THE FINZI JOURNAL

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THE 2021 JOURNAL OF THE FINZI FRIENDS

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EDITORIAL

The focal point of 2021 for Finzi enthusiasts has been the publication of Diana McVeagh's book Gerald Finzi's Letters 1915-1956. Published by The Boydell Press (ISBN 978-1-78327-572-4), the volume has surpassed expectations. It was a great joy to celebrate the book at an event at Chosen Hill in September 2021. We were fortunate to have Diana with us and to enjoy a selection of the letters read in conjunction with some of Finzi's songs in a programme devised by Iain Burnside. Rightly, the 2021 Journal of The Finzi Friends celebrates the book's publication.

Finzi Friends Chairman, Martin Bussey considers what the letters tell us about Finzi as a musician, in particular his musical development and the impact of his friendships, support for other composers and study of others' music on his own work. This is followed by several reviews of the book: by Andrew Ford, writing from Australia, whose interview with Diana for the Australian Broadcasting Company is available via the Finzi Friends website; by Andrew Burn, distinguished writer on music, Finzi Trustee, and one of the founders of The Finzi Friends; and Dr Jonathan Clinch, from a younger generation of academics focused on British Music of the twentieth century. I hope this stimulates further interest in what is an immense achievement, one which has provided a book which serves as a compendium of all one could wish to know about Finzi, not least through Diana's incredible footnotes.

We are very grateful to Jane Morris for allowing us to print her fascinating article about Ernest Farrar, Finzi's first teacher, seen through the focus of early twentieth century Harrogate. This dovetails well with Matthew McCullough's account of his early work as part of his PhD research into the impact on aspects of British music of World War 1, in which, amongst others, Farrar lost his life. Matthew is a contributor I have hoped to include for a while and I very much hope he will write further for us as his research continues. His article is welcome particularly for the light it throws on a composer who has received relatively little focus, Alan Gray, although Gray's skill as a composer will be known to church musicians from his double-choir Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis as well as

sundry anthems. Matthew shows that there is much more to Gray than this area of composition, as well as highlighting Gray's tragedy in the loss of two sons in the conflict.

The Journal concludes with a CD review, of the Eblana Trio recording to the cost of which Finzi Friends was delighted to contribute. Again, we welcome someone from the younger generation of musicians in Angus Robertson, just completing undergraduate study at Manchester University.

It is, as always, a delight to commend this year's journal to you with particular thanks to our Secretary, Eric Hazelwood for his help in preparing the Journal for printing and for his photographs from the Friends' Churchdown event spread throughout the Journal.

Martin Bussey
November 2021

FARRAR & FINZI AT NO. 15

Jane Morris

‘. . .walk and think of one. . .’

The ‘Metes and Boundaries’ of the Royal Forest of Knaresborough in Yorkshire’s West Riding were determined by perambulations. Until the 18th century most of its 30,000 acres was open moorland, and it took three weeks for interested parties to check its edges. Boundary stones can still be found from the final walk in 1767; since then, the Duchy of Lancaster has retained oversight.

Springs laced with sulphur, chalybeate and sodium bubbled up inside the Forest. These mineralised waters were first recorded in the Tudor period, and optimistic claims about their curative properties caused a spa to grow around them. The town centred on existing hamlets of High and Low Harrogate, where springs were concentrated. In 1778, an award from the Duchy put 200 acres of protected public common, known as the Stray, at the town’s heart. Hotels, gardens, baths, and entertainments followed.

Towards the end of the 19th century a young builder called David Simpson created a glamorous estate along a ridge just north of the town centre. It was called the Duchy. Here, great stone villas set in large grounds were built along wide avenues named after the Dukedoms of Rutland, Clarence, York, Brunswick, Cornwall, Hereford and Kent. The Duchy overlooked open lands where visitors could walk after taking the waters. Simpson extended developments down the other side, Valley Drive. Landscaping led to the creation of The Valley Gardens, wherein thirty-six springs rise in the single acre of Bogs Field. These gardens were criss-crossed by paths, one of which is now called Elgar Walk, after the composer’s daily stroll from the Hotel Majestic.

By the early 20th century Harrogate had become the ‘Queen of Inland Watering Places’, frequented by European royalty. With them

came fashionable elites, and a fabulously diverse economy.[1] The *New York Times* singled out Harrogate and the Tower of London as European destinations not to be missed. The town's fame and wealth were reflected in its fabric. The Edwardian town was a place of magnificence and modernity: alongside statues and splendid hotels were new reservoirs, a gas plant, and a hospital. Samson Fox, a millionaire iron master from Leeds, installed water-gas lighting on Parliament Street, built social housing and a school, provided a steam fire engine and contributed to a sparkling new place of entertainment, The Kursaal, which was opened by Sir Hubert Parry in May 1903. The Kursaal, with its velvet, murals, mahogany, gold leaf, turrets, dome, balconies, ambulatory, stencil work and stained glass, was a versatile space: it could seat almost 1,300 people or be cleared for equestrian or ballroom events. From his elaborate Grove House on Skipton Road, Fox also paid for the building in London of the Royal College of Music and bred the acting dynasty of Edward and James Fox.

Ernest Farrar

It was into this area that in 1914 Mrs Emma Eliza (Lizzie) Finzi brought her youngest son Gerald and introduced him to his music teacher, Ernest Farrar. In 1909 Mrs Finzi had a husband, four sons and a daughter. Three years later she had lost her husband and two sons to illness. At this point she and her remaining family were in Switzerland. The children's unloved tutor, Walter Jenkinson Kaye, was a Harrogate man (from a schoolmaster's family in the town) and when the family's return was necessitated by the outbreak of war, it may well have been he who suggested Harrogate's 'bracing air, open spaces and high-class amusements' as the place to go. The Finzis arrived by

[1] In the early 1900s Harrogate was home to 101 grocers, 41 coal merchants, 8 chimney sweeps, 3 oyster dealers, 4 palmists, one clogger, 32 tobacconists, one dripping merchant, 58 boot and shoe makers, one riding school, one wig maker, one violin maker, 17 bath chair proprietors, 54 building contractors, a branch of an Esperanto society, 31 separate places of worship. Harrogate's attraction for people with ailments made it profitable place for the medical profession (64 physicians and surgeons), and for undertakers (26).

degrees, going first to Pateley Bridge in nearby Nidderdale, then to a rented house at the southern end of the town, finally moving into Birkholt, 22 Duchy Road, on that magnificent Duchy estate.

'. . . footfalls echoing. . . '

Harrogate was full of music. The Cairn Hydro Palm Court, the Winter Gardens, the Empire and Pier Head all had their own trio or band; versatile musicians from Tom Coleman's Pierrots and Otto Schwartz and his German Band made a living in the town. The violinist Wallace Hartley played in the Municipal Orchestra and in hotels until he was immortalised by playing on the deck of the Titanic as it went down.

The Kursaal

Between April and September there were weekly Wednesday afternoon symphony concerts at The Kursaal, when experienced orchestral musicians from Leeds, their winter season over, moved across to play in the Municipal Orchestra and the West Riding's musical centre of gravity shifted to Harrogate. The orchestra played on other days, and on some evenings there were themed concerts of music by particular composers. The 'darling of The Kursaal' was Julian Clifford, a tall, slim, wavy-haired conductor, composer, pianist, and flamboyant impresario who once stopped a concert to rebuke ladies in the audience who were chattering too much. When his contract began in 1906 Harrogate audiences were accustomed to easy listening – pieces like marches and single movements from popular symphonies. Clifford widened their horizons. He invited international soloists and introduced new music. The first provincial performance of Elgar's Second Symphony was given in Harrogate (after eight rehearsals), and on 12th August 1914 Vaughan Williams conducted his overture *The Wasps* before a performance of his *A London Symphony*, four months after its premiere.

Another contemporary composer whose work Clifford promoted was his neighbour and friend, Ernest Bristow Farrar, and when Mrs Finzi (very likely at Kaye's suggestion) asked him for advice about a composition teacher for her son, it was Farrar whom he recommended. Farrar had been organist at Christ Church in the middle of the Stray since

1912, where according to the local press 'there had been a great improvement in the standard of music' since his arrival. Clifford and Farrar lived within a couple of minutes' walk of each other, and of The Kursaal, where Clifford had conducted Farrar's *Rhapsody No. 1: The Open Road* (Op.9) back in August 1911. Clifford encouraged Farrar to write more works.

15 Hollins Road

Clifford lived with his soprano wife (the Hon Alice Margaret, daughter of Baron Henniker, an MP and Governor of the Isle of Man), their children, German nurse and servants in White House, on Coppice Drive.[2] Farrar's house was on Hollins Road, which leads off at right angles from Coppice Drive. Hollins Road is not quite as imposing as Coppice Drive. It is straight and slopes down from south to north, with a mews running parallel. Detached houses at the southern end give way to a terrace of six tall late-Victorian houses; then come two pairs of semi-detached gritstone buildings, Nos. 13/15 and 17/19, each marked by tall, zigzag-edged chimneys, strong curling finials, and faux half-timbered gables above polygonal bay-windowed frontages. The Farrars lived at No. 15. Today it is faced by newer houses, but in 1915, when Finzi first visited, it looked out across open fields in the rural valley of the Coppice Beck and east towards the village of Bilton. On summer evenings the houses echoed to the screech of swifts around the roofs.

[2] Living nearby were retired bank managers, an Indian railway official, a clerk in holy orders, the borough engineer and Charles Fortune, a former mayor, who had made his money plastering the new-built Victorian mansions and had owned some houses, including No. 15, on Hollins Road.

Gerald's journey to No. 15 from Birkholt on Duchy took him along tree-lined pavements, past the Cairn Hydro, across Ripon Road, down Coppice Drive and left into Hollins Road. It took less than five minutes. There is a description of the teenager sitting on the fence outside on non-lesson days awaiting an invitation to enter or go for a walk on the moors. Back then, the low wall in front of the house was topped by iron railings; the fence on which Gerald sat bordered the field across the road.

To enter, Gerald climbed a flight of six steps leading up to the front door, walked into an arts-and-crafts wooden porch with stained glass overlights, and turned left into the hall. If he glanced up the staircase, past the cloakroom, there was more stained glass on the half landing on the way up to two floors of six bedrooms and more bathrooms. Similar patterns of turquoise and crimson glass can be seen throughout the Duchy; they are a feature of the late-Victorian and Edwardian town. Two reception rooms lead off the hall, with a passage towards the kitchen and scullery beyond; the lessons would have taken place in one or other of these front rooms.

Olive, Ernest's wife, was assisted in her housekeeping by at least one servant. Top floor rooms with lower ceilings and a bathroom, let into the pitch of the roof, were provided as servants' quarters. It was a stiff climb up all the stairs from the cellar with coal buckets. A small garden lies before the house and a larger walled garden backs onto the Mews behind, with more steep external steps down to the cellar, where laundry was done.

'Hushed is Bilton evening air after vespers sung'

The choice of Farrar for Finzi was inspired. The quiet, shy, tall, twinkling blue-eyed and very talented Ernest Farrar may have been able to fill some of the senior male gaps in Gerald's life left by the loss of his father and brothers. Farrar's own father, Charles Druce Farrar, lived 20 miles away in Micklefield, a village astride the Great North Road on the east side of Leeds. By the end of the 19th century there were two parts to Micklefield: the Peckfield end, where there was a coal mine and terraces of workers' housing, and an older nucleus around the church. The church was a Victorian successor to a medieval chapel, and from 1887 the Rev Charles Farrar was its vicar.

The Farrars were the first occupants of the new, tall, red-brick vicarage which had been built alongside the churchyard. The house stood in generous grounds and was provided with a basement, large attics, two staircases, many bedrooms and reception rooms, as well as large kitchen and scullery. There was thus plenty of space for family hobbies, music, entertaining and parish duties. Charles's hobby was aviculture, breeding cage birds, a pastime about which he wrote two books, his *Birdroom and Aviary - Life with Cage Birds* (1910) being a valuable source of family anecdotes. Large aviaries were constructed in the garden, and in the attics.

Ernest Farrar was born on 7th July 1885 in Lewisham, where his godfather, the Rev Richard Rhodes Bristow, a popular high church vicar of neighbouring St Stephen's, Lewisham,[3] contributed his middle name. Ernest was two, and his sister, Rose Ethel, four, when the family moved north. A second son, Cecil Francis, was born in 1889. Rose, their gentle, kind, tall and stately mother was a devoted vicar's wife who fulfilled the many tasks that such a position demands, as well as undertaking motherly, housekeeping and bird duties. She was born in Usk as Rose Alice Handyside, the daughter of William, a thrice-married colonel in the Royal Artillery who had served at Sevastopol and Balaklava and later moved his family from place to place during tours of duty in the Tower of London, Newfoundland and Woolwich.

Charles Farrar came from a long line of churchmen. His grandfather, Rev John Farrar, was a notable Methodist who was fourteen times Secretary and twice President of the Conference. John's wife, Sophia Mathilda Martindale, also came from a dissenting background. Miles Martindale, her father, had risen from a humble beginning, taught himself French, Latin and Greek, become an itinerant Methodist minister. Grandson Charles, in contrast, was a Tractarian who valued traditional Anglo-Catholic liturgy and things that went with it – like colour, ritual, and high standards in music.

Charlie, or Big Mick, as he was known, was a bulky, sensitive man with a ruddy complexion, a big heart, and large sense of punctuality and humour. Charlie stood over six feet tall on enormous legs and feet which his children compared with those of fledgling Virginian Cardinal birds (small crests, no tails, but very leggy). Educated at Lancing, his degree was from Durham, and he had served as an HMI while a curate in Lewisham.

[3] Later, the Canon Missioner at Southwark Cathedral.

Rose seems to have been long suffering, often complaining about the time and money Charlie spent on his birds. When he was absent, she sometimes had to look after them herself, managing to see those same Virginian Cardinals through their infancy during one of her husband's illnesses.

A friend said of Charles, 'Give you some birds and a wall to lean against, and you settle into easefulness that would madden a saint!' Not all was saintly. Big Mick held breeding records for 24 types of bird and was exceedingly proud of the Aviculture Medal he was awarded for breeding Nonpareil finches. When village lads got into the Nonpareils' enclosure during church one evening, the repercussions included 'a meeting with the village constable and trouble with an ashplant, wielded by their father.' We are told that Wesleyans in the village did not like Rev Farrar, perhaps because of his high church leanings, but that he had their respect for bringing back parcels of fish from Leeds market for distribution among the sick, of whatever denomination.

On Thursday, the last day of April 1896 an explosion in the Peckfield colliery killed 63 men and 21 pit ponies. Charles was away that day, but a week later presided over a meeting in the Mechanics Institute where he argued that local people were best qualified to administer relief because they knew the needs. In Leeds, the relief fund for widows and orphans rose to £20,500.[4] Controversy ensued about whether two unmarried mothers should be eligible for support, on the grounds that vice would be encouraged by giving it. The Rev Farrar met this head on: 'It wasn't the children's fault'.

'The way he came and went'

These, then, were the surroundings in which Ernest grew up. In his teens he walked a mile to Micklefield station each day to catch the train for Leeds, then walked another mile through the city up to the Leeds Grammar School near Woodhouse Moor, where John Ireland had studied six years before. It is suggested the Leeds City organist, Herbert Austin Fricker might have given him some organ lessons on the school chapel

[4] The trust set up to support 132 dependents closed in 1962. A memorial in the churchyard names all the victims.

organ.[5] Little is known about Ernest's other early teachers, apart from Bernard Johnson, organist and composer, who later presided at Bridlington Priory and in Nottingham. Several of the great and the good who sat on the committees of Leeds music societies were both Leodiensians and graduates of Trinity College, Cambridge. Charles Francis Tetley JP, President of Leeds Philharmonic Society for many years and owner of Tetley's brewery had been educated at these places. He was noted for his integrity, sense of humour and ability to lower the temperature of controversy. He was also wealthy. Hence, perhaps, the choice of another Trinity man, Charles Villiers Stanford, as conductor of both the Leeds Philharmonic Society (1897) and Leeds Festival (1900). Encouragement and support for Farrar the promising 'grammar grub' will have spread through their network.

Ernest obtained his ARCO at 18, in 1903, and served as organist in his father's church until 1905. Charles said that 'things happen slowly at Micklefield, from the grasping of an idea to the pace of the church choir over hymns.' Could he have been referring to difficulties his son had managing services? Later Farrar wrote, in a talk about church music, that hymns were for people while voluntaries should be listened to. Rubbish was to be got rid of and a little austerity does no harm if it encourages dignity and strength. He dismissed 'The day Thou gavest Lord is ended' as 'that damned waltz tune'.

In 1905 Farrar won an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music (RCM), being one of 15 successful candidates from a field of over 300. His scholarship was for composition with Stanford. Other teachers were Sir Walter Parratt, (who had taught Julian Clifford) Sir Frederick Bridge and Jack Dykes. Farrar won the Sullivan Prize in 1906 and was a Grove scholar from 1907-9.

In March 1908 his setting of Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* (Op. 6) was given its first performance by the Leeds Philharmonic Society and Halle Orchestra in the Town Hall. The *Musical Times* described the piece as 'remarkably successful in conveying the mystical atmosphere of the

[5] Fricker was appointed organist at Leeds Town Hall in 1898 and started the Leeds Municipal Concerts in 1903. He later promoted Farrar's work when he became involved with Halifax Choral Society. At his first concert, on 24th November 1911, he featured the three *Vagabond Songs*, which were described by the *Halifax Evening Courier* as 'So refreshingly different from the banal platitudes of many modern song writers.'

poem'. Stanford's *Stabat Mater*, Wagner's Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, and Charles Wood's *Dirge for Two Veterans* were the other works that made up the programme.

Back at Micklefield, another Ernest, Ernest Bullock, later to be Sir ('Dead') Ernest Bullock, was now the organist in Charles Farrar's church. Bullock had begun as an orphan in Wigan, been adopted by Edward Bairstow, and later became organist of Westminster Abbey. He met Ernest Farrar in the following year; the two became close friends.

At the RCM, Farrar met other rising talents through membership of the exclusive 'Beloved Vagabonds Club' which had been founded by Audrey Alston, Britten's future viola teacher, that met in Holland Park several times a term to play. Entry was by invitation only. Other members over time were the violinist Marion Scott, the singer Clive Carey, composer Frank Bridge (who became a close friend), cellist Felix Salmond and pianist Harold Samuel.

Ernest later told Gerald Finzi about the remarkable Marion Scott, but, perhaps, not all the personal details. Like himself she had been born in Lewisham, but eight years before, to a well-to-do solicitor's family which recognised her musical ability and helped her become one of Stanford's first women pupils. She completed her course in 1904 but returned to create the RCM Union of Students as well as the Marion Scott Quartet (1908) and the Society of Women Musicians in 1911. In August 1909, she performed with Ernest in Micklefield, playing violin to his piano, this being the second of two recitals in the village which Ernest gave after his return from Germany the month before.

Farrar's German interlude had begun in February, at the English church of All Saints, Dresden, on the recommendation of Parry and Parratt. Dresden was a musical mecca for English composition students at this time, its reputation illustrated by the premiere of Strauss's *Elektra* there the month before Farrar's arrival. Delius, Elgar and George Dyson were among other visitors during the golden pre-war years.

Three months after his return, Farrar's first orchestral rhapsody, *The Open Road* (Op. 9) was given at Leeds Town Hall. Dedicated to G.E.T., who awaits identification, its brightly paced, joyful rhythms are stirred by Walt Whitman's lines

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy free the world before me.

The family's pride in his growing reputation can be sensed when they told him: 'Father will be on the steps an hour before the doors open!'.

In 1910 Farrar took a post as organist at St Hilda's, South Shields, where he was the successful candidate from 70 applicants. He received a letter from Ralph Vaughan Williams: 'I suppose I must congratulate you – I certainly congratulate them – but it's a beastly job being an organist . . .'

Local newspapers give glimpses of Farrar giving organ recitals at St Hilda's, and of the seventh annual concert promoted by the South Shields Orchestral Union which was held under the baton of Mr Albert Adams in the Royal Assembly Hall on 8th March 1911. Adams's 60-strong orchestra played a programme that contained three overtures, five sets of songs, suites and melodies from Massenet and Grieg, and Mozart's 40th Symphony (which was placed third in the programme). The fifth piece, in the first half, was the '*Song of the Open Road*' by 'St Hilda's own organist'. The composer, said the *Newcastle Journal*, was 'accorded a magnificent reception'.

In South Shields more friends are glimpsed. Among them was John Pullein, the organist of St Peter's Harrogate, who came to give a recital. It was probably he who later told Farrar about the up-coming vacancy at Christ Church, Harrogate. Another friendship was with Olive Wilhelmina Mason, the daughter of a parishioner, and chemist, Henry Thomas Mason. The Masons lived in the nearby village of Westoe, where stood substantial houses occupied by the families of prosperous businessmen.[6]

Marion Scott travelled up to South Shields on 18th November 1911 to perform the first two movements of Farrar's *Celtic Suite* (Op.11) (after Fiona McLeod) for violin and piano. 'Dalua,' the first part, about the faery fool, is dedicated to Marion. Next came 'The Laughter of Scathach', the Amazonian Queen of Syke. The third movement, 'Eily', was not yet complete and had to wait until the following January for performance by Marion and Ernest in a recital at Marion Scott's London home, 92 Westbourne Terrace. At some point in that month Marion found that Farrar was engaged to Olive Mason, to whom 'Eily' is dedicated. Scott never spoke to him again.

[6] Flora Robson, Elinor Brent Dyer, and Catherine Cookson, were others who had connections with Westoe.

Ernest started as the organist of Christ Church in September 1912. He returned to St Hilda's to marry Olive Wilhelmina on 8th January 1913, with Ernest Bullock as his best man. It is unknown when the Farrars moved into 15 Hollins Road, but there is no sign that they ever lived anywhere else, and it is likely that they were there from the first. The walk to Christ Church took about half an hour. Perhaps, like many artists, he found the rhythmic exercise good for composition for it was in Harrogate that nearly all his remaining works were composed.

Alongside his duties at Christ Church, Farrar gave lessons to private pupils, sometimes conducted the Municipal Orchestra, and taught at a new girls' boarding school, Queen Ethelburga's, on the north-west edge of town. Ethelburga's looked out across the valley of the Oak Beck towards Birk Crag, a rocky outcrop about a mile or so from Hollins Road. The crag was an attraction for visitors, who were rewarded by long views into the Pennines if they reached it on foot from the town centre. It is possible to picture Farrar and young Gerald walking to it along Duchy Road, the thirty-year old Ernest listening to the teenager, and wonder about their conversation. Farrar wrote to Lizzie describing her son as a 'v. interesting pupil' who was finding it a trifle difficult to concentrate at present but who would need 'the patience of Job multiplied by 4' to get on as a composer.

'Who went a-soldiering'

Farrar's *The Forsaken Merman* (Op 20) was completed in June 1914 and given its first performance on 9th September by Julian Clifford and the Municipal Orchestra, wherein Farrar played the celesta. His largest surviving orchestral work, it embodies the sense of loss and longing in the poem by Matthew Arnold that inspired it.

These were busy days. Clifford joined the Volunteer Corps – the 5th West Yorkshire Volunteers – on the outbreak of war. On 22nd August, ten days after the *London Symphony* performance, a Grand Orchestral Concert for the War Fund was given under his leadership, reinforced by musicians from Leeds, Bradford, and hotel bands, all of whom volunteered their services. More charity concerts followed in the Kursaal under the patronage of Her Imperial Highness Grand Duchess Maria Georgievna of Russia.

Farrar was composing. His *English Pastoral Impressions* (Op.26), destined to become possibly his best-known surviving work, was first performed in May 1915. At first sight, the three movements, 'Spring Morning', 'Bredon Hill', and 'Over the Hills and Far Away' evoke their dedicatee, Ralph Vaughan Williams, but Farrar's sound-world and use of the orchestra point in new directions.

On his thirtieth birthday, in July, Farrar conducted his *Variations for Piano* (Op.25), dedicated to and played by Clifford. Gerald, and his mother, were probably in the audience, together with Charles, Rose, Ethel and very likely Cecil, who was now in his fourth year of curacy at St Saviour's church in Leeds, and on the verge of being received into the Catholic church.

In September 1915, Francis Cecil Yates, the stage manager of The Kursaal, was killed in action. Next day Beethoven's 9th Symphony was performed in Harrogate for the first time. Farrar had trained the choir.

These were days of grim news. Both Julian Clifford and his wife had brothers who were sending letters home from the front. Ernest's Australian cousin, Alan Francis Farrar, had been killed in Gallipoli in July and buried at sea. His father's cousin, Sir George Herbert Farrar, quartermaster for the South African forces, was killed in an accident in May.

Farrar made the decision to enlist in the Grenadier Guards in December 1915. This was three months before the introduction of conscription, but he was not called into service until the following August.

Olive followed her husband as he moved through stages of training. Letters of encouragement sent to Gerald detail an hotel in Queens Gate, London. Ernest wanted any new composition to be sent there so Olive could deliver it. The couple were able to attend concerts and visit Stanford at home. A visit was arranged so that Gerald and Lizzie could meet him. Stanford was less than encouraging to Finzi about a career as a composer.

During 1916 Private Farrar told Gerald of his hands getting 'knocked about' and stiff from rifle work. Finzi wrote back so many questions that it made Farrar's 'brain reel'. The answer to one was 'I know nothing of Haydn's domestic affairs, but I don't suppose it made any difference to his music'. By 1918 Ernest was asking Gerald questions. 'Would you kindly let me have 12 sheets of MS paper (orchestral)! I have nothing here'. He was scoring a song in his spare time for Madam Julian Clifford to perform. Back in Harrogate, The Kursaal was renamed the Royal Hall in acquiescence to anti-German feeling.

Around the turn of the year Farrar applied for, and was granted, a commission in the Devonshire Regiment, He was posted to its 3rd Battalion, a training and holding unit based at Devonport. Olive followed, staying at the Royal Hotel in May.

It was here that in April he met another recently commissioned officer from Yorkshire, who years later recalled their life: 'We lived well, dined with the regimental silver and with the regimental band playing…we junior officers were supposed to turn out and be drilled, in highly elaborate and quite useless fashion…by a mad old marine sergeant.'

Farrar's new friend was the up-and-coming writer J.B. Priestley, who began to dodge the pointless parades and was duly punished by being put in charge of funeral parties. 'Morning after morning we slow marched to the station, where often there were weeping relatives on the platform; we gave the coffin a last salute; then off we went, marching briskly, the band playing a lively tune.'

The funeral parades were supposed to be a dead-end task, but Priestley discovered that if he did not report back to the adjutant when they were over no-one was interested in where he was. He would accordingly award himself the rest of the day off 'and visit the cinema, rich then in new Chaplin and custard pie short films, or to a music hall, where variety was in its Indian summer, brilliant and dying.' Priestley wrote of Farrar: 'We discovered common interests and ideals in music and literature so that we became good friends in a very short time.'

Early in July 1918 Ernest was given leave and returned to Harrogate for the first performance of his just completed and last orchestral work, the *Heroic Elegy* (Op.36). He inscribed it 'For Soldiers', and added a quotation from *Henry V*, 'Free from vainness and self-glorious pride'. The *Heroic Elegy* is grave and pensive, with an eerie opening that gives way to a funeral procession that might be proceeding 'down some profound dull tunnel'. There is no triumphalism: the heroism rests in endurance.

At the beginning of September, the two friends, Farrar and Priestley were ordered to active service with the Devonshire's 16th Battalion, then stationed between St Quentin and Cambrai. The 16th Devons were part of the Fourth Army, then engaged in the so-called Hundred Days' Offensive which culminated in the Armistice. Priestley described their journey. At Folkestone they boarded a 'fantastic American ship' that 'might have been fetched from the Mississippi' with thousands of American troops 'new,

raw and hearty, with nothing in their mode of address to distinguish their rank.' There was a band on the top deck 'with more than its share of gleaming sousaphones' which 'blared and clashed out ragtime. It seemed a hell of a way to sail to war but not completely ridiculous…'

From Boulogne, the Yorkshire pair travelled 'on roads jammed with transport' in dust and heat. They eventually found the Battalion headquarters in a quarry beside a railway cutting near the village of Ronssoy. The 16th Devons had been fighting hard for some weeks and were far below strength.

The Devons spent the next day, Tuesday 17th September, readying themselves for an operation early on the following morning. Their task was to establish a forward line from which the Hindenburg Line could be attacked. The battalion was part of 231 Brigade, which was responsible for 1000 yards of frontage. Opposing them was the 38th German Division which held positions from Templeux le Guerard to Rossony. The assault was going to rely on precise timing. There was to be no prior artillery barrage of the kind that, a year or two before, had given advance notice of a forthcoming attack; instead, the plan was for a curtain of shellfire to fall abruptly and move forward in increments of a hundred yards or so to enable troops to advance immediately behind it.

The Devons had little rest as they waited: the Germans fired gas shells into their positions overnight; as the clock ticked down, Priestley realised that gas had seeped into his mask.

At H-hour, 05.20, a thousand artillery pieces began continuous fire along a frontage of fourteen miles. After two minutes the barrage lifted forwards by a hundred yards, whereafter it advanced by a hundred yards every three minutes until it had moved 1,300 yards beyond the start line. It then became a protective barrage for an hour, after which it again began to move forward, this time at a rate of a hundred yards every four minutes.

The Devons advanced behind the curtain. The dawn half-light was fogged by mist and rain, and a number of them became disorientated; Priestley fell into a shell hole and was injured after losing contact with the men he was leading; tanks became bogged. Yet despite mishaps all went well: by 07.45 the Devons were in possession of their objectives. Their job now was to hold them while another unit passed through and continued forward. This too was successful. Many prisoners were taken and by Western front standards fatalities were light, just two. One of them was Farrar. The War Diary simply says: '2nd Lt Farrar killed'.

Post-war writers say that he was killed by machine gun fire. The Devons' advance took them across complicated networks of earthworks and obstacles, which ran in short lengths with many doglegs. Some of these were defended by machine guns and it is possible that Farrar met his end in one of them. Alternatively, their neighbours the Black Watch, just a few hundred yards to the right, reported heavy machine gun fire from a particular position as they advanced over the ridge. Perhaps it was from here that the fatal bullets came. If so, Farrar's assailants were themselves soon dead: the Black Watch passed the co-ordinates of their position to artillery, who silenced it with shells.

'But sorrow walks with me'

A century later, on 18th September 2018, a friend from Opera North sat with us in our own house, 13 Hollins Road. We thought of Olive awaiting the next of her husband's daily letters, which usually ended 'take great care of your small self…you are all the world to me', with three rows of seven kisses. We imagined the sounds of his music seeping through the wall, and played through an assortment of his pieces, found in charity shops and Leeds University's Brotherton Library.

Olive, who had returned to her mother in Westoe Village, while Ernest was abroad, had written a condolence letter to Finzi wishing she was in Harrogate to help Lizzie and him after his brother Gerald was shot down in France. Within a fortnight she was accepting Gerald's sympathy knowing how much 'you loved Ernest…who will live in the lovely music he has written'. She also received condolences from 2nd Lt Priestley. 'Your husband was to me a representative of one of the finest types of humanity, a creative artist free from all meanness and jealousies…he was an idealist.' Farrar's commanding officer wrote 'how much I personally feel the death of this gallant officer. He was a magnificent example to all in courage and devotion to duty and was beloved by all ranks in his battalion.' Stanford said: 'He was shy but full of poetry – and one of my most loyal and devoted pupils.' Marion Scott paid tribute to the sturdy Anglo-Saxon fibre in his music.

Rev. Farrar held a Requiem mass for his son at Micklefield on 29th September. Rose and Charles set up the Farrar Prize for composition at the Royal College of Music – an award twice won by Benjamin Britten. Farrar is listed on the war memorials at South Shields and Micklefield. He

lies in the cemetery just outside the churchyard wall at Ronssoy, on the Somme, under a few trees.

Musical tributes tell us something. Frank Bridge's Piano Sonata, one of the first substantial modernist works by an English composer, was dedicated to his memory. So was Finzi's *Requiem da Camera*.

Julian Clifford played Farrar's *Lavengro* at a concert in Harrogate in October 1918 and broke down at the end of his speech. He wrote a tone poem, *Lights Out* 'in memory of a dear friend . . . intended as an impression of the musician, whose musical ideals would have led him far in the world of music and art, of the strength and purpose characteristic of the man, and the friend, and regret for a life of high promise, so suddenly cut short. . . his compositions, nearly all been produced here in Harrogate, are now receiving due recognition in all parts of England; the memory of what he had already accomplished and his personality will remain with us through them. Their works live after them.'

Lights Out was given its first performance in Harrogate on 17th September 1919. It was regarded at the time as Clifford's best work and received several performances. Clifford, meanwhile, threw himself into organising a successful winter season for the orchestra in Hastings after Harrogate, and worked hard in other venues. It was a shock to all when he died from pneumonia at Christmas 1921. The score of *Lights Out* is lost.

''Tis silent.'

Olive Wilhelmina lived on in Hollins Road until the 1950s. Little trace remains of her. Her friend, Elinor Brent Dyer, who had had a tricky family background, found fame in writing the Chalet books, in several of which Farrar's song *Brittany* is mentioned. Gerald Finzi tried to persuade Olive to secure her husband's unpublished works. He was reluctant to interfere but knew how manuscripts had a habit of getting scattered and lost beyond recall. He proposed a subscription from friends to interest publishers, nevertheless *Lavengro*, the second orchestral rhapsody by Farrar, appears lost. The RCM and Ernest Bullock agreed to care for Farrar's manuscripts and they are now held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Olive died in a rest home in Sunderland in 1979, on the same September day as her husband had been killed 61 years before.

Rev Charles Druce Farrar stayed in Micklefield until retirement. The Very Rev Cecil Francis Farrar died in 1951 after ministry throughout

Yorkshire. Ethel trained at the 'pudding school' in Leeds and became her parents' housekeeper when they retired to Whitkirk in Leeds. She died in March 1955 and is commemorated, with her grandmother, in Micklefield churchyard on a memorial outside the church door.

By 2020 Hollins Road had become a rat-run for commuters trying to avoid traffic on busy Ripon Road. Since spring, when Covid and peace descended, the whole Kursaal estate has become part of the Nightingale Hospital for Yorkshire and the North East. Huge oxygen tanks still peep over new security fencing, and at the time of writing it is being re-readied for use. Between Hollins Road and the hospital, near the mighty Majestic, Ripon Road is coned off for expected emergencies.

Ernest's pupils remembered him: 'Needless to say, there is never a day passes but I have some thoughts of Hollins Road', wrote Horace Dixon. 'A thousand things continually remind me of those happy days.' Dixon's lines below were set to music by another of his pupils, Harry Gill. In them, three of them can be imagined back together on a May evening, walking down Hollins Road.

In Memoriam
Beneath the light-leaved sycamores
In blue dusk of spring,
Still I walk and think of one
Who went a-soldiering.

Hushed is Bilton evening air
After vespers sung,
Home from church in Sunday best
Saunter old and young.

And their footfalls echoing
Speak of hearts content,
But sorrow walks with me along
The way he came and went.

On the lilac-scented air
Falls the steeple chime,
'Tis silent. Swallows skim the eaves
Where strangers hear the time.

A Note on Sources

This note has drawn on a number of published works with which many Finzi Friends will be familiar. They include Dr Frankie Williams's Julian Clifford – the phenomenon (1877-1921); *chapters by Donald Webster and Adrian Officer from* The Clock of the Years *(edited by Rolf Jordan); and Bernard Benoliel's sleeve notes for the Chandos CD* Ernest Farrar: orchestral works. *The go-to author for publications on Harrogate's buildings, builders and people is Malcolm Neesam, whose valuable output has included twelve books on different aspects of the town's history. Robert Demaine's PhD thesis* Individual and Institution in the musical life of Leeds 1900-1914 (*University of York, 2000) has been consulted. Quotations from J B Priestley's recollections of life in the Devonshire Regiment are from his* Margin Released: a writer's reminiscences and reflections, *first published in 1962. Diana McVeagh's extraordinary collection of* Gerald Finzi's Letters 1915-1956 *was published in time to include more detail and correct errors. Extensive use has been made of the British Newspaper Archive and census records. The account of events on 17/18 September 1918 is based on the War Diary of 16 Battalion Devonshire Regiment (The National Archives WO 95/3152/2).*

There is more to do, both in relation to Farrar's music and his family. Research into the family history has thrown up vivid glimpses into Victorian society that await the telling, like the acrimonious divorce of Charles Farrar, Ernest's great uncle, a doctor; the extraordinary lives of his sons in South Africa; and perhaps most remarkably events surrounding his brother, John Martindale Farrar, Ernest's grandfather, who by 1891 had made the transition from clerk in holy orders to journalist and ten years before is found living with Emma (32 years his junior) rather than his wife Frances – whose brother John had been killed when he fell off a wall in Oriel College Oxford during a drunken undergraduate evening in 1849). Details of cousins in Australia and Methodist forebears will all make interesting reading, and perhaps explain Charles Druce Farrar's contentment in the life of an obscure Yorkshire village life – bringing up three children in peace.

REFLECTIONS ON A THESIS TO COME; BRITISH MUSIC AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Matthew McCullough

> "How is it that while novelists and poets have during the past ten years produced a flood of books about the War, composers have been practically silent? [...] . Since 1918, music has expressed little or nothing of what we have all felt. Why?"[7]

The First World War shook Europe. It tore apart the fabric of daily life and left ripples in the cultural landscape spanning decades. The above remark, quoted by Harvey Grace in a 1930 *Musical Times* article on Sir Arthur Bliss' *Morning Heroes*, posits an interesting question: is it possible that the war avoided exploration through the British musical imagination? Grace attempts to address this remark himself, suggesting that the core elements of post-war literature (he notes weariness, disillusionment, disgust, propaganda, and damage control for political reputations) were 'barren ground for composers.' For the other things left unsaid Grace nods to the poets but concludes that 'solitary reading for the few whose tastes lie that way' will do nothing to project these thoughts into the public domain. Turning towards *Morning Heroes*, he suggests the marriage of poetry and orchestra as a possible solution to the drought of musical engagement with the war.

We might reasonably expect the musical contributions of composers from the front to be few and far between, what with less-than-ideal conditions for composing in the trenches and composers such as George Butterworth, Cecil Coles, Ernest Farrar, and William Denis

[7] Harvey Grace, "'Morning Heroes': A New Symphony by Arthur Bliss," *The Musical Times* 71, no. 1052 (1930).

Brown joining the often-termed 'lost generation.' Some of those who fought and survived were perhaps reluctant to relive wartime experiences in their art, whilst for others it was a safe haven to explore traumatic memories; the aforementioned Arthur Bliss used his choral symphony, *Morning Heroes*, as a source of release, sublimating his recurring nightmares about the war. But there are two elements of Grace's opening which strike me as particularly interesting: the first being the fact that there seems to be consensus, at least between Grace and the maker of the remark, that this question was reasonable and its implications accurate; and secondly, the focus on the need for the music to express something of 'what we have all felt.' Grace, a musician and critic possessing a broad repertoire, must have known Parry's *Chivalry of the Sea*, Elgar's *The Spirit of England*, *Carillon*, and *Polonia*, Gurney's songs, Howells' *Elegy*, Vaughan Williams' *A Pastoral Symphony*, and the several early 'War Requiems,' to name but a few works associated with the war. Was it that these works were at odds with the collective values and memories that Grace felt should be embodied in British War music? And what might these be? What do we learn from reading the war through British music and where do Britain's musical responses to the First World War fit in the cultural landscape of memorialisation amongst the more prominent touchstones of literature and art? These are the questions which presently drive my current PhD research which explores British Composer's responses to the First World War and how they helped shape a cultural memory of the war.

British composers' responses to the war have been generally poorly researched. That is not to say that literature on these composers and works is absent, but instead I would point to a lack of systematic examination of the musical responses as a corpus. This becomes particularly evident when we look to literature and art where 'war poetry' in literature and 'war memorials' in architecture have been covered in considerable depth. Indeed, in Jay Winter's *War Beyond Words*, a study on languages of remembrance in cultural responses to the war, he notes:

> This study is perforce incomplete. There are other important fields – for instance, music – which require detailed examination by those qualified to do so…[8]

[8] J. M. Winter, *War beyond words : languages of remembrance from the Great War to the present* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2017), 2-3.

The examination of war music, and in particular British war music, is a mighty task for any musicologist, one which could take a lifetime, and one which certainly pushes the word limits of a PhD thesis, but it is one to which I am dedicated and in this thesis I aim to do no more and no less than delve in and proffer what thoughts and developments I can. But how to explore such a wealth of music and composers, from Gurney to Gray, Elgar to Elkington, Foulds, Finzi, Bridge, Stanford, Vaughan Williams and others? It is from Jay Winter's seminal studies on the cultural history of the war that I take my methodology: in order to maintain depth alongside breadth and pay attention to the music itself as well as its context, I will deploy a mixture of case studies to retrieve common threads, for example: the use of death rhetoric in the war requiem, the effect of personal experiences with the war on artistic creativity, the role of the 'Pastoral' in war music, and the use of the poetry of Whitman and Housman. This research is still very much ongoing and will no doubt be superseded as quickly as it is published, such is the nature of the beast, but I hope that in sharing a small selection of the initial fruits of my research and some plans for that to come will prove interesting and might provide some food for thought.

The British War Requiem: Dramaturgy and Musico-funerary Rhetoric

Some of the most prominent, large-scale, and public responses to the War were what we would now term 'War Requiems.' As Wolfgang Marx notes, the 'war requiem' throughout the twentieth century in Europe was characterized both by the use of additional or alternative texts to that of the Latin Requiem mass and by its role in the consolation of the living rather than the intercession of the dead.[9] The composition of First World War requiems by British composers is particularly of note when one considers the absence of burial ritual during and after the war.

The death toll from World War One was, and still is for many, unimaginable. In the years between July 1914 and November 1918 over 9 million military and medical officers lost their lives - twice the cumulative number of war casualties from 1790 until the beginning of the Great

[9] Wolfgang Marx, "War and Requiem Compositions in the Twentieth Century," in *The Power of Death: Contemporary Reflections on Death in Western Society*, ed. Maria-José Blanco, Vidal, Ricarda (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2015).

War.[10] In the British forces alone 743,000 soldiers lost their lives which accounted for one in every sixty-six adult males in the country.[11] Not only was this non-biological death unprecedented in Europe, but the innovative technologies of modern warfare produced bloodshed on an inconceivable scale and with immeasurable brutality.[12] By the spring of 1915, British casualties in the war were catastrophic – of Kitchener's original 160,000 strong army, most were dead or injured with 54,000 falling at Ypres alone.[13] The trenches were now filling with the bodies of newly dispatched recruits. As early as September 1914, the Red Cross had sent a special unit to France to search for wounded and missing soldiers, and to collect evidence of those dead or captured.[14]

In particular, the repatriation of bodies was problematic. The number of casualties was rising considerably and moving such a large number of bodies any significant distance from their location on the battlefield was logistically difficult. Furthermore, the advances in modern weaponry meant that many of the bodies were simply obliterated and existed as no more than decimated flesh – if not immediately on impact, then shortly after by shelling, trampling, or natural decay. Wealthy families attempted to repatriate their loved ones in the early days of the war, but this was banned in March 1915, and in May 1916, the British Army also prohibited the erection of personalized memorials in battlefield graveyards.[15] This was generally accepted on the understanding that once the war was over families could exhume their dead. Major Fabian Ware of the Imperial War Graves Commission later extended this legislation indefinitely over concerns regarding political and social unrest arising from inevitable discrepancies in wealth or status.[16]

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[10] Michael Heffernan, "For ever England: the Western Front and the politics of remembrance in Britain," *Ecumene* 2, no. 3 (1995): 293.

[11] Ibid.

[12] "Of the men who were aged 20–24 in 1914, death came to 30.58 per cent, and of those aged 13–19, the figure was 28.15 per cent." – From David Cannadine, "Mirrors of Mortality (Routledge Revivals) : Social Studies in the History of Death," in *Routledge Revivals*, ed. Whaley Joachim (London: Routledge, 2012), 197.

[13] Heffernan, "For ever England: the Western Front and the politics of remembrance in Britain," 295.

[14] Ibid., 296.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 297.

This decision for uniformity in commemoration was not universally accepted.[17] Lord Cecil Sharp's 'The Glorious Dead' in *The Times* on 18th December 1919 argues forcefully;

> Although the arguments for rigorous uniformity command respect, we are convinced that they are outweighed by the just desire of relatives to pay their own tribute to the dead… [It is] repugnant to British feeling that even in death the family should surrender all rights over the individual to the state.[18]

Sharp, here, summarises the main difficulties with public commemorative artefacts of the war. The dead, as soldiers, were thought of as a single entity. Their remembrance as such provoked complex emotions for bereaved relatives – for them, their loved one was not 'just another soldier' but distinguishable through individual characteristics which were intensely personal. This issue was further complicated by the denial of ritual grieving. The fact that the bodies had been buried was not enough, families were deprived of the cathartic ritual process.

It is interesting, therefore, that elements of the requiem appear throughout several 'war requiems' in musical form. To focus on one requiem of note, we might take that of John Foulds, written in the wake of the war and finished in 1921.[19] The work is of enormous proportions with

[17] Lutyens' Stone of Remembrance was said by one critic to look like a shop counter and many protestants were unhappy with Blomfield's Cross of Sacrifice as they thought the cross too catholic a symbol.

[18] "The Glorious Dead," *The Times*, 19th December 1919. The phrase 'The Glorious Dead' was originally coined by Prime Minister David Lloyd George.

[19] Other requiems of note are that of Delius (1916) and Gerald Finzi (1925). Delius had contemplated writing a requiem as early as 1902, although nothing materialised until 1913 when he began working on a score. Writing throughout the summer of 1914, Delius had a finished version by October, but continued to make alterations through to 1916, when it was completed and later published by Harmonie with the dedication 'to the memory of all young artists fallen in the war.' The work has a German text written by Heinrich Simon, translated to English by Philip Heseltine, which contains a strong Nietzschean flavour. The overarching sentiment being that 'human life is like a day in the existence in the world, subject to the laws of all being,' lending the implication that there is no afterlife and that religions spin tales of falsehoods. Somewhat

20 movements, a running time of approximately two hours, and an unprecedented number of performers – at the premiere of the work around 1,250 musicians took part. It is scored for Orchestra, large chorus, four soloists, organ, percussion and brass to play from the north, south, and west of the concert building, and a chorus of boys and youths, harp, celeste, and four solo violins to play from a west-end gallery 'at some distance from the main body.' The orchestra also includes a 'sistrum,' a percussion instrument invented by Foulds which produces a 'gold shimmering' effect. The requiem is not liturgical, though it uses sections of the Requiem Mass plus several other texts collated by Foulds' wife, Maud MacCarthy, including Biblical passages, excerpts from John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress, a poem by the Hindu poet Kabir, and even some text from MacCarthy's own pen.

A World Requiem is dedicated as a 'a tribute to the memory of the dead – a message of consolation to the bereaved of all countries' and was born out of the theosophical philosophies of Foulds and his wife. The work gained a fair degree of notoriety – *A World Requiem* was endorsed by the British Music Society (at the time, an organisation of prominent English musicians including Adrian Boult, Arnold Bax, and Arthur Bliss) and the British Legion, to whom all profits were to be donated. It was premiered at the Royal Albert Hall on Armistice Night 1923 with plans in place for a further five annual performances. There were discussions of performances in Seattle, Vancouver, Sydney and Bombay, on BBC radio, and Douglas Haig requested that it should be performed by regional choirs throughout the United Kingdom every Armistice Day to bring the nation

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more familiar to this particular audience: Gerald Finzi's Requiem da Camera written in memory of Ernest Farrar. The requiem was written between 1923 and 1925, with only the opening *Prelude* performed during his lifetime (1925) – Finzi had originally intended to group this with *A Severn Rhapsody* to create a duo of 'English Pastorals and Elegies.' Whilst none of the other movements were to be performed, the work seems to have held some importance for Finzi as he continued to work on it long after 1925; in 1927 he asked Howard Ferguson about horn signals (Finzi uses the 'Last Post' in the *Requiem*) and in 1928 removed the Hardy setting, *The Breaking of Nations*, only to re-add it later. The *Requiem da Camera* stands aside from the requiems of Delius and Foulds in its scale, its lack of performance, and its noted weaknesses which Banfield suggests are summed up by Philip Thomas remarks of 'one-paced, elegiac sweetness.'

together in remembrance.[20] It is impressive and perhaps testament to the quality of the work, given its scale and the considerable efforts required to perform it, that it remained a feature of the Festival of Remembrance until 1927 when the Daily Express took over the festival, replacing certain commemorative elements with victory celebrations and 'patriotic singing.'[21] At this juncture, the British legion distanced themselves from the event and Foulds' *A World Requiem* faded somewhat into history until a brief revival in 2007.

A certain fascination with these works lies in their role as cultural artefacts, written as works of consolation for the living and in memory of the dead. In looking more deeply and analytically at the score one notes the use of dramaturgy and death rhetoric by Foulds. Douglas Davies, in his book *Death, Ritual, Belief*, notes that we, as humans, use 'words against death:' Humans are self-conscious beings, death poses the ultimate challenge to our self-consciousness, and so we use language, which is the medium of self-consciousness, as a response; thus making us evolved and better equipped to deal with bereavement and death.[22] This, Davies suggests, is one of the central functions of our funerary rites and the rhetoric within (we might speak of performative utterances against death, such as 'for you are dust, and to dust you shall return'). It is interesting, therefore, that Foulds has constructed his requiem around the use of these musical rhetorics of death: the work opens with a tolling bell (or knell), there is a funeral march in the third movement, chanting in the fourth movement, and hymns, meditations, a passion chorale and chorale prelude permeate the musical material of other movements. In a broader cultural landscape where these elements were missing from daily life with families unable to bury the war dead, British composers, in their creation of public facing memorial works repopulated Britain's soundscape of death in the cultural landscape and concert hall, acting, in part, as 'music against death.'

[20] Peter Grant and Emma Hanna, "Music and Remembrance: Britain and the First World War," in *Remembering the First World War*, ed. Bart Ziino (London; New York: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 5.

[21] James G. Mansell, "Musical Modernity and Contested Commemoration at the Festival of Remembrance, 1923-1927," *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009): 434.

[22] See Douglas James Davies, *Death, Ritual, and Belief : The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites*, Third edition. ed., Rhetoric of Funerary Rites (London; Oxford; New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

Personal Experience as a Catalyst for Artistic Creativity

In one of the more archive-heavy sections of my research, I am interested in how composers experiences with the war, both direct and indirect, acted as a catalyst for musical creativity. In order to explore this topic in some depth I have chosen the music of Dr Alan Gray as a case study. Alan Gray was born on 23rd December 1855 in York where he was later educated at St Peter's School, learning music under E.G. Monk, the organist of York Minster. He graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1876, having successfully completed the Law Tripos and qualified as a solicitor in 1881. For a decade, Gray returned to music and took up the Director of Music post at Wellington College from 1883-93 and during that time, in 1889, received his Mus.Doc. The son of the Headmaster at Wellington is said to have remarked on his father's acquisition of a musical staff of particular distinction, with Hugh Allen, A.H. Fox Strangeways, and Walter Ford joining Gray in the music department. He also notes Gray's height (Gray was 6ft 6ins and known to his friends as 'long Alan'); when accompanying at the piano he was as tall sitting down as most singers were when they stood in front of him. Gray took over from Stanford as Director of Music at Trinity College, Cambridge and the University Musical Society (CUMS) in 1893. He retired from CUMS in 1912 and from Trinity in 1930, when he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the College, something of which he was particularly proud.

Dr Alan Gray

Gray lost two of his three sons in the final months of the First World War and this devastated him. His youngest son, Edward Jasper, was killed in action on 31st March 1918. Edward Jasper had left school in the summer of 1916 as a goalkeeper for his house football team, a prizewinning German scholar, and with an Exhibition to Trinity College,

Edward Jasper Gray

Cambridge to read History only to enlist almost immediately for the war. Edward Jasper was shot through the head by a sniper in Arras. The Battalion chaplain wrote in a note to Alan Gray: "we were troubled by a sniper, and your son very pluckily went out to search for him but fell victim himself." In a reply to a letter from Edward Dent regarding Edward Jasper's loss, Alan Gray writes: "It is a cruel blow – that sweet, affectionate, clever boy and man." He talks of Edward's anticipation of death and his own hopes to meet again – "If I had not this hope I should be of all men most miserable." Gray's middle son Maurice also died in action. He had taken up a place at Trinity College in 1908 but dropped out the following year to join the Slade School of Art. Maurice was predicted a successful career as an artist, exhibiting at the New English Art Club, but he decided to enlist some time before the war and was sent to France in 1915. He was killed at Montières (Amiens) when in command of his platoon undertaking 'special danger,' for which he had volunteered.

Maurice Gray

Alan Gray's response to the war was extensive: he gave organ recitals in aid of the 'Musicians at War' fund, he lent his car to the military several times to transport wounded soldiers from the train station to home or hospital, he subscribed to several relief efforts, including £10 to the 'Prisoners of War' fund and donated to the 'comfort for troops and prisoners of war' campaign, and even took charge of a male voice choir of troops in Cambridge, which was formed by popular demand. Musically, his contributions were equally as wide-ranging and committed, and it is these that I wish to focus on in my thesis: when Maurice went to war Gray wrote an arrangement of 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' for him to take to the front; he wrote several 'war prayers' for male voices; he published an anthem, *Christ Will Gather in His Own,* dedicated to Edward Jasper in September 1918; he wrote the well-known remembrance anthem *What are these that glow from afar?* which is dedicated 'to the memory of the brave' and quotes the Sarum chant 'Jesu Dulcis memoria,'; and most

interestingly he composed a Requiem, amongst several other war related works. Gray's *Requiem* is dedicated to his two sons who died in the war. It is a monumental eleven movement work for chorus, orchestra, and soloists which opens with a Tenor solo followed by a sweeping, almost Bachian, unaccompanied chorus. Much like Gray's quotation in *What are these that glow from afar?*, it is interesting that the opening motif of the Dies Irae is taken from the piano accompaniment of Purcell's *Music for a While* and is later combined with the Dies Irae plainchant. It is no coincidence, for at the time Gray was preparing an edited volume of Purcell's dramatic works and even spoke to the Royal Musical Association about them. The text fitting perfectly the requiem sentiment: "Music for a while/May all your cares beguile./Wond'ring how your pains were eased…" A piano and vocal score of the requiem exists in the hand of Howard Carr which suggests preparation for a performance in Harrogate, but to my knowledge, this work was never published or performed. I am currently working on an edition of the *Requiem*, and so hope to change that in good time.[23]

At home and abroad

Perhaps another element of personal experience acting as inspiration for composition, albeit a very different one, is that of Ivor Gurney. Gurney's story is one of particular renown – poet and composer, and one of the few composers whose compositional work from the trenches survives. Of particular focus in my research will be the songs Gurney wrote during the war, some of which at the front. It strikes me that there is a strong element of pastoralism in this set of songs, something which will surprise very few given Gurney's love of the Gloucestershire hills, but there is something of a dissonance in the strong nostalgia of Gurney's longing. After taking up a place at the Royal College of music in 1911 Gurney soon felt the pressure of mental illness – neurasthenia, as he termed it. He claimed that the regimented nature of military life provided a structured life which kept it at bay, despite further breakdowns, and helped create enough inner stability to create music and poetry, even at

[23] If any readers have any information about, or letters or manuscripts of Alan Gray, I would be grateful if they felt able to get in touch.

the front.[24] And so, the pastoral tropes of idealism and nostalgia come at an intersection with memory, art, and coping mechanisms in Gurney's songs from the front. *By a Bierside* is a meditation upon death, *In Flanders*, *By Wenlock Edge* and *Severn Meadows* depict something of the Gloucestershire hills for which Gurney longed, both in text and music, and *Even such is time* and *The folly of being comforted* pose questions of time, youth, and indirectly of the ongoing conflict.[25] Other areas of exploration might include *The Trumpet* and the *War Elegy* and in particular, there are many comments to be made on Gurney's use of form and thematic development.

Some final thoughts on further avenues of exploration concern music written during the war. It is often assumed that the older generation of composers, Stanford, Parry, Elgar etc. wrote music which would keep spirits up at home, and to some extent this is certainly true, but with the phrase 'keep spirits up' one is often driven to the assumption of nationalism and patriotism. Unlike the cases of Stanford's *At the Abbey Gate* and *Mass 'Via Victrix,'* the glory recounted in Parry's *Chivalry of the Sea* and Elgar's *Spirit of England* is tinged with sufficient sorrow, or at least downturn, to draw away from bombastic sentiments of ennobled sacrifice. In fact, Elgar was perhaps to suffer most from the reputational attachment of such sentiments. Throughout the war, the pomp of *Land of Hope and Glory* was heard in numerous concert halls across the country, particularly in the early years, but Elgar's actual responses to the war tell a very different story. In gathering his early war works we see contributions such as *Polonia, Carillon, Le Drapeu Belge,* and *Une voix dans le desert*. In reality, Elgar's responses were not necessarily as imperialistic as the common narrative may present, rather, they show a sympathy for the destruction of other countries in the war. Even Elgar's signature 'war work,' *The Spirit of England*, shows a certain sensitivity; as Andrew Neill notes: "The title coving the three settings, *The Spirit of England*, has an implied chauvinism that has inevitably restricted the appeal of the work," but "[Elgar's] response [to the war in the *Spirit of England*] was both angry and sad for the waste, horror, and carnage that would destroy the

[24] See Michael Hurd, *The ordeal of Ivor Gurney* (Oxford: Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1978).

[25] For scores of these songs, I might refer readers to Philp Lancaster and Ian Venables excellent new edition with The Maker's Press.

world he knew."[26] A re-examining of these works and the responses to them as a collective is overdue, and whilst reception history is beyond the scope of my immediate research, a reconsideration of these works in the context of 'British war music' and the cultural history of the war more generally is an important focus of this thesis.

A Music of Death and Grief?

As I return to the comment in Harvey Grace's article, we can see that, by and large, British composers were not silent when it came to responding to the war. Although, taking into account that his article was written about Arthur Bliss' *Morning Heroes*, we might see Grace's point – British composers' musical engagement with the First World War appears at a quick glance to be a music that deals with death and grief, and not 'of war itself.' The war requiems of Foulds, Delius, and Finzi, the elegies of Howells, Alan Gray, Frederick Septimus Kelly, the *Oration* and *Lament* of Frank Bridge, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, all deal with the loss of life in one way or another. Those that do deal with war itself, such as *Morning Heroes* and perhaps *A Pastoral Symphony*, seem to sit in a minority. The works that build up our cultural memory of war speak, as Jay Winter would say, a language of remembrance, one of sympathy and consideration as opposed to heroics and glory. It is my aim to draw together these threads more fully in an in-depth investigation of the music, the composers, and their experiences. But what comes next? What is left to do?

The answer: a lot more. I am only able to deal, here, with a select group of composers, musicians, and works. Hundreds of small vocal, piano, and instrumental works which have as yet to be discovered have contributed to a cultural memory of the war in a very different way and would provide valuable information for scholars researching music's role in coping with the war. It is also important to also consider the collective memory, as well as the cultural. That is to say, how these works helped shape how we think about the war today. This will require an examination of the performance history and reception of these works to get an feel for how the public engaged with this music and the ideas it portrayed – this would help us approach the 'what we have felt' element of Grace's quoted

[26] Lewis Foreman, *Oh, my horses! : Elgar and the Great War*, The music of Elgar (Rickmansworth: Rickmansworth : Elgar Editions, 2001), 34-35.

question. We also might move to explore the music and works of those who died in the war; Cecil Coles, George Butterworth, Ernest Farrar, William Denis Browne etc. These composers and musicians were the 'lost generation' and who knows what their contribution to our current musical thoughts may have been. These are all fascinating and worthwhile projects which I hope to be able to take on when time allows, but for now I must focus on the task at hand – British Composers' Responses to World War One.

Ernest Farrar

To conclude, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Martin Bussey and the Finzi Friends for asking me to write a few thoughts on my research. Whilst I have only been able to supply a small selection above, I hope it has been somewhat of interest and that I might have the opportunity to share more of it in more detail as my work progresses.

FINZI'S LETTERS
WHAT DO THEY TELL US OF THE MUSICIAN?

Martin Bussey

The publication of Diana McVeagh's long-awaited edition of Finzi's letters is properly a cause for celebration. As commented on elsewhere, they are an invaluable resource for those interested in British music during the first half of the twentieth century. The letters encompass an amazingly broad spectrum of musical life. The painstakingly researched cast of musical executants, composers and, crucially writers (as well as pomologists), means that countless students of Finzi's era will find new resources or be able to extend their existing understanding of material previously alluded to in the standard biographies of Finzi by McVeagh and Stephen Banfield.

A key question to be answered, which this article seeks to do if only in part, is, 'what does the collection tell us about Finzi the musician?' Although McVeagh has to acknowledge an incompleteness with regard to the many letters lost, wholly or partially, the collection outlines Finzi's life and development in a methodical and uninterrupted way that neither biography could do, bound as both were to engage regularly in analytical writing about the music. One of the most effective but heart-rending aspects of the book's structure is to create a heightened awareness of how densely packed Finzi's compositional activity was in the years following

World War 2. Having observed at close hand, through his letters on the topic, Finzi's growing frustration with lack of time to compose during the war years, the reader then watches well-known compositions seemingly flash by rapidly with a pace and intensity missing from Finzi's musical activities before 1939. Perhaps only *Dies Natalis* shines through the pre-war letters with a musical intensity similar to that of post-war works, its premiere curtailed by the outbreak of war. The Clarinet Concerto; *Intimations of Immortality*; *Lo, the full, final sacrifice*: all jostle for place in the pages detailing the years after 1946. The reader's progress then receives a jolting stop in 1951 with the diagnosis of Finzi's terminal illness. One of the hallmarks of McVeagh's presentation of the letters is the understated way in which she deals with this irresistible conclusion to Finzi's plans. There is no need for the editor to seek to evoke pity because the poignancy of Finzi's situation is apparent from the enthusiasm inherent in Finzi's letter-writing in the late 1940s and the terminal judgement which it later meets head on. The way Finzi dealt with the news is also carefully managed in understated editing. With many twentieth-century musicians and writers there is a temptation to dwell on the tragic or imagine a battle with an uncompromising fate in each of their lives. This book shows us that Finzi was not inclined to do so and so, perhaps, neither should we, but focus our energies on understanding his music.

Finzi's development as a musician, as opposed to specifically a composer, is one of the most generously documented aspects in his letters. The evident enthusiasm of Finzi and Howard Ferguson in the 1920s and early 1930s for discovering the music available to hear in London is instructive. Continually through the book Finzi's inquisitive and acquisitive ear is shown. In the commendation of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (despite a poor broadcast) and of *Les Noces*, to Howard Ferguson in 1928, and the recommendation of Bartok's first quartet to Cedric Thorpe Davie in 1935, there is strong evidence of an open and hungry musical mind. They are perhaps works not readily associated with Finzi but that only serves to show that he was interested directly in the music itself rather than viewing other people's work as a stepping-stone to determining his own compositional style. How Finzi's style developed remains fairly elusive in fact. Was Finzi's mind always so open? The letters certainly provide evidence to support those who delight in maintaining that there was/is a Finzi-Britten musical conflict. They allow the reader to discern a certain entrenched view of Britten on Finzi's part

as insubstantial, which he seemed to reach for easily. In 1940, *Les Illuminations* in a letter to Ferguson, and *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* in comments to William Busch, both receive the critical 'soap-bubble' epithet. It is tempting to consider whether Britten's 'effectiveness and brilliance', which Finzi alludes to positively, were qualities that he envied, given his complaints in other letters about the slow progress he often experienced in his own writing. It is fair to say that iridescence and fragility, such as he identifies in Britten's works, are not characteristics that might readily be associated with Finzi. Most composers, even if they don't own up to it, spend large parts of their creative lives casting sideways glances at other composers. Finzi's criticism was impartially spread around in any case, witness, in Letter 672 in 1940 his less than positive approbation for his friend Herbert Sumsion's cello sonata. McVeagh characteristically resolves the issue with common sense in the Epilogue to the book: 'Some sixty years on it is surely possible to love both [Finzi and Britten], to appreciate the individual qualities of each, as one can of, say, Brahms and Wolf, Duparc and Ravel. Time now to celebrate the richness and variety of English music which could hold such opposing but complementary approaches.'

Finzi's view of Britten certainly cannot be ascribed to any grudging view of other composers in general. Another rich mine provided by the selection of letters in the book is that which demonstrates Finzi's generosity to a generation of younger composers who, with a few exceptions such as Kenneth Leighton, seem to have, temporarily at least, faded from public hearing. His support for Busch, for Robin Milford and Tony Scott is exemplary, particularly the opportunities he provided for performance of their works by the Newbury String Players. This quality is illuminated throughout the letters as stemming from his own, serious view of the role of the composer and, indeed the roles of all those who are creative. The natural way in which Finzi and Ferguson wrote to each other about composition shows it to have fulfilled an innate need for both men, certainly until Ferguson's creative impulse began to lessen. Finzi's often frank exchanges with Busch frequently show composition to be viewed by him as a much less egotistical activity than might be perceived in the views of previous generations (Beethoven and Wagner) or the present day. Finzi and Ferguson's exchanges on how to physically preserve their works during the Second World War, a quandary blessedly not sent down upon present-day composers, show an innate sense of the compulsion to create and to ensure that the fruits of that creation are safeguarded.

Similarly, Finzi understood that reception of created music, literature or art depends on context. A telling letter to Busch in June 1940 (Letter 615) recounts the experiences of a Frenchman in the eighteenth century reading Seneca. The man's reaction prior to the French Revolution is that Seneca's writings were too theatrical, but his experience of the Terror, when the possibility of his imminent political execution was similar to that for Seneca of being executed by Nero, showed them to be exactly right. The letters abound in such illustrations which underline how Finzi's aesthetic was founded on immensely wide reading, experience and perception.

Finzi's interest in and promotion of composers of the preceding generation or earlier makes up a significant element in the letters. His championing of both the poetry and music of Ivor Gurney is a matter well documented in the extensive and ever-extending literature on Gurney. It is good to have Finzi's letters to and from Marion Scott arranged in a sequence from Finzi's viewpoint rather than Gurney's or Scott's and rubbing shoulders with letter detailing his efforts elsewhere, such as those he exerted to prevent the loss of Hubert Parry's output. Possibly at times the letters show Finzi taking a slightly proprietorial interest in Gurney, as many others were wont to do. A lengthy letter (Letter 1165) to American musicologist Don Ray in 1951 is uncharacteristically quite abrupt in some judgements on Ray's views, for example about J.C. Squire. Finzi's frank comments in the same letter about Gurney's surviving family will be familiar to many aficionados of Gurney and doubtless had considerable truth at their core but the tone is perhaps over-dismissive and slightly patronising. So are some of Finzi's comments about Marion Scott, however frustrating she could be. The correspondence with Ray suggests a lack of enthusiasm for someone from 'outside the circle' exploring Gurney. There is certainly a lack of true scholarship in his dissuasion of Ray from considering 'some trouble at the choir school' for what appears to be 1950s prudery rather than anything else. Yet Finzi must have been in a difficult position in trying to promote Gurney, as Tony Boden's account of his and Joy Finzi's efforts (*Finzi Friends Journal 2019*) shows.

Finzi's letters to and from Edmund Blunden regarding Gurney's poetry are much more optimistic and open, albeit hindered by Blunden's frequent absences. In the correspondence with Blunden there is also some of the most informative evidence of the genesis of a work by Finzi, *For St Cecilia*. His exchanges with Blunden (Letters 968-975) on how the poem might develop and the musical reasons for his requests for changes to

Blunden's text are a window into Finzi's approach to text setting. They lead to an idle speculation as to whether Finzi might at times have wished he could barter with Hardy or Traherne for a more amenable vowel to set.

The final word from the letters on Finzi and Gurney should, perhaps, be left with Ralph Vaughan Williams, who is a presence throughout the book, seemingly observing Finzi's life, often quietly, occasionally commenting, always succinctly, and presiding as a sort of benign genius over the lives of Finzi and his friends. In a letter to Edmund Blunden (Letter 427) Finzi references Vaughan Williams' thoughts about a *Music & Letters* symposium on Gurney thus: '[he] has suggested that no mention should be made in the articles of Gurney's particular troubles. I think his reason is that people will begin to find disintegration in the work, where nothing of the sort exists'. Prescient.

In promoting awareness of Parry's music Finzi was on slightly easier ground, though swimming against the tide in terms of general disinterest in the music of Parry's generation. It is interesting that Finzi's particular enthusiasm was for Parry's large-scale choral works, judging by his terrier-like tenacity in seeking to wrest full scores of now overlooked choral works such as *The Glories of our Blood & State* from publishers. The footnote on p.706 from Finzi's 1949 article in *Making Music* shows his view that Parry's 'main contribution to music is likely to have been in the choral sphere'. Perhaps the difficulty in ensuring the safety of, and reviving Parry's work, and Finzi's objective approach to aiding this venture, is summed up in his letter (Letter 1051) to Lady Ponsonby (Parry's daughter) in 1948: 'I do feel that uncritical admiration…can do more harm than good, particularly at this stage when he is neither a contemporary or a historical figure'. From the viewpoint of 2021 it is of interest that such revival of interest as there has been in Parry's large-scale works has focused on his symphonic rather than choral writing.

The fine judgement frequently shown by Finzi in his endeavours to support interest in the music of Parry and Gurney is also evident in his dedicated approach to researching, editing and performing the works of eighteenth-century composers, foremost his interest in John Stanley. A fascinating impression left by the book is that the letters reveal more of Finzi's working patterns as a researcher and editor than as a composer. The saga of cadenzas in eighteenth century concertos is ongoing across and tranche of letters and includes correspondence with a wide range of the foremost performers of the repertoire during Finzi's lifetime. Current practice may raise an eyebrow at some of the decisions made about the

music but that would be to overlook how little published material there was and how impenetrable some of it was. Overtures ascribed to one composer turn out to be the work of another and so on. Finzi's letters reveal sharp musical and historical antennae in his diligent devotion to the cause of these earlier unjustifiably shaded composers who flourished alongside the blazing sun that was Handel.

There are insights into some of Finzi's approaches to his own composing. Writing about the Clarinet Concerto to Fredrick Thurston who gave the first performance, (Letter 1093) Finzi gives some interesting insights into his thoughts on writing for the instrument. *Intimations of Immortality* receives considerable focus after its of composition in terms of performances, as does the Cello Concerto. Yet detailed accounts of Finzi's compositional methodology are generally hard to come by beyond complaints about lack of time for orchestration or, during the war, simply time to compose. That such revelations are a sad loss is emphasised by Finzi's self-deprecating comments about his understanding of tonality or structural planning which appear from time to time. It would have been fascinating to see how he approached tackling both matters in detail.

This all leaves an intriguing picture of the composer: ready to offer criticism to others, usually in a constructive and helpful way, though occasionally perhaps dogmatic; open to listening to a wide variety of musical styles; passionate about the relationship of text and music; hugely supportive in bringing the music of others, across different generations, to performance; yet reticent about his own stylistic intentions and impulses.

WHY NOT APPRECIATE A BARTOK ….AND A PARRY

Andrew Ford

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The Hungarian composer Béla Bartók and the Australian Percy Grainger were contemporaries. They were both fine concert pianists, Grainger having the edge, and both ended their days in the United States. They were also among the foremost collectors of folk music, Bartók in Eastern Europe, Grainger in Scandinavia and the British Isles. The musicologist Malcolm Gillies has published extensively on each, so I once asked him to rate them. He didn't hesitate: Bartók, he told me, was a great composer, among the five or six greatest of the twentieth century; Grainger wouldn't make the top hundred. But composers can be fascinating, of course, even if their art is not of the top rank.

The Englishman Gerald Finzi (1901–1956) was another minor figure in twentieth-century music, and Diana McVeagh, who has edited a massive, 1080-page, two-kilo volume of the composer's letters, is as clear-headed and unsentimental in her estimation of his importance as Gillies was about Grainger. But the book, if unwieldy, is fascinating for its glimpses into not only the creative mind of a lesser composer and his circle, but also a time and place.

McVeagh, who will turn ninety-five next month, is a significant figure in English musicology. A decade ago she published a life and works of Finzi, and all the way back in 1955 a similar study of Elgar. Indeed, near the end of her edition of Finzi's letters, she makes a cameo appearance when her Elgar monograph receives an encomium ("first rate") from Finzi himself in a letter to his friend, Cedric Thorpe Davie. Later there's a letter from McVeagh to Finzi — in reply to what one assumes was more direct praise of that book — and finally a note to

McVeagh from Joy Finzi, the composer's wife, following her husband's death. (Joy's portraits of her husband and his friends illustrate the book.)

Though English to his bootstraps, and suspicious, as McVeagh puts it, of "abroad," Finzi came from a line of Italian Jews. He was non-conformist in many ways — agnostic and, for the most part, pacifist — yet his musical style was conservative. His tastes were conservative, too, and these were shared by his friends. Part of the attraction of this volume is reading letters to and from Finzi that wrestle with the progressive music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Berg and Boulez. In Finzi's case, it's clear he really is trying to appreciate it all ("there's no reason why we shouldn't appreciate Schoenberg & Walton"), though even when he gets it, his judgements can take you by surprise.

"See Stravinsky's Noces if you get the chance," he writes to fellow composer Howard Ferguson. "I liked it — not as European art, but rather in the same way as we shd like some curious oriental or asiatic music." The language might be of its time, but it's not an impossible judgement on this particular Stravinsky score.

More often he fails in his attempts to be ecumenical, writing to William Busch in 1942: "I wd rather listen to a deft, delightful, light, movement by Ed. German, or Fauré, or J. Strauss or Elgar than all the ponderous integrity of Bruckner or the constipated integrity of Schoenberg! (I tried Pierrot Lunaire the other night. It was deadly.)" Just in passing, one wonders how Finzi heard Pierrot in 1942, because the first recording of the piece only appeared in 1949. Perhaps he had a score. This was the single moment of puzzlement I had from a volume in which the editor seemed to have anticipated and provided answers for all my questions as they arose.

The bête noire for Finzi and his friends, however, was their fellow Englishman, Benjamin Britten, younger than any of them, undeniably brilliant and enjoying early success. "Britten is rapidly going to the dogs," Edmund Rubbra writes to Finzi of the twenty-two-year-old; and of Britten's Piano Concerto, "Seldom have I heard a work so empty & futile." Britten's opera, Albert Herring, is best "seen & not heard" (Ferguson to Finzi); St Nicolas is "twaddle" (Ferguson, again); Winter Words is "just awful" (the poet Edmund Blunden); and Les Illuminations is "just like soap bubbles. Iridescent & easily exploded." That last judgement is by Finzi himself and he was evidently pleased with it, repeating it in letter after letter.

What Finzi and his friends had experienced that Britten hadn't was the first world war, and perhaps that's why they resented his blithe facility. Britten was only five at the war's end; twelve years his senior, Finzi had lost two elder brothers in the fighting (a third had died just before it began), and it is hard not to feel that this coloured his musical outlook and drew him to the writings of Thomas Hardy, whose poetry would provide the texts of six of his nine song cycles. That Hardy would, much later, also be the poet of Britten's Winter Words rankled with Finzi's circle.

The other vital figure Finzi lost in the war was his first composition teacher, Ernest Farrar, killed in action with the Grenadiers at the battle of Épehy on only his tenth day in France. The letters bring it home. In April 1918, Farrar is writing to Finzi from barracks, asking for manuscript paper. In May he thanks him for it. In September, Farrar's wife, Olive, writes to let Finzi know her husband has gone to France, and in October she acknowledges Finzi's letter of condolence following Farrar's death ("I feel so proud of him, & yet my grief is unspeakable"). That these letters should take up less than two pages of McVeagh's fat volume makes the snuffing out of Farrar's talent the more pitiful.

And then there's this, in a 1923 letter from Finzi to his friend Vera Sommerfield: "Ivor Gurney has gone mad. It is the most terrible news I have had for five years. Overwork on top of shellshock. He may get better." But he didn't, and the editing and publication of Gurney's poetry and music became a mission for Finzi. It was the same with the music of the eighteenth-century English composers William Boyce and John Stanley, and the Victorian Hubert Parry, lost causes all in the progressive twentieth century. Yet, "Why not appreciate a Bartók… and a Parry?" (Finzi to his younger colleague Anthony Milner).

Much of this book is concerned, as you would expect, with the business end of a composer's life — concerts, broadcasts, publications, frustrations. At the heart of it is a fascinating to and fro between the composer and the publisher Leslie Boosey ("My dear Finzi," "My dear Boosey"). It's 1939, another war is coming and Finzi is desperate to get Boosey & Hawkes to take on *Dies Natalis*, his setting for high voice and strings of words by the seventeenth-century mystic Thomas Traherne, in time for its first performance at the Three Choirs Festival. Boosey is being hard-headed, insisting it is not a commercial proposition. At length, Finzi more or less agrees to fund the publication himself. Then both premiere and publication are shelved for the duration of the war.

That correspondence is fascinating partly because we know now what neither correspondent knew at the time — that *Dies Natalis* would become Finzi's best-known piece — and partly because it has the ring of high-stakes negotiation (though, except for Finzi, the stakes were small), the letters pinging back and forth on a daily basis, almost as emails would today.

There is rather less space devoted to Finzi's musical philosophy (Finzi's fault, not McVeagh's — most of his extant letters are in the book), which is a shame because when it comes it is touchingly revealing. Here he is, writing to his wife, about William Rutland's biography of his beloved Hardy:

I'd like you to read it… & perhaps it will give you some idea of why I have always loved him so much & from earliest days responded, not so much to an influence as to a kinship with him. (I don't mean kinship with his genius, alas, but with his mental make-up). Here is a passage from the book "The first, manifest, characteristic of the man who wrote the Dynasts is the detestation of all useless suffering and his loathing of cruelty. The suffering that fills the world, and the thought that it is unnecessary, are to him a nightmare. This was the long tribulation of Hardy's life."

It's impossible to read these letters and not conclude that this was also Finzi's tribulation. And perhaps that explains not only the thick seam of regret that runs through even the composer's most radiant music, but also why, in the century of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, it looks so wistfully backwards.

REVIEW:
GERALD FINZI'S LETTERS 1915-56

Andrew Burn

To Diana McVeagh's major achievements – her masterly studies on Elgar and Finzi - can now be added a superb collection of Gerald Finzi's Letters, 1915 – 1956, edited by her with insight and rigour. The volume is an indispensable resource for enthusiasts of Finzi and his circle, as well as providing a portrait of four decades of musical life in Britain viewed through their eyes and ears, with Finzi's remarkable letters at its core. Don't be put off by the volume's size – over 1000 pages with more than 1600 letters – it's a damned good read. Initially, I decided to browse through the book to get my bearings by choosing letters almost on a whim from different periods; then I read the first 100 pages, and lastly followed one strand, the letters between Finzi and Bliss. All three approaches helped me gain a broad appreciation of the letters and McVeagh's skill in providing commentary and context, but my recommendation is to read the letters chronologically: in this way, the sweep of Finzi's lifespan, and his development as a composer emerges.

Diana with Paul Spicer

The volume is splendidly structured starting with a list of Finzi's correspondents. After a detailed Chronology, McVeagh's Prologue sets the tone, opening with three sentences typical of her limpid prose: 'Letters are private, personal, and immediate. Each captures a single moment in time and experience. The writer and the reader are friends, each assumes much, much can be left unsaid.' In two pages she summarises Finzi's life

(another memorable turn of phrase here is 'Outwardly his life was uneventful, but his interior life was rich'), his achievements as a composer and the importance of his letters as communications with his friends and his wife and soulmate, Joy.

The chapters follow, divided into periods, each headed, appropriately, by the titles of Finzi's works (mainly from the songs), hence Chapter One is 'A Young Man's Exhortation', the final chapter, poignantly, 'The Two Short Time'. Within them, McVeagh links the letters with background information, helpfully printed in italics, for example, before a letter to Gerald from Adeline Vaughan Williams, she informs us: *'Adeline Fisher (1870 – 1951) married Vaughan Williams in 1897. She played the cello and the piano before she became crippled with arthritis. She shared with Finzi … an obsession with cats.'* The copious footnotes are also a mine of information in themselves. To take three examples, in a letter to Joy in 1935, Gerald enthuses about a now largely forgotten play he had seen in London: the footnote informs us that it was: '*Lady Precious Stream*, by Hsiung Shih-I, which ran for 1,000 nights.' In the same letter he mentions that he is going to see 'the *Travelling Companion'*; the footnote explains this is Stanford's opera, 'first performed in 1925.' Holst inviting Finzi to visit him at St Paul's Girls' School, suggests that they can drink a 'Tinalt' together: the footnote reveals that this was 'A body-building drink'.

From chapter two onwards, each is prefaced by an Interlude (a further allusion to a Finzi work) in which McVeagh sets the scene for the next sequence of letters by reference to Finzi's life and compositions. An Epilogue, beginning with the announcement of Finzi's death, charts the years that followed and the gradual re-emergence of his music. Three invaluable Appendices cover short biographies of Finzi's Circle, a Catalogue of his compositions and his Writings, followed by a select Bibliography, and Indexes relating to both Finzi's compositions and names mentioned in letters. The index detailing Finzi is helpfully sub-divided to encompass such strands as 'art, value and meaning of', 'books and music collections', 'domestic life', 'vegetarianism', 'words and music', and 'youth, old age, and time's pressure'.

The illustrations are judiciously chosen beginning with a striking photo of Joy, ending with the first page of a letter; in between are a selection of Joy Finzi's penetrating portrait drawings of Finzi himself and his close musical friends circle, but also, for instance, poets and writers (Edmund Blunden and Sylvia Townsend Warner), Alfred Powell, 'the

Arts and Craft architect, designer and potter' (as another of McVeagh's excellent links informs us) and the Finzis' doctor, Tom Scott.

All McVeagh's gifts as a scholar and editor would be naught though without the quality of the letters themselves which provide constant revelations into the minds and personalities of Finzi and his correspondents, who apart from musicians include visual artists (for instance, John Aldridge), writers (J.B. Priestley), poets (Anne Bowes Lyon), architects (Peter Harland) and the archaeologist and amateur poet 'Toty' de Navarro. Among the composers with whom Finzi corresponded are Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst from the senior generation, as well as his teachers, Ernest Farrar and Edward Bairstow. His contemporaries, or near contemporaries include Howard Ferguson, Herbert Howells, Arthur Bliss, Robin Milford, Cedric Thorpe Davie, and Edmund Rubbra. Perhaps, surprisingly, Benjamin Britten too, given Finzi's later antipathy to his music. However, as fellow composers making their way in London in the early thirties, they were on friendly terms as revealed in a 1932 letter from Britten inviting Finzi to tea. From the 1950s Finzi's encouragement of emerging young composers is evident in letters to and from Leighton and Jeremy Dale Roberts.

Of particular interest to me are the letters between Joy and 'Gerry', as she called him, and those between Finzi and three composers - Howard Ferguson, his closest male friend, Arthur Bliss and William Busch. For someone who recalls Joy, as a private, and at times other-worldly, even formidable personality, the tenderness she expresses took me by surprise, for instance she signs her letter of 20 April 1940 to Gerald, 'Good-bye my pet – the wind is blowing & a blackbird singing & I'm longing to see you. Joy'. The Ferguson/Finzi letters are full of boyish humour typical of the time – swopping limericks for example, but also full of support and criticism of each other's work, which only a strong friendship could sustain, as in the opening of Gerald's letter to Howard of November 1933 when he launches straight in with his view of a passage for the horn in Ferguson's Octet: 'Did you really want the horn to bellow on those high notes, like a cow in need of a bull?'. Bliss being a decade older than Finzi and well established by the 1930s, is constant in encouraging him as in a letter of November 1929 when he enthuses that in Gerald's music he 'felt very distinctly an original beauty making itself felt', then continued with practical criticism 'The weakness of the songs as a body was in the sameness of the emotion in each – You are at present harping on one string however deliciously.'

With William Busch's German background (his parents, McVeagh explains in her cameo biography, were naturalised English) and Finzi's German ancestry on his mother's side, as well as his Jewish inheritance from both his parents, the gathering storm clouds of the late 1930s brought long and deep discussions between them regarding the contemporary political situation. In October 1938, Busch had commented about Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler, 'Having weathered this dreadful crisis we can now look forward to the firm establishment of a firm basis for general peace ….' Finzi was not convinced replying, 'That Hitler wd have been prepared to force Europe into war is quite enough to convince me that a firm basis for peace has by no means been established. – nor do I see how it can be, with a paranoid of that type. … I feel more than ever that the Nazi octopus is one of the most evil & retrograde things in the world.' For me, their correspondence is some of the finest in the collection.

In other letters the reader will find references to Finzi's enthusiasms – his apple orchard at Ashmansworth – and Hardy (in a letter to Joy of October 1938 he refers to a new biography about Hardy hoping that she'll read it as 'perhaps it will give you some idea why I have always loved him so much & from the earliest days responded, not so much to an influence as to a kinship with him (I don't mean kinship with his genius, alas, but with his mental make-up.)'. There too can be found his advocacy on behalf of Gurney and Parry (for instance, letters to Marion Scott and Lady Ponsonby.) As well as his enthusiasms, there are his prejudices (for instance, his dismissal of the Sitwells in a letter to his friend Vera Strawson of November 1933: 'I know nothing about the Sitwells except their stuff which I despise.') However, he also had an open mind, as, for example, his comments to Ferguson on Stravinksy's *Les noces* and Berg. In a letter to Anthony Milner the month before he died, he summed up his perspective: 'I take it to be one of the glories of the world that it can hold a Byrd at one end and a Berg at the other: Why not appreciate a Bartók … and a Parry.'

By bringing together this collection of Finzi's letters, arguably among the finest of any 20th century British composer, admirers and enthusiasts of the music of this period are in Diana McVeagh's debt: this volume is a treasure trove to return to – again, and again.

REVIEW:
GERALD FINZI'S LETTERS 1915-56

Jonathan Clinch

In our current age of extravagant promotion, intensive publicity, and the frequent over-politicisation of many writers, I believe it is hard to over-estimate the importance of Diana McVeagh's volume of Finzi letters.

On one level, the project itself represents a rigorous rejection of the current style of musicological writing that presents many arguments without much actual evidence and frequently dismisses British music. By combining this vast trove of letters with a first-class commentary, we can experience first-hand this vivid depiction of a certain strand within twentieth-century British music. The variety comes from the kaleidoscopic range of topics which often start from Finzi's own composition and musical life, but soon adventure off into the entire musical ecosystem of institutions and individuals. This is partially through the nuts and bolts of what happened and when, but here we learn so much from the tone and manner of the numerous characters and the complex network of relationships. In that way it demands the intensive scrutiny of a modernist novel and it builds up layers within multiple narratives of British music.

Its power comes from hearing from people first-hand in a manner that's not only accessible but critically self-empowering. So often British music suffers from the weight of received opinion and here readers are invited directly into Finzi's world to make their own conclusions. On a personal level, the methodology and tone throughout seem to encapsulate the personal qualities of the author herself. It's a time-consuming project of perseverance and astonishing modesty, and whilst Finzi was a biographer's dream to some extent (in terms of the volume of letters and other materials that he saved with librarian-like care), the scale of this material would terrify any scholar.

Despite the ravages of the pandemic, there have been many substantial contributions to British music scholarship in recent times, not least other substantial books on Moeran and Delius from Boydells, but McVeagh's volume is not only twice the length of any of these books, but reveals not just an individual, but a whole community.

Diana in discussion with Iain Burnside
at the Finzi Friends event at Chosen Hill September 2021

REVIEW:
THE KING'S ALCHEMIST
BRITISH MUSIC FOR STRING TRIO

Angus Robertson

Gerald Finzi: Prelude and Fugue for String Trio Op.24
Hugh Wood: Ithaka Op.61
Sally Beamish: The King's Alchemist
E.J. Moeran: String Trio in G major R.59

Eblana String Trio:
Jonathan Martindale (violin)
Lucy Nolan (viola)
Peggy Nolan (cello)

Willowhayne Records WHR067CD

In an album devised to celebrate some of the best and less well-known of the British string trio repertoire, the Eblana String Trio presents a diverse and thoroughly agreeable programme of music. Formed in 2006, the group studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and perform regularly across the UK and further afield, and have previously held the position of Junior Fellows at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Released this year and supported by funds from the Finzi Friends, this record is certainly worth 51 minutes of your time.

Opening the album is Gerald Finzi's seldomly heard Prelude & Fugue, Op. 24, which presents a cautious yet convincing start to the record in the Prelude, with the players muting their instruments. Phrases are carefully measured, with some stunning dynamics matched throughout the group. Although the movement is very stop-start, it presents some real high points, inter-mixed with some curious tonality. The orchestral ending

of the Prelude leads into the Bachian Fugue, in which the thick textures capable of achievement by the group are really showcased. This richness builds up to the glorious unison climax, which is interrupted before a fantastic flourishing ending. It is within this movement that the listener first gets a sense of the group's ability to create a huge orchestral sound, providing a very nourishing listening experience. Written in 1938 as a tribute to Finzi's counterpoint teacher, R.O. Morris, the piece certainly employs the formal structure of Bach, but with Finzi's character clearly spread generously throughout.

Offered up next by the group is the world premiere recording of *Ithaka*, Op. 61, by the late Hugh Wood. Described by the composer himself as a 'mini-symphonic poem', the programmatic nature of the title shines through as a clear structure to follow, describing Ulysses' adventurous and often dangerous voyage home from the Trojan Wars. Yet, as Wood describes, 'Sensual delights and intellectual feasts also wait for him on the way'. The performance is very rhythmically tight, and the piece is always tonally stimulating yet simultaneously organised – it is always possible to follow the tonality within the narrative. The clearly defined structure of the work is expressed well and clearly by the players, and the piece is a satisfying length of just under 10 minutes, creating a thoroughly enjoyable listen.

Sally Beamish's *The King's Alchemist*, from which the album gets its title, is another world premiere recording, and presents the listener with the court of King James IV of Scotland, in particular the European alchemist John Damian, who deluded the King (and probably himself!) with the promise of creating gold from 'aqua vitae', once attempting 'to fly to France from the battlements of Stirling Castle'. The piece takes inspiration from the French folksong L'homme armé – these themes were also employed by the court's composer, Robert Carver, as with many other composers during the medieval period, in one of his masses. The first movement, 'Cantus', is largely made up of floating, breathy harmonics that sound as if woodwind have briefly joined the group. The second, 'Aqua Vitae', is a harsh scherzo, purposefully scratchy in some places, described as 'unstable' by Beamish. There are some impressive unison passages which are executed perfectly by the group, with a flourishing ending. The third movement, 'Pavane', is much calmer, extremely lyrical with some beautiful melodic solos throughout, with moments of tonal uneasiness to maintain the mood of the piece. Movement four, 'Avis Hominis', meaning 'Bird Man', introduces a

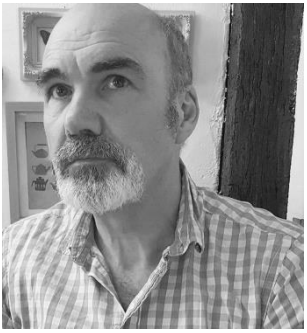
flightiness into the music, sometimes reminiscent of the first movement, especially with the opening harmonics. Figures in the violin like bird-calls get more intense throughout the piece, culminating in an ending that somehow does not feel quite resolved, just like John Damian's failed flight. The piece as a whole succeeds in representing the bizarre nature of King James IV's court, especially the colourful character of Damian, and the group accomplishes this performance with the necessary combination of sincerity, solemnity and humour.

The seldom performed String Trio in G major, R.59 by Ernest John Moeran closes the album, providing an appropriate, warm ending to the programme. The polyphonic first movement contains lovely warm, flowing folk melodies and perfectly matching unison parts between the viola and cello. The middle section, marked 'minaccioso', meaning menacing, contains a cello ostinato that certainly fits this mood, before moving into the beautifully flowing end of the movement. The second movement is inspired by the death of Moeran's close friend, Peter Warlock, with this bleakness well represented in the mourning tonality and sustained writing, along with a despairing melody at the start of the second half. The third is jovial and folk-like, with rhythms and melodies bringing to mind parts of Holst's *St Paul's Suite*. The final movement has a lyrical, melodic opening, giving the impression that the work is winding to a close, before the energy intensifies for the fantastic, regal ending that does a brilliant job of bringing the record to a close.

Thick and thin timbral textures alike are represented whole-heartedly on this album, both by the players and through the recording itself, which often makes the group sound like a much larger ensemble. The sound is direct and satisfying, and along with the elegant performances by the players, makes this record unquestionably worth a listen.

BIOGRAPHIES

Andrew Burn After reading music at the University of East Anglia, Andrew Burn worked in theatre and music administration at English Nation Opera, Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. From 1993-2007 he was also Artistic Director of the Chester Summer Music Festival. As a writer and speaker, his specialist field is 20th/21st century British music, with a particular interest in the music of Arthur Bliss and Gerald Finzi; he is a Trustee of both composers' charitable trusts and Chairman of the former. He has written many programme and CD liner notes for orchestras, festivals, record companies and the BBC, as well as articles for music magazines and contributing to the *Revised New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* As a speaker he has given talks, for instance, at festivals such as Three Choirs, at the Royal Festival Hall and Barbican, and in the USA at the Julliard School of Music. Currently, he presents the BSO's pre-concert talks as a video broadcast available on line. (Photograph courtesy Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra).



Martin Bussey combines the roles of composer and conductor. He currently directs the Chester Bach Singers, Cantiones Choir in Oswestry, and is a vocal tutor at Manchester University. He is Chairman of the Finzi Friends and a director of Ludlow English Song. Martin's commission for the 2021 Pinner Festival *A Brother Abroad*, composed to a libretto by Anthony Pinching, received a warm reception at its first performance by Marcus

Farnsworth. It is scheduled for performance at the 2022 Ludlow English Song Weekend. This followed the recent successes of *Mary's Hand* (2018) and *Timeless Figure* (2020), each premiered at the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival. His two piano works *Floreat Coll. Reg.* were premiered at the 2020 Three Choirs Festival by Matthew Schellhorn who commissioned them, and these are scheduled for recording in 2022. Other recordings include *Through a glass*, a recording of songs, by Marcus Farnsworth on Resonus Classics. The 2019 CD of Martin's choral music sung by the London-based professional choir, Sonoro, directed by Neil Ferris, on Resonus Classics received four-star reviews in BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone magazine and Choir and Organ. Martin was a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, then studied singing at the RNCM. He ran the aural, academic music and choral programmes at Chetham's School of Music, where he taught from 1988 to 2013. Scores of his music are available from *www.composersedition.com*.

Dr Jonathan Clinch is an organist and academic. He holds the post of Lecturer in Academic Studies at the Royal Academy of Music, having previously been Frank Bridge Research Fellow at the Royal College of Music and OCVE Research Associate at Cambridge University.

He read music at Keble College, Oxford, and completed his doctorate on the secular music of Herbert Howells under Professor Jeremy Dibble at Durham University. His completion of Howells' Cello Concerto (2014) has been performed at the Three Choirs and Cheltenham Festivals and has been recorded by cellists Alice Neary (with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra on Dutton) and Guy Johnston (with the Britten Sinfonia on the label of King's College, Cambridge), leading one critic to describe it as 'the best-kept secret in English classical music'. His most recent editing project for Novello has led to the publication of 28 previously unknown piano manuscripts by Howells which has formed the basis of a new series on Naxos with the pianist Matthew Schellhorn.

As an organist, he is currently working with the composer Robert Saxton on a major cycle specifically for online performance. He sits on

the committees of *Musica Britannica* and the British Music Society and is currently editing a volume of essays on Frank Bridge.

Andrew Ford is a composer, writer and broadcaster and has won awards in all three capacities. Born in Liverpool, England in 1957, he was educated at the University of Lancaster. He came to Australia in 1983.

Ford has composed orchestral and chamber music, operas and music-theatre pieces, and a wide range of vocal and solo instrumental works. His music has been featured internationally at festivals in Adelaide, Aspen, Ferrara, Houston, Huddersfield, Istanbul, Kuhmo, Seoul, Sydney and at Salzburg's Aspekte. All the major Australian orchestras have played his works, along with groups such as the London Sinfonietta, the Australia Ensemble, Het Trio, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and the Black Dyke Band. His piano pieces have been played by Peter Donohoe, Lisa Moore, Gerard Willems and Michael Kieran Harvey, his vocal music sung by Katie Noonan, Teddy Tahu Rhodes, Yvonne Kenny and, above all, Gerald English, for whose voice Ford composed a dozen pieces.

Ford's music has won national and international awards. He has been composer in residence with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1992-94), the Australian National Academy of Music (2009) and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (2009). He was the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Composer Fellow (1998-2000) and Australia Council Music fellow (2005-06), during which period he composed, among other works, *Scenes from Bruegel*, jointly commissioned by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and the New Juilliard Ensemble, and first performed by the latter at Alice Tully Hall, New York in April 2006.

Recent works include a symphony for the Orchestra of the Australian National Academy of Music under Brett Dean (2008); an opera *Rembrandt's Wife* (libretto by Sue Smith) for Victorian Opera (Green Room Award for Best Opera 2010); *Blitz* for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (2011); string quartets for the Brodsky Quartet, the Noise, the Australian String Quartet, and the Flinders Quartet; song cycles, *Last*

Words, for Jane Sheldon and the Seraphim Trio (2014 Art Music Award), *Come close and sleep now* (2016) for Gian Slater and the Monash Art Ensemble, and *Nature* (2019) for ensembles in Stockholm, Sydney, Oslo and Dublin; a Missa Brevis (2015) commissioned by four Australian cathedrals; the electric guitar concerto, *Raga* (2015), for Zane Banks and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and *Peter Pan* (2015-17), an opera - again with Sue Smith - for Gondwana Choirs.

Beyond composing, Ford has been an academic (on the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong from 1983-95) and given lectures in the USA, Europe and Asia. In 1998 he won the Geraldine Pascall Prize for critical writing. Ford wrote and presented the ABC radio series *Illegal Harmonies* (first heard in 1997), *Dots on the Landscape* (2001), *Music and Fashion* (2005), *The Sound of Pictures* (2010) and *Earth Dances* (2015). He has also written nine books - most recently a memoir, *The Memory of Music* - and, since 1995, presented *The Music Show* each weekend on ABC Radio National. In 2018, he was H.C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellow at the Australian National University.

Matthew McCullough is the current Van Mildert College Trust PhD Scholar at Durham University where he is affiliated with the Department of Music and The Centre for Death and Life Studies. He holds an Associate Fellowship at Van Mildert College and a DCAD Fellowship at Durham University (2021-23). Matthew's research specialism lies in British and Irish music and culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and more broadly at the intersection of musicology and death studies; he is particularly interested in music's relationship with death, grief, trauma, and memory. Matthew's current PhD thesis (historical musicology and analysis) merges these interests in a study of British composers' responses to the First World War and the ways in which their work helped shape a collective and cultural memory of the war.

Alongside music and the First World War, recent work includes research on Ernest John Moeran, Gerald Finzi, Cecil Gray, and he has several forthcoming publications on the life and work of Sir Arthur Bliss,

such as a book chapter on his choral symphony Morning Heroes and an article in *Religions* on Arthur Bliss, Music, and Spirituality. Beyond his research, Matthew sings as a cathedral lay clerk and undertakes work as a freelance musician throughout the North East; recent engagements have involved being guest soloist for The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble and The Durham Singers, and conducting 'Opera By The Lake with Sir Thomas Allen.'

Jane Morris Jane is a Finzi Friend whose interest in Ernest Farrar was aroused by the discovery that the house in which she lived adjoined Farrar's home, No. 15 Hollins Road in Harrogate.

Before immersing herself in the study of Farrar, Jane taught the physically disabled for over thirty years and served as a magistrate over a similar period. Earlier in her career she sang with the Schola Cantorum of Oxford, alongside then-students such as Emma Kirkby and Andrew Parrott. She stills sings, now mainly with church choirs.

Angus Robertson comes from Hampshire and is currently studying for his BA in Music at the University of Manchester. Having been brought up within the classical choral tradition, Angus was a chorister in Winchester Cathedral whilst at school, and Head Chorister in his final year. He now enjoys singing in both large and smaller chamber choirs and is an active participant of the University of Manchester's choirs and music society, as well as a new member of Kantos Chamber Choir. Highlights of his musical journey include tours to the Czech Republic, Colombia and Hong

Kong, where he performed in choirs and in orchestras on the violin. In addition to singing, Angus loves playing in rock bands on the guitar and drums, and even brings out his bagpipes from time to time. He also assists with the running of Ad Solem, the University's top chamber choir, being this year's Deputy Manager & Librarian.