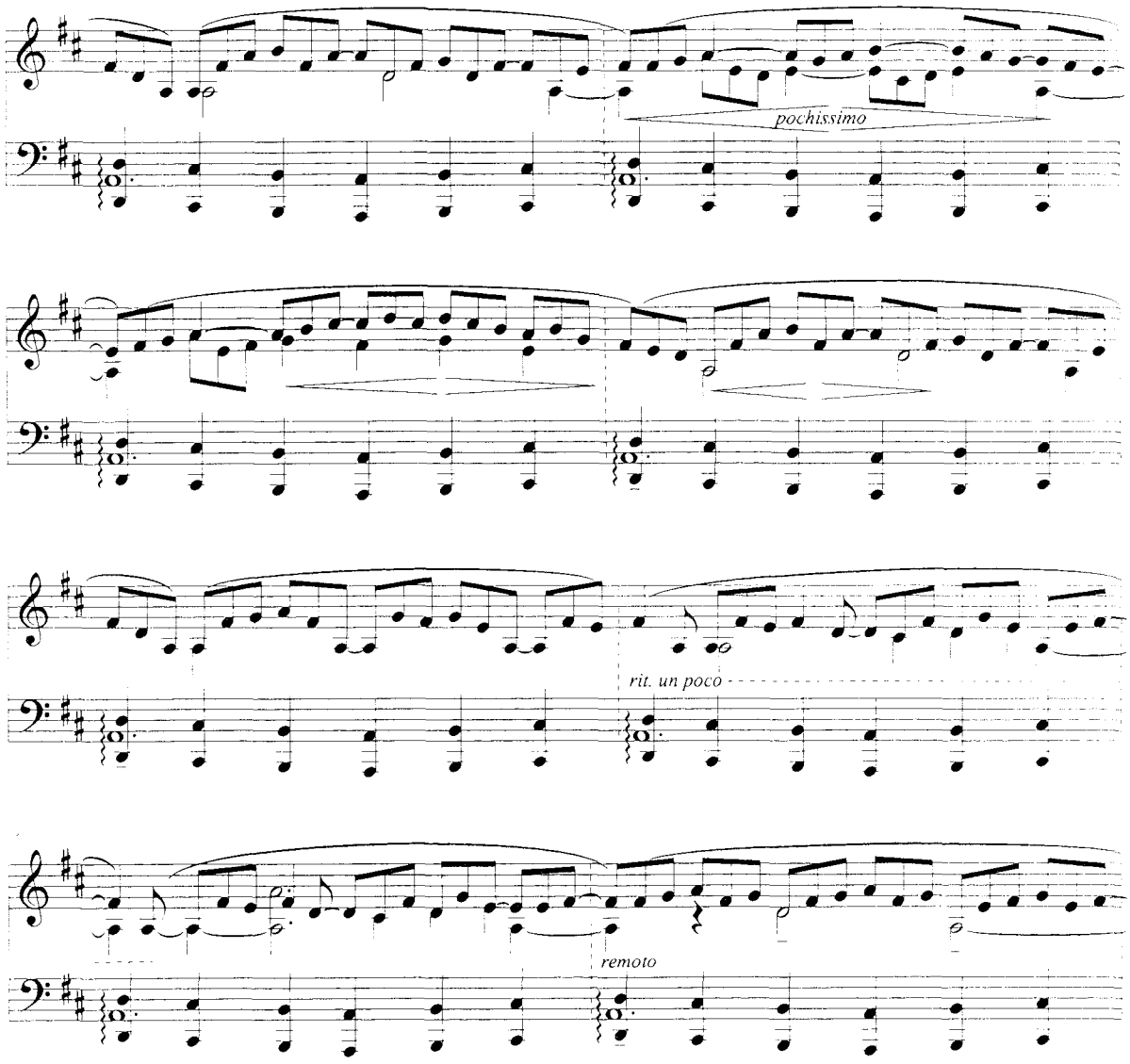
Ex.52 Warlock *Adam Lay Y-Bounden*



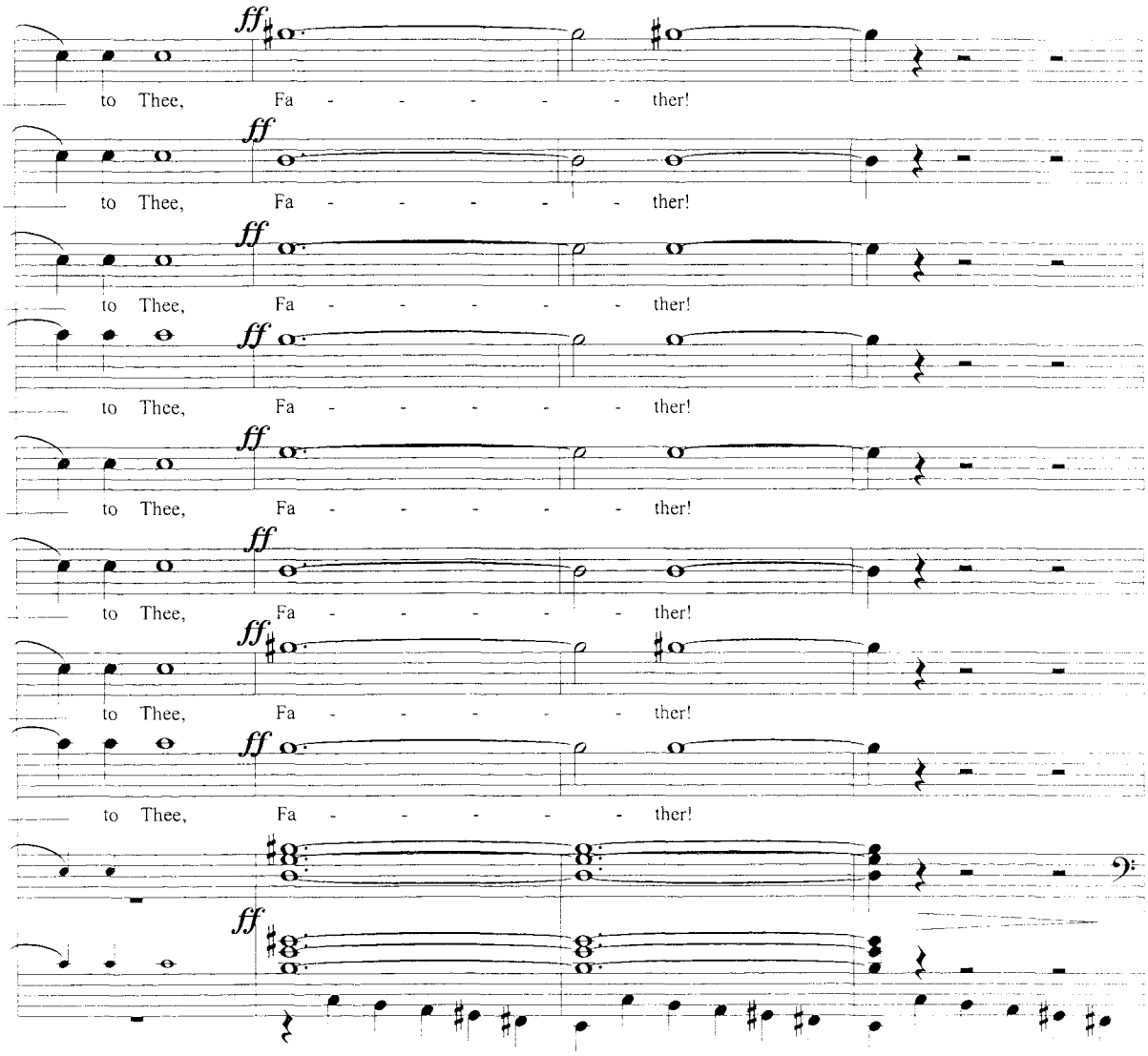
Ex.53 Warlock *Corpus Christi*



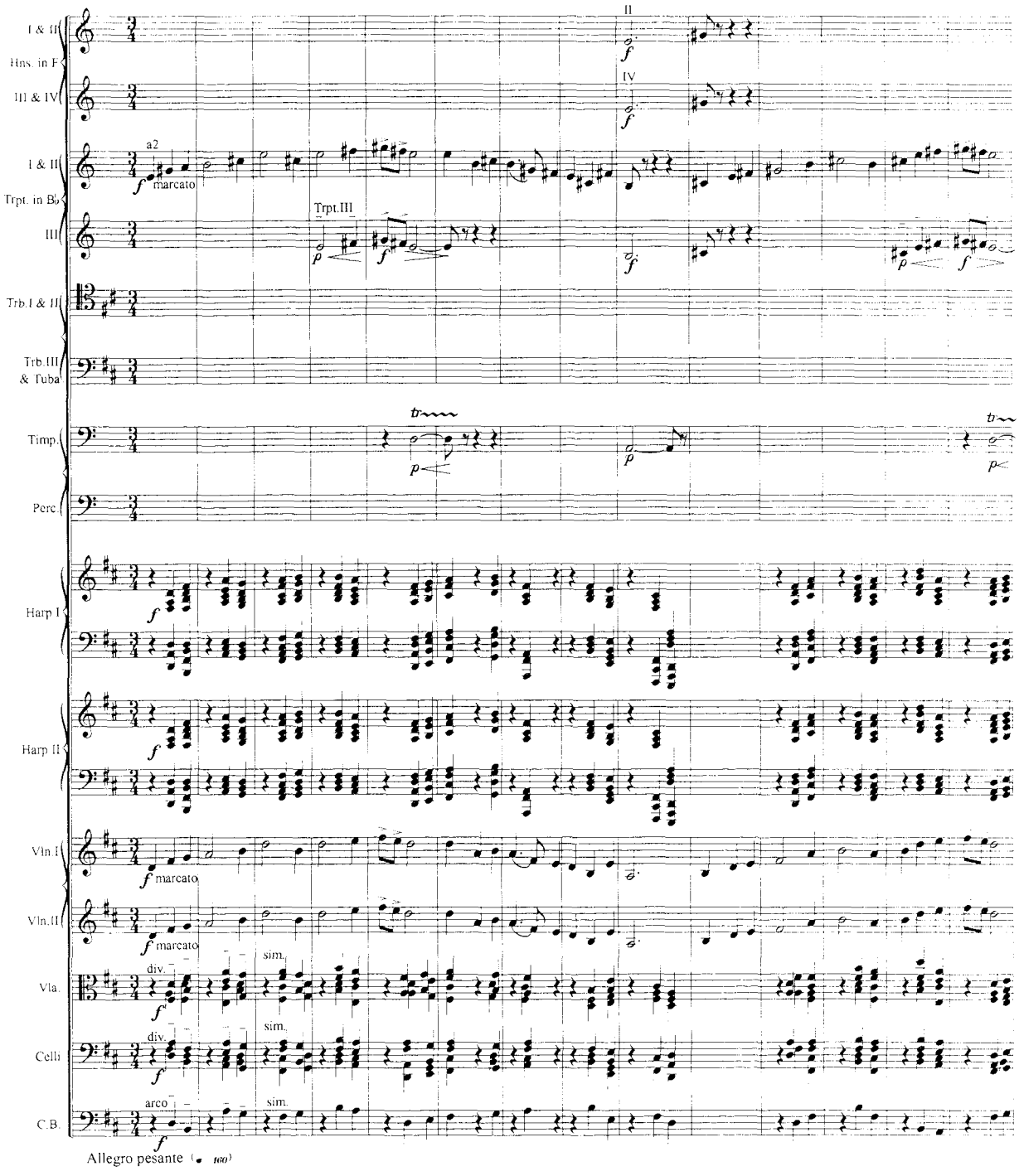
Ex.54 Foulds *Gandharva Music*



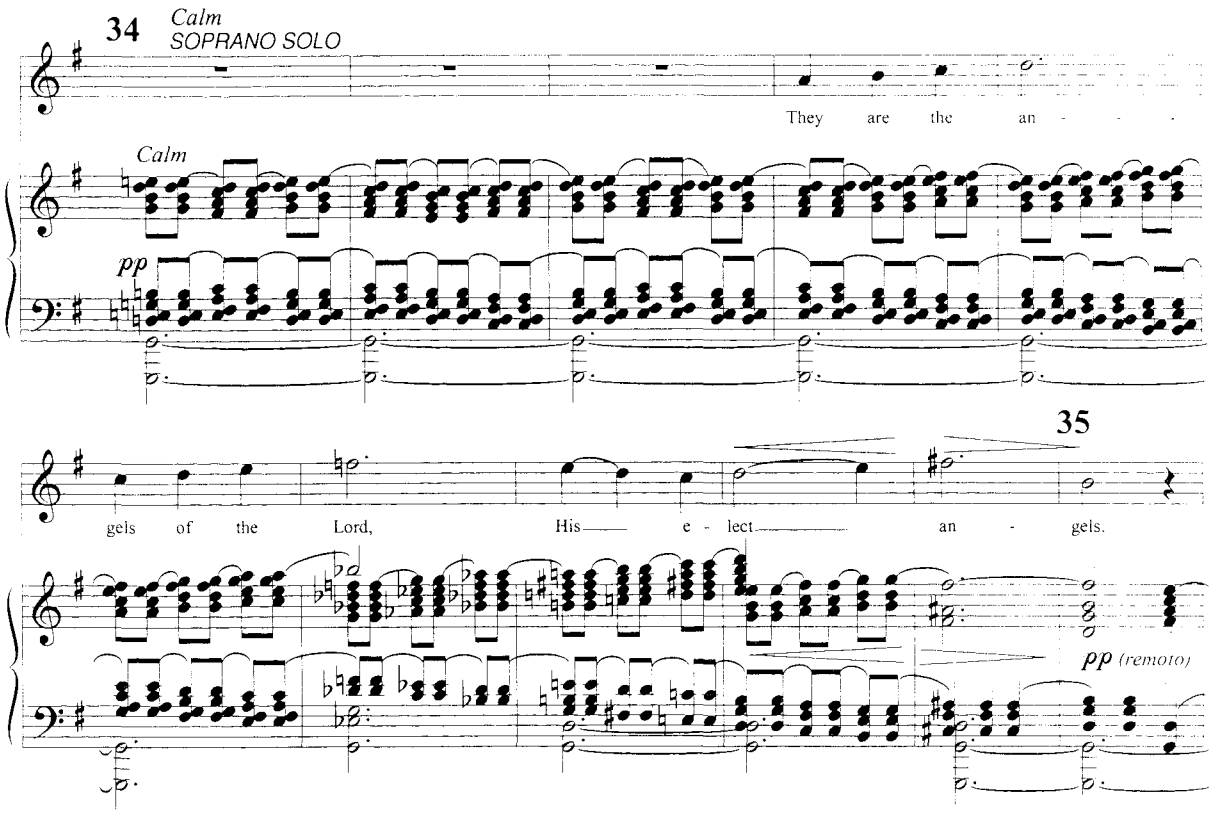
Ex.55 Holst *The Hymn of Jesus*



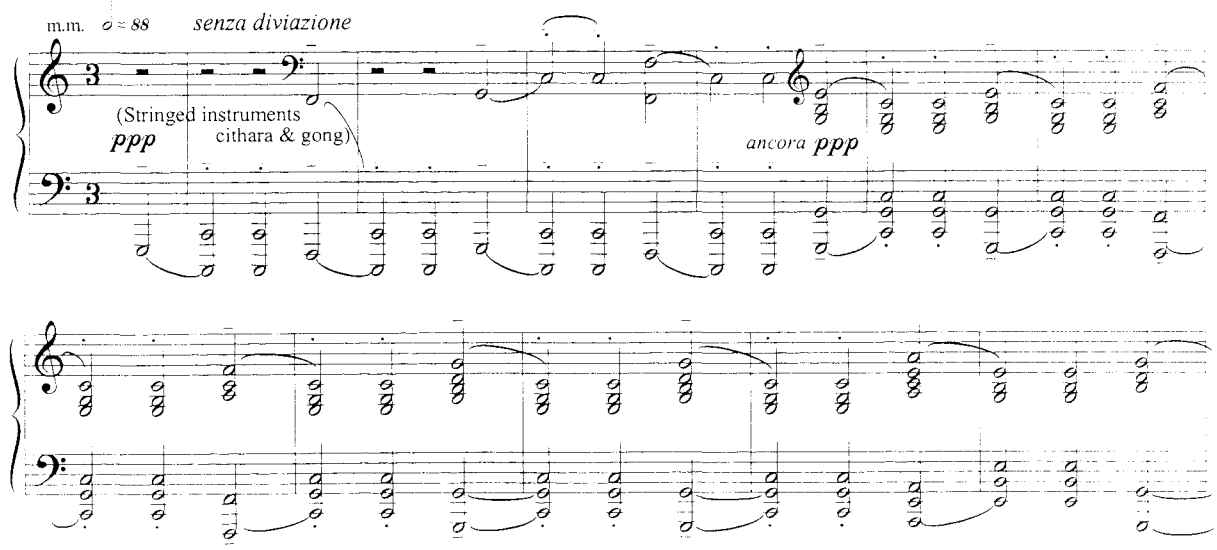
Ex.56 Vaughan Williams *Job*



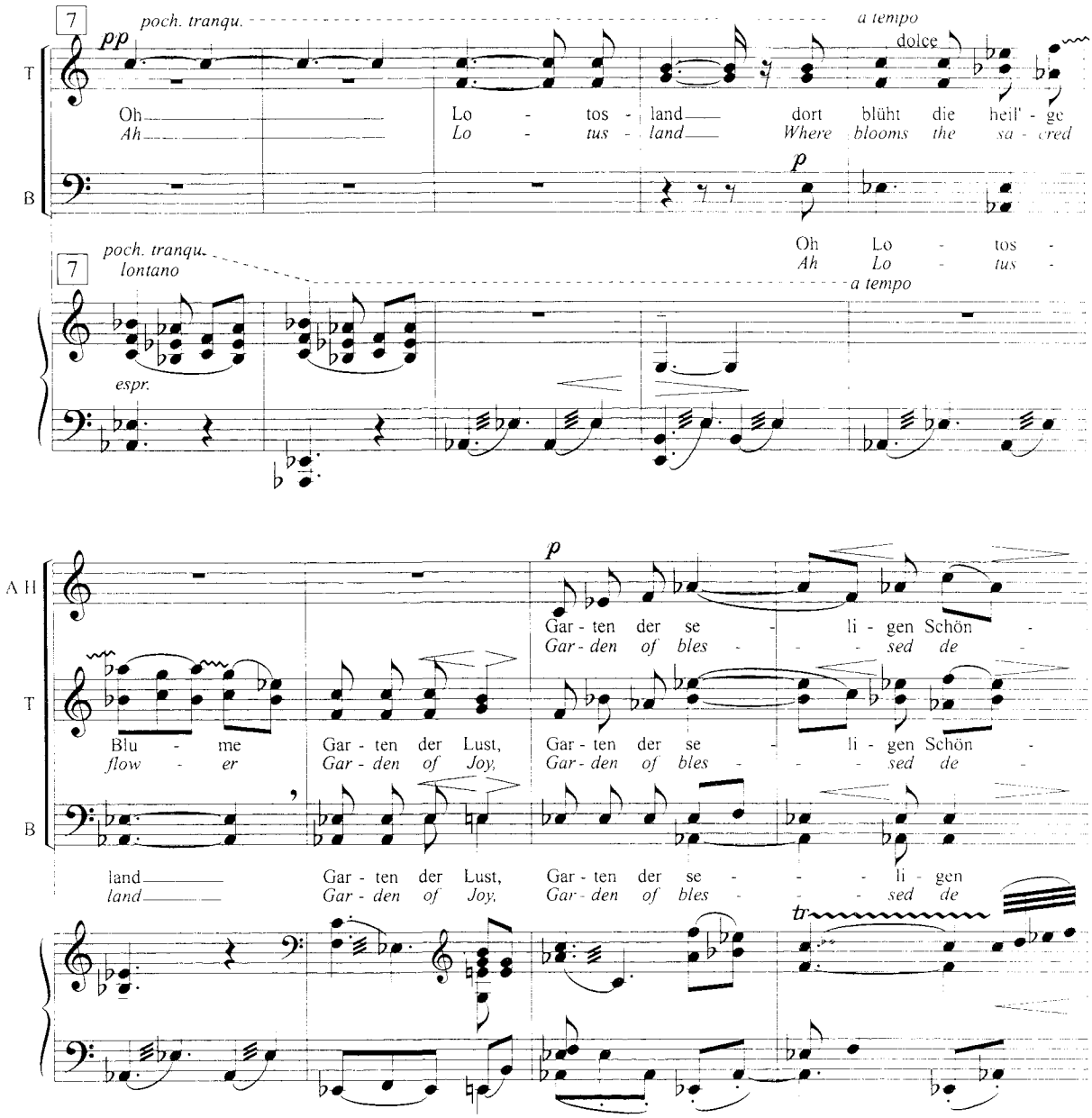
Ex.57 Foulds *World Requiem*



Ex.58 Foulds *Hellas Suite - Processional*



Ex.59 Scott *Summerland*



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Abbreviations

BMMN	*The British Musician and Musical News*
ER	*The English Review*
G	*The Gramophone*
JISM	*Journal of the Incorporated Society of Musicians*
MB	*The Music Bulletin*
MM	*Music and Musicians*
MMR	*Monthly Musical Record*
MNH	*The Musical News and Herald*
MO	*Musical Opinion*
MR	*Music Review*
MS	*The Musical Standard*
MT	*The Musical Times*
MTe	*The Music Teacher*
NA	*The New Age*
NAA	*The Nation and the Athenaeum*
(n.d.)	(no date)
NSA	National Sound Archive
NYU	New York University
O	*Opera*
OUP	Oxford University Press
Q	*The Quest*
RCM	*The Royal College of Music Magazine*
RMA	*Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*
RT	*Radio Times*
T	*Tempo*

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2) British Library Additional Manuscripts (BL Add. MSS):

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56473	*Mirage* for orchestra Op.33 c.1910
56475	*Hellas* for two string orchestras, harp and percussion Op 45 1932
56476	*Lyra Celtica* for voice and orchestra Op.50 (n.d.)
56478	*A World Requiem* full score Op.60 1920-1
56480	*Dynamic Triptych* for piano and orchestra Op.88 1929
56481	*Quartetto Intimo* for string quartet Op. 89 1932
Philip Heseltine/PeterWarlock:	
52547-8	Delius's letters to Heseltine/Warlock
54197	Heseltine/Warlock's letters to Colin Taylor
57794 - 57803	Cecil Gray papers
57963	Sorabji's letters to Warlock
58127	Heseltine/Warlock's letters to Olivia (Viva) Smith
71167 - 8	Heseltine/Warlock's letters to Delius
John Ireland:	
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