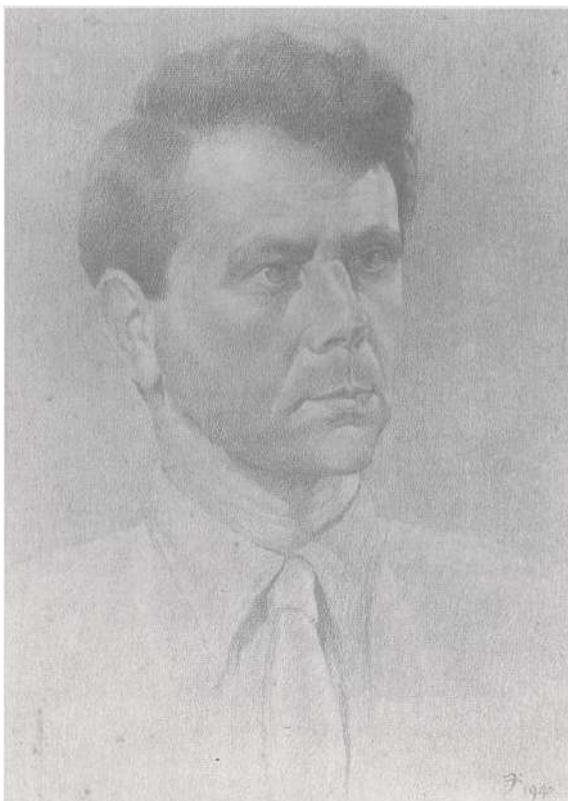




# FINZI FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 37, Number 2, October 2020



Joy Finzi's portrait of Gerald

Contents:-

Foreword

1. News from the Committee
2. Tribute to Anne Boden
3. Finzi Reminiscences
4. An Expression of Interest
5. Future Events
6. Reviews



*Gerald Finzi*

## Foreword

In these unprecedented times the classical music profession has been dealt a particularly cruel hand, and that equally applies to many of our own Committee and Distinguished Honoured Members. This, however, has not inhibited the fertile imagination of our Chairman Martin Bussey and he has not paused in his quest for avant-garde composition. We report on his ever increasing compositional output in Section 6 of this Newsletter.

The Society has regrettably not been immune from the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic which has meant that our prestigious Ashmansworth pilgrimage scheduled for July this year had to be cancelled along with other plans for Finzi events throughout the year. We are, however, hopeful that things will return to normal next year and have set in motion planning for a return to Chosen Hill where, if necessary, there is sufficient space for social distancing. Details are given in Section 5.

This of course has meant we have nothing to report on events you may have missed this year and instead have brought together other news and reminiscences, Finzi memories we are eager not to miss and which have been charmingly recounted here.

Despite the curtailment of activities your Committee has still been active behind the scenes. We are grateful to our Chairman for ensuring our Website has frequently offered added interest and he has so far uploaded four videos 'Exploring Finzi', songs and the Hardy connection, and the *Cello Concerto*. You are invited to experience these for yourself.

We are conscious that we have not been able to offer an opportunity to meet with the Members and deliver our AGM. We have therefore made arrangement to prepare and forward the documentation all of which is explained in Section 1.1 of this Newsletter.

Reviews of recent and forthcoming publications and discs are a feature at the end of the Newsletter and you are encouraged to share with us these developments. All have Finzi connections and Member and Composer, Ian Venables, releases a major choral work in his acclaimed Requiem.

Eric Hazelwood

# 1. News from the Committee

## 1.1 Current Issues

You will be pleased to hear that the pandemic has not curtailed the constitutional activities of your Committee and the most recent meeting at the end of September was successfully conducted on-line using the 'Zoom' platform. Future events are constantly under review and while we have put in place plans for 2021 these will of course be subject to government guidelines at the time, and the situation is being monitored closely.

You are encouraged to follow the *Finzi Friends* website where we are trying to add interest, and news through Bulletins. We continue to allocate grants to deserving performers and performances keeping sums within manageable levels but at the same time meeting our charitable commitments. In offering grants we always encourage the inclusion of Finzi in the programme and we are pleased to report this is more often the case. One particular funding project has been to a forward looking individual, the tenor Daniel Norman, who is selflessly keeping alive music in real time for performers and us the audience, and an account of his endeavours is given below. The Finzi Trust is also conscious of similar commitments and one of the latest expressions of support also follows.

We have been continually aware of our responsibility to deliver an AGM during 2020 which hitherto has been thwarted by the pandemic restrictions. However, in accordance with the Charities Commission guidelines we will be circulating the membership with all the salient documents and reports, either with this Newsletter or on our website which you are invited to review. Further details will be given in the documentation to which you will be given the opportunity to respond.

## 1.2 Daniel Norman and 'Positive Note'.

(With support from the *Finzi Friends*)

Daniel is an operatic and concert tenor with a positive and proactive spirit who hasn't let the lockdown thwart his endeavors to bring us original music, and he has set out to produce some online performances, putting together a technical team and devising a system to combine the music-making of individuals in their own homes. And so, Positive Note was born.



POSITIVE  
NOTE

Daniel goes on to say “Our first film, "Old Abram Brown at a distance" was premiered the day that the lockdown was announced, and before long we were planning our epic co-production with Oxford Bach Soloists, "St John Passion from Isolation", which was screened on YouTube in nine weekly episodes, starting on Good Friday, raising over £16,000 for Help Musicians UK, with 44,000 views to date.



We continue to make these kind of films, and our recent "apart/together" project with New College Choir has been featured on Radio 3 and Classic FM. They can all be seen on the Positive Note YouTube channel — [youtube.com/PositiveNoteFilms](https://youtube.com/PositiveNoteFilms)

BUT...there is no substitute for making music in person, and as much for the mental health of the performers as the enjoyment of our audience, we decided to put together some filmed performances to make up an online festival and the concept of the ‘Positive Note Autumn Sessions’ was born.

I approached Radley College to see if they would host us and give us access to their film unit. They are always keen to share their resources with worthy causes, and were very encouraging, making the Silk Hall available to us at an affordable rate. None of this would have been possible without their generosity.

*Finzi Friends* also pledged their early support, helping us to get the concept off the ground. Then I invited a wonderful, diverse range of performers to be involved - all of them jumped at the chance to be performing together again, resulting in stunning work from world-renowned performers, and stars of the future. The overarching theme is Nature - the one thing that kept me, and I'm sure many others, sane during lockdown.

The Sessions were filmed at Radley, with sound engineered by classical music film specialist, Myles Eastwood. Repertoire in the series spans six centuries, from Orlando Gibbons and William Cornysh to Judith Weir and Sarah Rimkus. And, naturally, works by Gerald Finzi in two of the programmes.

They feature a world-class line-up of established and rising stars, including Roderick Williams, Anna Dennis, Daniel Norman, Marta Fontanals-Simmons, Sholto Kynoch, Helen Sherman, Claire Egan, Diana Moore, Catriona Scott and The Gesualdo Six.



There are seven chamber music recordings, which will be premiered over two weekends starting on 23 October. After each premiere there will be a live Q&A so audience members will have the chance to meet the performers. The streams will be available for four weeks.

The *Finzi Friends* support goes towards production costs, and the balance of those has already been covered by a crowd funding campaign (which runs until 8 October), so all further support, and profit from the ticket sales will now go directly to the performers, many of whom have not been paid to make music since March. So the more successful the sales are, the bigger the dent that can be put in to the losses sustained due to the mass cancellation of contracts.

Supporters of the crowd funding campaign can select rewards including early access to all the streams. A video about the campaign can be found here: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/positive-note-autumn-sessions>.

Once the crowd funder has closed, tickets will be available from [www.positivenote.co.uk/tickets](http://www.positivenote.co.uk/tickets), with a 10% discount for *Finzi Friends* subscribers. Just enter the code AUTUMNFINZI at the checkout.

For any enquiries, please email: [dan@positivenote.co.uk](mailto:dan@positivenote.co.uk)

### **1.3 The Finzi Trust Annual Donor Report**

Supporting access and outreach in Music Education at the University of Oxford

We have included this article to give you an insight into the support offered by the Finzi Trust to musical endeavour, and in this case, education.



The Faculty of Music’s ‘Music Education Programme’ for schools aims to unlock creativity and nurture a love of music among the young, as well as offering targeted and specific workshops that link with the attending school’s curriculum. The Faculty Fun Days welcome children and their teachers into a place of higher education and learning and promotes access to these spaces for those who may never have heard of, or thought of attending, Oxford University.

They go on to say “We would like to thank the Finzi Trust for their support and vision in helping us to deliver a valuable and engaging programme of outreach now, and in the future.”

The Faculty of Music’s ‘Music Education and Outreach Programme’ comprises of:

1. Schools’ Faculty Fun Days and concerts for Key Stage 1, 2 and 3
2. Student and professional musician visits to schools
3. School visits to colleges

#### 4. Gamelan sessions for school groups

“We are delighted to let you know that we have been able to plan several outreach and engagement events as a direct result of the support the Finzi Trust have given to the Faculty for the 2019/20 academic year.”

In November, two Key Stage 1 groups from Mabel Pritchard School and Caldecott Primary School in Oxfordshire visited the Faculty for a workshop and concert with professional musicians and Faculty of Music students.

In January, we hosted our first Faculty Fun Day for Key Stage 2 pupils from Bletchley Premier Academy. The pupils enjoyed a student concert, Bate Collection workshop, a mini lecture, and a tour of Christ Church College. We also arranged a reciprocal visit to the school in Bletchley with several professional musicians who have a relationship with the Faculty.

Our Faculty Fun Days have been organised by our wonderful part-time Education Officer, Isabelle Carré. Isabelle has a wealth of experience in hosting and delivering engagements activities, and has been fundamental in the success of this Programme. In partnership with Oxford Music Hub, we sought to work with schools with minimum music teaching provision with the goal of forming long standing relationships with these schools.

Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 we have had to cancel our remaining Faculty Fun Days for 2020. However we have looked to support participating schools with teaching materials and have commissioned some videos to guide learning at home. We have also been supporting our students in their music in the Community placements. You may have seen our students on BBC News supporting the charities ‘Soundabout UK’ and ‘Young Dementia UK’ in their virtual engagement sessions.

“We are very grateful to the Finzi Trust for allowing us to carry over the remaining funds to support the rescheduled events. We are planning to host several Fun Days throughout next year and we would be delighted to see you at one for a chance to meet with Faculty staff, and our brilliant students.”

## 2. Tribute to Anne Boden

It is with sadness that we have to report that a faithful *Finzi Friend* Anne Boden passed away on 21 April 2020 at home on Chosen Hill. We brought this to your attention in our May 2020 Bulletin No. 5 but we give a more comprehensive account of Anne and her husband Anthony's lives here, with particular attention to their Finzi and Gurney connections.



*Anne with her husband Anthony at one of Jennie's Tardebigge recitals.*

Both Anne and her husband Anthony have faithfully attended our Events, and Jennie's Tardebigge Sunday afternoon recitals over many years, only latterly being less frequent due to Anthony's infirmity. It was only last year that they were present at our Chosen Hill event in Gloucester, being local residents there, and were both in good spirits and managing well. Unfortunately, a recurrent illness visited Anne again and this time proved fatal. Anne had been a nurse and devoted much of her life to the care of others. She always had a beaming smile and was always very encouraging and enthusiastic towards all Members and friends who came to our events. She will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with Anthony as he comes to terms with the loss and adjusts to life without Anne.

They have both regularly attended St Bartholomew's Church at the top of Chosen Hill and a funeral service was held there by Canon Jonathan Perkin

as Anne was buried in the Churchyard. Anthony is being supported by their son and daughter.

To give a little more context, Anthony has written several books not least the now updated and revised *Three Choirs, A History of the Festival*. He has also been the Administrator of the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival and was the founding Chairman and now President of the Ivor Gurney Society.

Interestingly, being close to Gloucester and living at the foot of Chosen Hill, Joy Finzi used to visit them and stayed on occasions in her quest to champion Ivor Gurney, an endeavour started by Gerald and something she was determined to see fulfilled after his death. This was further enhanced by Anne having a connection with Ivor Gurney through her mother but we will let Anthony tell the story as follows:

Anthony made a successful career in the RAF rising to the rank of Group Captain and spent time in the Far East. He then goes on to say:-

“Back in England in 1969 I met my future wife, Anne, and when she took me to her home in Gloucestershire to meet her parents several new loves entered my life. Not least of these was a love for Gloucestershire itself, the Severn Vale, the Cotswold ridge, the distant Malverns, and the hill at Chosen where her parents lived. I was delighted too, to find that Anne’s parents were both welcoming and lovable.

After only a few weeks of regular visits I felt very much a part of the Gloucestershire world and soon discovered that both Anne’s mother, Winifred, and Winnie’s widowed sister Marjorie, who lived close by, had a fascinating tale to tell of their childhood in High Wycombe before and after the first World War; of their father, Edward Chapman, a manager with the Great Western Railway and Churchwarden of their Church; of their imperious mother; of their athletic brother, Arthur; and their elder sister, Kitty, all of whom had by then died. They also spoke at length and often about the brilliant young musician who came every weekend from his studies at the Royal College of Music to play the organ in their Church and who, at their father’s invitation, came back to their home every Sunday for lunch and usually stayed to enjoy the pleasures of walking, cricket, pin-pong and boyish fun with the children; songs around the piano with the whole family; and conversation by the fire-side with Edward Chapman,

both men smoking guggly churchwardens pipes. They also remembered Ivor composing at the small upright French piano which Winnie still owned. And then Marjorie (always known as Mickie), who herself had studied at the RCM, played one day the song which for the composer's young audience had been a favourite. Although seventy by then, Winne sang that re-introduction for me to the music of Ivor Gurney, his setting of *Down by the Sally Gardens*: I have been addicted ever since.

It was with the Chapmans that Ivor Gurney found what he described as 'that settled home-life which is so sweet a stimulus to any sound art'; something which he most certainly did not find with his own family and which, in his shortened life, he was to find in only one other home - that of his friend, the poet F W Harvey."

A lot more is described in Anthony's book *Stars in a Dark Night* published by Alan Sutton which details the connection between Gurney and the Chapman family and you are encouraged to read this fascinating account of his affection for the family. In it he describes the particular affinity Ivor had with Winnie and how they would go for walks together and how he would often bring her back on these walks to rest his manuscript and jot down staves of music that spontaneously came into his mind. As a result of this friendship Ivor dedicated the following poem to her.

### The Immortal Hour

(To Winnie)

I HAVE forgotten where the pleasure lay  
In resting idle in the summer weather,  
Waiting on Beauty's power my spirit to sway,  
Since Life has taken me and flung me hither;

Here where gray day to day goes dully on,  
So evenly, so grayly that the heart  
Not notices nor cares that Time is gone  
That might be jewelled bright and set apart.

And yet; for all this weight, there stirs in me  
Such music of Joy when some perceivèd flower  
Breaks irresistible this crust, this lethargy,

I burn and hunger for that immortal hour

When peace shall bring me first to my own home.  
To my own hills; I'll climb and vision afar  
Great cloud-fleets line on line up Severn come,  
Where winds of Joy shall cleanse the stain of war.

In Anthony's own words

“In case you haven't heard my darling wife, Anne, died on 21st April and has been laid to rest on the hill here in Churchdown at St Bartholomew's. As you probably know, Anne was very much a driving force when it came to setting up the Gurney Society back in 1990 and her passing marks the severance of a close link between her family (the Chapmans) and Ivor. My first little book *Stars in a Dark Night* contains the letters between Ivor and the Chapmans, and it would not have been written had I not had the good fortune to meet Anne; we were married for fifty years.”

### 3. Finzi Reminiscences

#### 3.1 Gerald Finzi in the '50s

By Sir Michael Llewellyn-Smith KVC O CMG

Sir Michael is a retired British diplomat and academic. He attended New College, Oxford, where he studied classics, ancient history and philosophy. He served as Ambassador to Poland from 1991 to 1996 and Ambassador to Greece from 1996 to 1999. He is Visiting Professor to the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London.



*Sir Michael Llewellyn-Smith*

“I first became aware of Gerald Finzi’s Newbury String Players in 1950 or 51. My father was headmaster of St Andrew’s prep school Pangbourne (between Bradfield and Upper Basildon) and invited the Players to perform for the school. The concert took place in the dining hall, which was cleared of tables. I can’t remember the programme, except that it included Warlock’s *Capriol Suite*, and almost certainly something by Boyce or Stanley. At the end of the concert Gerald Finzi, who was very good with the boys (no girls in those days), explaining things without talking down, asked if anyone would like to have a go at conducting. I volunteered and he guided me through the basics before I tried one movement of the Suite. I guess the players were really conducting me rather than the other way round. I will always remember how Gerald pointed out that I was making the lateral movements for the second and third beat of a movement in

common time the wrong way round, moving my right arm to the right first rather than to the left; but typically he did not say this was ‘wrong’, simply that it was unusual and I might find it easier to try the other way.

May Hope was leading the Players. She used to bring a string quartet each year to provide incidental music for the open air Shakespeare play that my father produced. This took place in front of the cricket pavilion, and the quartet squashed themselves into the scorer’s box. May Hope’s voice could be heard (was it gruff? That’s how I remember it) against a background of birdsong, instructing her players on what came next, with what cue. The performances I remember, because I acted in them, were of *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V*. For Ariel’s music we used settings by Arne and others.

Later I joined the Newbury String Players. It was probably Gwynneth Reed, who had taught me violin at St Andrew’s, who suggested this, and Gerald and Joy Finzi welcomed me kindly. By then I was at Wellington College (where Gerald came one year as examiner in the music competitions). As soon as I had a driving licence I would drive over to Newbury for the Saturday rehearsals. I remember concerts at Stockcross and other churches; Frederick Grinke and Jean Stewart playing the Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante* in the Corn Exchange, Britten’s *Simple Symphony*, and Sophie Wyss singing Matyas Seiber’s Greek songs; and of course lots of Boyce and Stanley and Mudge, Dvorak and Tchaikowsky serenades, and *Handel in the Strand*. Vaughan Williams made an appearance at more than one of these concerts.

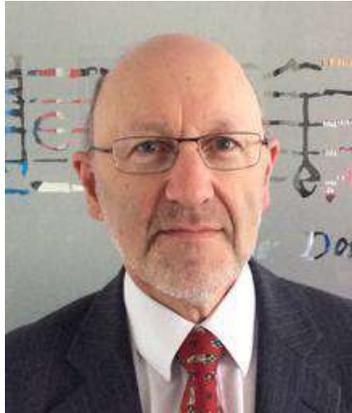
The time was too short. After Gerald’s untimely death I learned of the memorial concert to be held in London, and persuaded the Master of Wellington to let me attend it. The assistant music master Alan Angus rode with me on his tandem cycle to a train station, and thence to London. The highlight was a moving performance of *Lo the Full Final Sacrifice*, conducted by Kiffer Finzi.

Finzi’s music was cherished then as it is now, but by a relatively small community many of whom knew each other. The work of the Finzi Trust and Finzi Friends, and Classic FM and the BBC, have changed that. The glorious legacy he left is enriched for me by memories of taking part.”

### 3.2 Recollections of Kiffer by Stephen Banfield

Dr Stephen Banfield is known to most of us through his biography of Gerald Finzi published by Faber and Faber in 1997, but as a musicologist he has written extensively on this genre, publishing several books, not least on the English music tradition.

Educated at Clare College Cambridge (organ scholar), St John's College Oxford (senior scholar) and Harvard University (Frank Knox Fellow), he was senior lecturer, at Keele University, Elgar Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham, and the Stanley Hugh Badock chair of music at the University of Bristol. Head of School at Birmingham and Bristol he retired in December 2012, thereafter becoming professor emeritus at the University of Bristol.



*Dr Stephen Banfield*

“When I began to write about Gerald Finzi, which was as a DPhil student in Oxford around 1973-4, I went for lunch in the Chilterns with Diana McVeagh at her invitation and first heard the strange name ‘Kiffer’ (the child’s version of ‘Christopher’), which she seemed to refer to a lot. But, probably through Diana, my contact person within the family became Joy, and I was invited to go and see her too. I think I must have met Kiffer then, for my first car, a 1959 Morris Minor, carried until its dying day (which was not long afterwards) a dent in the front wing acquired when I grazed a vehicle coming the other way down Ashmansworth Lane on my first visit to Church Farm. So it must have been there that I went for the interview with Joy, held as I think (with very vague recall) in the Book Room while the poetry library was still *in situ*.

Joy was hugely supportive though not uncritical of the little Triad Press book on Finzi's Hardy settings that I hoped to produce and never did. (Much of it got turned into the Finzi chapter in *Sensibility and English Song*.) She drove with a friend all the way to Oxford for a choral and orchestral concert I was conducting there and was very nice about it. But I never felt I knew her at all, whereas standing in front of Kiffer I was sure that it was like being the recipient of all the critical confidence and positive energy Gerald himself must have radiated unreservedly to those around him. Was the voice similar? Possibly not. Kiffer's was unforgettable, bluff, cheerful, well and widely modulated, beautiful to listen to, and extremely persuasive, the herald of a person never dull and a mind peculiarly well formed while delightfully responsive to new impressions and considerations, which would be rapidly though thoughtfully processed and re-emerge in his mould in the next sentence. Rarely have I met anyone whose view of the world was so firm and comprehensive, though again I reckoned it was a trait inherited from his father.

Equally rarely have I met anyone so open and friendly, and I paid what now seem like many visits to Ashmansworth while I was researching and writing the Finzi book, first in 1990-1 and then, after a somewhat painful hiatus while two other books had to be despatched ahead of it, in 1995-6. Hilary would give me a lovely lunch, Kiffer, in his countryman's shirt and trousers, would stand and reminisce or explain—I rarely think of him seated—while I sifted through papers on the dining room table or looked up my own notes for the many questions I needed to ask him. Kiffer just adored life. Whether it was about his father trying to drive the car in Wellington boots or the neighbour charging the wartime refugee for a cup of tea, it was the most vivid and attractive thing in the world when he related some anecdote concerning a name in the correspondence which had hitherto meant nothing to me or a circumstance surrounding 'Dad' for whose full and correct understanding he now felt responsible. He would carefully expound it with utter freshness, though many others had beaten a path to his door before me and had no doubt been treated to similarly dedicated attention. His was the picaresque view, Dickensian almost in its genius for rendering a person or a situation vivid and lovable. As I sat there he was eager but not impatient, and happily waited for me to jot enough down that I wouldn't forget, though many letters too, in his clear, pleasant and prompt hand, subsequently passed back and forth when I did forget and had to ask him about it again prior to writing something up. I have often wondered since whether this sense of responsibility that he

carried weighed heavily on him, as in some respects being the composer's widow had weighed heavily on Joy. It didn't seem to, but being the extraordinarily loyal son that he was to both Gerald and Joy must have come at a price, even if the currency was somehow always that of Kiffer himself: sparkling gold.

I never knew much about how Kiffer kept body and soul together, and the health food shop in Newbury, Sunstore, had gone by the time I was writing the book. But there were matters difficult to broach. Sunstore had been subject to an arson attack while the entire Finzi correspondence was housed there in a tin trunk after having been photocopied, along with some items that hadn't been photocopied. Kiffer couldn't bring himself to open the trunk to see whether anything had survived. I felt rather the same way and didn't press the matter after enquiring about it once. The other difficult issue was how I dealt with Finzi's Jewishness. Kiffer's view was that Gerald had simply not felt Jewish and that was all there was to it. I strongly believed that much had been suppressed by Gerald and it was time to think about it. The great thing about Kiffer was that he let me do exactly what I wanted without further comment: that must have taken courage on his part, just as it took courage on mine to stick to my guns (I lost sleep over it). Probably he was able, like his father, to take the long view and realise that new perspectives would settle down and seem utterly natural. But the thing I thank Kiffer most for was his faith that I would produce the book, for which the Finzi Trust had paid generously. He had to wait a long time, and when I was up against a final deadline in 1996 to the extent that I shut myself away in a rented cottage of the Long Mynd Hotel, didn't answer the phone, and didn't even open the Trust lawyer's letter until I had completed the last chapter (I can still remember putting the letter away in the wardrobe), Kiffer volunteered to try to call me and left the sweetest urgent message imaginable.

I shared only some of Kiffer's beliefs at a time when it was easy for them to seem pleasantly eccentric or annoyingly out of touch. How prophetically mainstream they appear now! It warmed my heart no end, while listening to the *Dad's Army* theme accompanying the exit of his wicker coffin from St James's, Ashmansworth, to read that donations should be sent to Extinction Rebellion. Because I think about the young and about the future of the planet every day now, I also think of Kiffer every day, and will continue to do so."

## 4. An Expression of Interest

### **Intimations of Immortality:**

### **A stained glass window into Gerald Finzi's world**

**by Leoni Hughes-King**

We encourage all of our members to express an opinion, to use the *Friends* as a platform for debate or to just air their interest in Finzi and his music by sharing with us their thoughts. Here, Leoni has taken up that challenge following her encounter with the new Finzi stained glass windows in Gloucester Cathedral and we are pleased to share with you her thoughts on how this has inspired her.

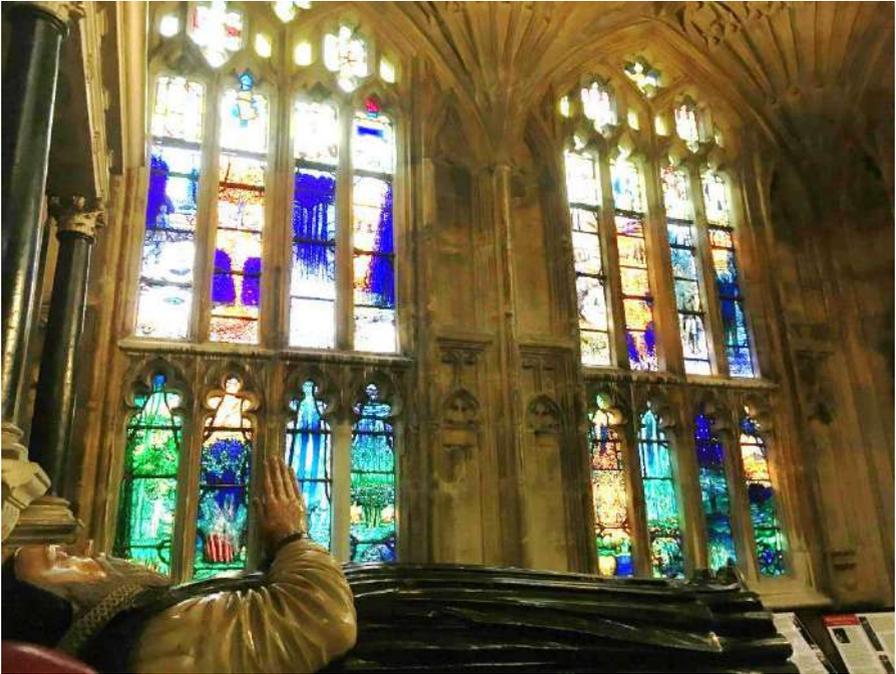
Leoni is a clarinettist and composer with a keen interest in Finzi's life and work. She is currently a second-year music student at New College, Oxford and like Gerald, she enjoys poetry and the countryside.

“Gerald Finzi; the sensitive, modest composer born in 1901 who cultivated rare apple species in the English countryside he adored, and who lived only for 55 years, preoccupied by the transience of life following a childhood tainted by loss. His music; reflective, heartfelt and brilliant, entangled with the poetry of Hardy, Traherne and Wordsworth. The relationship between Finzi's life and the nature of his music fascinates me. He responded to tragedy not in anger, but with a closer attention to unacknowledged beauty. For all the mental turmoil he suffered, his music is a peaceful acceptance that beauty can always be pulled from something, somewhere.

Commissioned in 2016 by the Finzi Trust, artist Tom Denny created a series of eight stained glass snapshots inspired by Finzi's life and work. Unassumingly tucked into a side chapel of Gloucester Cathedral, these secular windows are a fresh exhibition of colour and artistry amongst the vast gothic walls. Above them is a similar series commemorating Ivor Gurney, installed two years previously.

At the end of the summer, I found myself near Gloucester and took the opportunity to visit the windows in person. Having located the Lady Chapel which is home to them, I was struck by how vivid and incredibly detailed each stained glass scene is. In contrast to the Gurney windows above, in stiller tones of amber and muted grey, the Finzi windows are an arresting array of deep blues and jades with flashes of orange and red.

Finzi's treasured landscapes and poetic images all sing out to the viewer at once, almost competitively; *all this colour and meaning you must appreciate here, now, for it will be too late when you have left.* Denny's windows are transient in their own way. The presence of sunlight breathes life into stained glass in a way impossible to capture through photography. The detail too; I wanted to examine each image one square inch at a time, every tiny line felt significant.



Each scene – or light – has a sense of depth; the narrow vista draws you over the hills, through the trees, into the houses. Trying to immerse myself in each one, I noticed tiny leaves, daisies, hedgerows. I found less depth in the Gurney scenes, however, with parts of the distant scenery often obscured by large features. Gurney was confined to mental institutions for the last 15 years of his life following a breakdown and traumatic service in the First World War. Finzi was familiar with death from an early age, having lost his father, three brothers and music tutor before his teenage years were over.

Certain elements of the window caught my attention in particular. Firstly, the yew tree growing in a churchyard, in the second light. This is the only area of red in the window, and the yew tree glows from its core as though it has a soul. This scene refers to the Hardy poem *Voices from things growing in a churchyard*, and to me it reflects Finzi's intimacy with the rural life around him.



Next, in the fourth light, a sleeping poet lies on the ground. A line of people walk across the upper part of the scene, heads down. Except one person, who has turned their head towards the poet. A certain quote of Finzi's comes to mind: "I like to think that in each generation may be found a few responsive minds... To shake hands with a good friend over the centuries is a pleasant thing". All of us have had this response to certain music, art or poetry; feeling that it speaks to us as an individual, seeks us in the crowd.

The final two lights complement each other especially well. They create an arc, across all eight lights, much like a Finzi piece – my favourite being the *Romance* for strings. A flowing series of reflective moments culminating in a stirring, intense contemplation before resigning to a peacefully shimmering conclusion. In the penultimate light, which uses the darkest and most limited colour palette, a figure stands staring out to the stars on the Hampshire Downs, near Ashmansworth where Finzi lived. “Static from very ecstasy”, as he wrote about the angels in the roof of March Church. This is followed by the final light, in which technicolour rays beam down on May Hill from a dark thundercloud. Beauty is pulled from turmoil, and the spirit of a certain Wordsworth phrase favoured by Finzi is alive in this scene – *Intimations of Immortality*.



There were several other visitors to the windows during this time who all, like me, stood and entered into each of Finzi and Gurney’s miniature worlds, perusing and searching within as they would at an exhibition. Each visitor remarked on the beauty, the colour, the detail. I can understand why

these secular artworks belong in Gloucester Cathedral, though. Finzi was agnostic but wrote heartfelt Christian choral music, appreciating the artistic potential of sacred texts without necessarily believing in their religious significance. Similarly, Denny's windows do not make a contribution to worship like the cathedral's other stained glass displays, but they are clearly admired for their aesthetic qualities and the introspection they provoke. Music and stained glass, Denny points out, are natural companions. Religion is one of the founding veins of this companionship. Finzi, like Gurney, had a close personal connection to Gloucestershire - his ashes were scattered on May Hill, which appears in the final light of the window. It seems right for Finzi, who was not fond of change in the world around him, to be commemorated in a musical time capsule that will stand long into the future.

Six of the eight lights in the window reflect different settings of poetry by Finzi. Here is my 'companion playlist' to the window, including two pieces I think are appropriate for lights four and five."

1. Dies natalis, Op. 8: V. The Salutation
2. By Footpath and Stile, Op. 2: V. Voices from things growing in a churchyard
3. Let us garlands bring, Op. 18: Fear no more the heat o' the sun
4. Romance, Op. 11
5. Five Bagatelles, Op. 23 (arr. L. Ashmore): IV. Forlana
6. To a Poet, Op. 13a: No. 6. Ode on the Rejection of St Cecilia
7. In terra pax, Op. 39: A Frosty Christmas Eve
8. Intimations of Immortality, Op. 29: Andante sostenuto

## 5. Future Events

Unfortunately the present Covid pandemic and the associated implications threw our 2020 plans into disarray and naturally we had to cancel our proposed Ashmansworth event in July much to the chagrin of all those looking forward to a re-visit. Plans were well advanced but naturally had to be cancelled. After much thought and planning for 2021 and bearing in mind the uncertainty which still remains, we have decided that our bi-annual visit to Chosen Hill, which was scheduled for 2021 anyway, would be a better venue in the event. It offers the opportunity for more distancing if this is still a requirement at the time. We have remained positive for the future and hope that the following dates and events can remain on schedule and look forward to a return to normal and meeting up again.

### **EMF Autumn Event 9 and 20 October 2020**

Being deeply concerned about the future of concerts and live music in the wake of the lockdown the EMF (English Music Festival) are doing what they can to rectify matters starting with an Autumn Festival in St Mary's Church, Horsham which has been designated a Covid-secure venue.

Recitals will be given by violinist Rupert Marshall-Luck and pianist Duncan Honeybourne and will include Elgar's *Violin Sonata*. Three separate recitals are scheduled during the day on 20 October and will be given by flautist Emma Halnan accompanied by harpist Heather Wrighton, including Vaughan-Williams's *Fantasia on Greensleeves*. The evening concert will be given by Ensemble Hesperis performing baroque compositions.

You are invited to view the full programme and purchase tickets by visiting [www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk/2020-autumn-festival](http://www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk/2020-autumn-festival)

### **Ludlow English Song Weekend 9-11 April 2021**

LESW Festival Administrator Steve Catanach explains that he still feels it's a little early to do any detailed planning just yet as in the current Covid circumstances there are a number of ongoing unknowns which need further clarity. "The issue of social distancing in venues remains at the forefront of shaping my initial planning. Whilst lockdown measures are now easing, indoor public venues are likely to remain restricted for some time and it

needs us all to think about how and where we do things. Anthony, Iain and I have had some initial discussions and I am currently exploring some options that are practical for you as the audience, technically suitable for the artists and financially viable for us and our partners. We fully intend to press ahead with LESW21 in April in Ludlow but it may be the time to just slightly update the format to keep things both fresh and interesting for you and, most importantly, safe for everyone involved.” Steve has promised to come back with more proposals soon and you are invited to keep in touch via the website - [ludlowenglishsongweekend.com](http://ludlowenglishsongweekend.com)

There is a meeting of the Ludlow Song Board in October to review current circumstances and plan around some of the issues.

Iain Burnside already has a Reception for the promotion of Diana McVeagh’s new book in his sights for the Saturday, 10 April 2021. He goes on to say that “We’ve secured Declan Costello as one of our speakers - he’s one of the country’s leading laryngologists and is doing an important study on infection rates spread by singing/brass playing etc etc. So we won’t lack for expert opinion. Declan’s a delightful and wise man, and will be worth listening to.”

### **Chosen Hill 5 June 2021**

Our optimism has driven us to book St Andrew’s and St Bartholomew’s at the top of the hill already and hope to be able to split the day between the two Churches as usual. For those who don’t know Gerald and Joy Finzi used to visit the Sexton’s cottage at the top of the hill which will be made open for viewing, and the location was the inspiration for *In Terra Pax* during a New Year’s visit. Performance plans are still at the planning stage while we review Artists plans for the future and their availability.

We had naturally booked artists for Ashmansworth and felt, therefore, it would be ideal to honour that commitment by inviting them to perform at our next event at Chosen Hill.

Depending on their plans for 2021 we hope, therefore, that we will be able to invite Florian Panzieri, tenor and James Atkinson, baritone. Florian is from Guildhall and James from RCM. They would have been singing songs from *Earth and Air and Rain* and *Oh fair to see*, together with songs by Kurt Weill, Butterworth, Madeleine Dring and American composer Ben

Moore. The original plan was that Iain Burnside would accompany them but Iain is always in demand and has yet to confirm his availability for this event.

We will keep you informed of our progress and not least to include a flyer and application form with the next Newsletter in April 2021.

### **St Marylebone Festival 22 July 2021 (Marylebone Parish Church)**

Naturally the Festival, originally scheduled for this year, had to be cancelled but is being re-arranged for a similar date in 2021. More details can be found on their website <https://www.stmarylebonefestival.com/>

There is a Finzi concert scheduled for Thursday 22 July 2021 which the *Finzi Friends* will be sponsoring. Also scheduled that afternoon is an associated walk from Hamilton Terrace, Gerald Finzi's birthplace, down to St Marylebone and a pre-concert talk by Martin Bussey.

We are delighted to be working in partnership with St Marylebone Festival to present 'A Finzi Feast'. This will be held at St Marylebone Parish Church, 17 Marylebone Rd, Marylebone, London NW1 5LT, UK.

It will feature the Choir of St Marylebone PC directed by Gavin Roberts and instrumental music by Finzi. We are excited to co-host this venture, promoted by our newest committee member, Gavin Roberts.

### **Come and Perform Members Event 2021**

As reported earlier in this edition the Come and Perform Members Event at Tardebigge in the autumn last year was, we felt, a success and of course gave Members an opportunity to perform to an audience they wouldn't necessarily otherwise experience. We are, therefore, considering arranging a similar event, perhaps this time in a different location to suit Members who may feel that the West Midlands isn't necessarily accessible.

## 6. Reviews

### 6.1 Compositional News

Our Chairman Martin Bussey's creative impulses are never at rest and we are proud to present here the success of his new and most recent monodrama *Timeless Figure*. It has been in the making for over eighteen months but by the time you receive this Newsletter will have been performed at Tête à Tête: the Opera Festival 2020 in London. Written for baritone Peter Edge, accompanied by clarinet, viola and marimba it takes as its starting point clockmakers Joyce of Whitchurch, Peter's hometown.

Making clocks from 1690 to 1965 the piece traces Joyce as clockmaker across the centuries. Changes in transport and communication challenge traditional perceptions of Time. Time passing; Time measuring our lives; Time measuring out the distances we travel. Communication and faster travel make distances ever shorter, so the piece poses the question 'Can Time stand still?' From clocks on village steeples to railway clocks and civic clocks around the world, what does Time look like?

We are also delighted to report that the score of Martin Bussey's recent monodramatic composition *Mary's Hand* has now been published and is available on 'Composers Edition' [www.composersedition.com](http://www.composersedition.com). At the same time, he has written three short instrumental pieces based on music from *Mary's Hand*, called *Mary Pieces*, one for each of the instruments that play in the piece: *Jack of Hearts*, for Oboe; *Gloriana*, for Trumpet; and *Soul Song*, for Cello. These are already available from 'Composers Edition' and Clare Hoskins, Heidi Bennett and Gabriella Swallow, who regularly perform in the show, have made commissioned recordings which can now be viewed on Martin's YouTube channel.

'Composers Edition' is also proud to be publishing Martin Bussey's new composition *Shocklach Diary*. *Shocklach Diary* is a set of six short pieces for piano, born of a move by the composer to a converted Methodist Chapel in Shocklach, on the borders of Cheshire and Wales in 2015. Border lands have long been a strong interest for Martin. Connections between place and music are hard to define and seldom absolute, but they form a common strand in much music that has influenced him. These are not descriptive pieces, more reflections of place, mood or moment, most often exploring a musical idea which came to mind while in a particular

place. In that sense they form a musical diary, reflecting a new and stimulating chapter in Martin's life. Venues reflected in the diary include the magnificent Redwoods in Bodnant Gardens, Conwy Castle, Bickerton Hill in Cheshire and the night sky in Shocklach itself.

## 6.2 Books

Gerald Finzi's Letters, 1915-1956. A fully annotated edition of more than 1600 letters from and to Gerald Finzi

The Boydell Press

Hardcover 1216 pages

Due to be published 21 May 2021 £60

Diana McVeagh, Finzi's biographer, brings together more than 1600 letters from and to Gerald Finzi, spanning the composer's life from the early 1920s until his untimely death in 1956. His more than 160 correspondents include Ralph Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells, Edmund Rubbra, Arthur Bliss and Howard Ferguson, Michael Tippett, Benjamin Britten and Sir John Barbirolli, the poet Edmund Blunden, and the artist John Aldridge, making this a portrait not only of Gerald Finzi but also of his group of composer, musicians and artists friends that impacted British musical life in the first half of the twentieth century.

In these mostly unpublished letters Finzi emerges as a multi-faceted and complex character, developing from a solitary, introverted youth into a man with strong views and wide interests: education, pacifism, vegetarianism, the Arts and Crafts movement and the English pastoral tradition, among others. From amusing trivia to the deeply serious ideas and principles Finzi set out at the onset of war and in the 1950s, these letters allow for first-hand insights into his personality and background. This definitive edition is fully annotated, offering context with substantial commentaries on the correspondence, illustrations by Joy Finzi, a chronology, bibliography and a catalogue of works.

Diana McVeagh studied at the Royal College of Music. She is a Vice-President of the Elgar Society. Her interests range from Josquin to Birtwistle, but she writes mostly about English Romantics. She is the author of *Elgar: His Life and Music* (Dent, 1955), and the highly acclaimed *Gerald Finzi: His Life and Music* (Boydell, 2005 and 2010),

and *Elgar: The Music Maker* (Boydell, 2007). She has contributed to the *New Grove* (1980, 2001) and the *Dictionary of Natio*



## Table of Contents

### *Prologue*

*A Young Man's Exhortation, 1915-33*

*Haste on my Joys! 1933-39*

*Oh Fair to See, 1939-41*

*Channel Firing, 1941-45*

*Sing Out Cecilia's Name, 1945-51*

*The Too Short Time, 1951-56*

### *Epilogue*

*Finzi's Circle*

*Catalogue of Finzi's Works*

*Finzi's Writings*

*Select Bibliography*

## 6.3 Compact Discs

### **Ian Venables - Requiem**

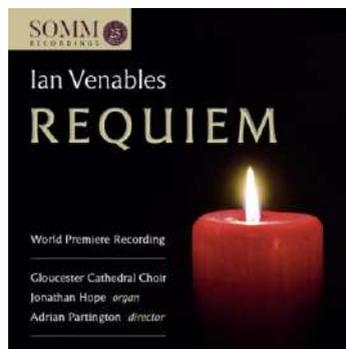
Requiem Op. 48

Adrian Partington with the Gloucester Cathedral Choir and Jonathan Hope, organ

SOMM CD 0618

Ian has been a faithful Member of the *Finzi Friends* and a regular attendee at our events. He has won acclaim for his Composition, and that is extended to his new work, Requiem Op. 48. In addition his lyrical style is reminiscent of Finzi's although entirely personal and unique. He is also the

Chairman of the Ivor Gurney Society and you are invited to visit his website '[www.ianvenables.com](http://www.ianvenables.com)' where you can learn much more including merited reviews of his works.



This is the premiere recording of Ian Venables' exquisite and moving Requiem with the Choir of Gloucester Cathedral conducted by the Cathedral's Director of Music Adrian Partington and Assistant Director of Music Jonathan Hope playing the organ. Completed in 2018, the Requiem received its first performance in the imposing surroundings of Gloucester Cathedral, where this recording was made in 2019.



Widely acclaimed for his songs and chamber music, the Requiem is Ian Venables' most substantial choral work to date and is a compelling piece full of fine melodies and gorgeous harmonies. Adrian Partington describes the Requiem as "a significant addition to the choral repertoire. The music is eloquent, resourceful and exerts a strong emotional appeal." Ian Venables comments: "Composing a Requiem is a daunting creative challenge because so many great settings have been written in the past. However, as a composer of songs, words are always crucially important to me and I found that the words of the Mass for the Dead came to appeal to me strongly. I felt an overwhelming desire to set them to music. I am delighted that Adrian Partington, his excellent choir and Jonathan Hope have brought my music so vividly to life."

The disc also includes first recordings of Ivor Gurney's *God mastering me* (arranged by Venables), John Joubert's *O eternal God* and Venables' *O Sing Aloud to God* alongside John Sander's *Dedication*.

You are invited to peruse other reviews on Ian's website but we include some excerpts here.

John Quinn – 'Seen and Heard'

Ian Venables' songs always show a great sensitivity to the chosen text. Usually, of course, he can select the words which he wants to set but in this instance the text was prescribed. Even then, however, it seems that Ian delved beneath the Latin text to ensure that the marriage of words and music was just as he wanted it. "My approach to composing this Requiem

is exactly the same as my approach to setting any text. The music flows from the text and I have followed the liturgical narrative quite closely but given that the text is in Latin and that there are multitudinous variations in the translations I have had to make my own decisions regarding some textual cuts and repetitions. In addition, each section of the Requiem inhabits its own world, and this too is reflected in the music.”

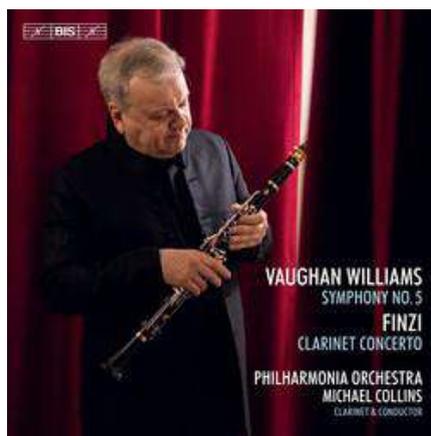
I'm in no doubt that this is a work of considerable importance and stature. The music is often urgent and at all times it is compelling to hear. As we know from his songs, Venables is a very fine melodist and it's no surprise to find that the melodic inspiration behind this score is very strong. The harmonic language is full of interest and always apt for the words that are being sung.

### **Michael Collins plays and conducts Finzi and Vaughan Williams**

Gerald Finzi Clarinet Concerto  
Vaughan Williams Symphony No. 5

Michael Collins and the Philharmonia Orchestra  
Released on BIS – 2367 SACD - July 2020

Michael Collins is a distinguished clarinetist and has given accomplished performances at the Ludlow English Song Weekend. Michael has in recent years also gained recognition as a conductor, appearing with eminent orchestras across the world. The present disc sees his recording debut as a conductor of symphonic repertoire, from which he has chosen Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony, one of the composer's best-loved works. Vaughan Williams is followed by one of Finzi's few instrumental works, his Concerto for Clarinet, the instrument widely regarded as the most voice-like of all. For this, Michael Collins reverts to his customary role as soloist, conducting the strings of the Philharmonia Orchestra from the clarinet.



Norman Stinchcombe of the Birmingham Post writes; 'Gerald Finzi's clarinet concerto is closely associated with Michael Collins: this is his third recording of a work which is a perfect match for his virtuoso style. He makes the first movement's switch from vigorous declamation to lyrical grace a seamless one and the finale's catchy carefree melody absolutely irresistible. Finzi's romantic central adagio is to be played "without rigour", a call for the soloist to sound flexible and improvisatory, which Collins certainly does. He's quite closely recorded which makes me prefer the slightly distanced vernally fresh sound of his 1987 recording now languishing in Warner Classics' vaults. Collins conducts the orchestra in Finzi and also a well-played, brisk performance of Vaughan Williams' fifth symphony

**Finzi Friends**  
**Registered Charity No 1089033**

President: Iain Burnside

Chairman: Martin Bussey

Vice Chairman: Paul Ives

Vice Presidents: Michael Berkeley CBE, Philip Brunelle MBE, Jennie McGregor-Smith BEM, Jim Page MBE, Raphael Wallfisch, Roderick Williams OBE.

Hon. Treasurer: Adrian Williams, Bell House, 72a Old High Street,  
Headington, Oxford OX3 9HW

[corvus@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:corvus@tinyworld.co.uk)

Finzi Journal Editor: Martin Bussey, The Chapel, Worthenbury Road,  
Shocklach, Cheshire SY14 7BF

[mail@martinbussey.co.uk](mailto:mail@martinbussey.co.uk)

Secretary and Newsletter Editor: Eric Hazelwood, 37A High Street,  
Morcott, Oakham, Rutland LE15 9DN

[erichazelwood888@btinternet.com](mailto:erichazelwood888@btinternet.com)

Finzi Friends Website - [www.finzifriends.org.uk](http://www.finzifriends.org.uk)

*Yeraw Finzi*

Copyright © all contributors 2020  
[www.finzifriends.org.uk](http://www.finzifriends.org.uk)