

Music in the Provinces

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 86, No. 1224 (Feb., 1945), pp. 61-62

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/935690>

Accessed: 02-01-2017 20:08 UTC

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played his own *Concerto* for two pianos at the Albert Hall together with Benjamin Britten. The event was extremely comforting in the evidence it provided that at least M. Poulenc no longer believes it necessary to startle an audience in order to avoid the suspicion of being a reactionary. There is nothing in the *Concerto* to puzzle and much to charm the listener. Modern devices are used with tact and judgment and many pages could have been written, as far as technique of composition is concerned, many years ago. The performance was equally remarkable, being completely free from the autocratic mannerism of the star interpreter and thoroughly sound in all essentials. One would like to hear either Poulenc's or Britten's conception of a Beethoven or Mozart concerto. A few days later M. Poulenc accompanied Pierre Bernac at Wigmore Hall in some of his own lyrics—most sensitive and delightful compositions.

### Choral Concerts

Berlioz's 'The Childhood of Christ,' given on December 30 at one of Harold Holt's concerts under Malcolm Sargent, was interesting and disappointing at the same time. The Albert Hall can just do justice to music of an heroic, the-more-grandiose-the-better, type. Music of an intimate character, slight in texture and delicate in manner is out of place in that hall of echoes. Nevertheless one was glad of the opportunity to hear so unusual a work of the still much-debated Frenchman. 'Elijah' sung by the Alexandra Choir under Charles Proctor on January 25 was much more satisfactory and did much credit both

to the choristers and their trainer. Mary Hamlin and Roy Henderson gave an excellent account of their parts; Edward Reach and Muriel Gale (who deputized for Astra Desmond) were adequate in theirs.

### Various

Rubbra's *Soliloquy* for cello and orchestra, performed in Wigmore Hall, and on January 1 at a National Gallery concert, made a very good impression in the finished performance of William Pleeth. Rubbra reconciles better than most modern composers a certain austerity of style with an innate instinct for lyrical expression. The unusual combination should take him far—further than he has gone up to the present.

The Boosey & Hawkes concert in Wigmore Hall on January 27 did not bring forth novelties. But John Ireland's settings of sixteenth-century lyrics had a directness that was absent from Aaron Copland's *Sonata* for violin and piano, a disconnected, casual and unsatisfactory piece of work. A *Sonata* for piano, violin and flute by Martinu on the other hand showed modernity in its most attractive colours; it was rather dainty in character, assigning to each instrument tasks of a genial nature, balanced in construction, sincerely felt and original in thought rather than in manner.

An official band of the U.S. forces gave also a concert in the Albert Hall on January 24. It left no possible doubt in our mind that this band is, and must ever be, the best that money can buy. F. B.

## Music in the Provinces

**Banbury**—Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Parts 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, was given on December 31 by the Banbury Co-operative Choral Society and a full orchestra, conducted by Geoffrey Furnish. The soloists were Helena Cook, Ruth Bowman, Bradbridge White and Stanley Riley.

**Belfast**—A packed Ulster Hall heard the Philharmonic Society in Gounod's 'Faust' on November 22. The conductor was Godfrey Brown, the soloists, J. Johnston, W. Broderick (Mephistopheles), and Eileen Latimer, with Dorothy Marshall (Siebel), Florence Cooke (Martha), A. Rogers (Valentine) and W. Martin (Wagner).

**Birmingham**—The City Orchestra, under George Weldon, with occasional guest conductors (Richard Austin, in a January concert, and Sir Adrian Boult, in February) continues its weekly concerts, on Thursdays at 6.30 and Sundays at 2.30. A soloist always appears, but rarely a novelty. On December 31 there was one, in Howard Ferguson's 'Four Diversions on Ulster Airs.' At Christmas Hely-Hutchinson's 'Carol Symphony' was played. Recent works, down for the first quarter of the year, include piano concertos by Khachatryan and Britten, Guy Graham's 'Landsman's Hornpipe,' Rowley's 'Burlesque Quadrilles,' and several works by Jacob: his 'Passacaglia,' 'Russian Interlude,' and 'Galop Joyeux.' Among the piano soloists appear the names of Hilda Bor, Lympny, Margaret Maddison, Phyllis Sellick, Valda Aveling, Weingarten, Mewton Wood; among violinists, Alfred Cave, Spivakovsky and Norris Stanley; with the cellist Frank Walker. Dr. Cunningham has played the organ, and Richard Gibbs the clarinet, in a Mozart concerto.—The L.P.O. visited Birmingham on January 8, when Britten conducted his 'Requiem' Symphony, and Heinz Unger the rest of the programme.

**Blackpool**—The town's Philharmonic Society performed 'The Messiah' in the Tower Circus on December 6. Frank Rawes conducted, and the

soloists were Dorothy Greene, K. Ferrier, Eric Greene and W. Parsons. The Blackpool Symphony Orchestra, which took part in this performance, continues its independent concerts in the Jubilee Theatre; conductor, W. Rees.

**Bradford**—On December 16 the Hallé (Barbirolli) opened the season of the Bradford Subscription concerts.

**Bristol**—Mr. Charles Lockier held a Festival Week at the end of December, offering both lunch-hour and evening concerts. He began with the L.P.O., under Cameron.

**Cambridge**—The University Musical Society (Dr. Hadley) gave a choral and orchestral concert on December 7. John Davison was the soloist in a Mozart Clarinet Concerto, and Marie Wilson the violinist in one by Bach. Alan Rawsthorne conducted his overture, 'Street Corner,' and the programme also included Cyril Rootham's 'City in the West,' for chorus, harp and strings. The choir sang Bax's unaccompanied motet, 'Mater ora filium.'

**Dumbarton**—The Dumbarton and District Music Club meets weekly throughout the winter for lectures, club recitals, and celebrity concerts. Among the events announced for the remainder of the season were a sonata recital by Frieda Peters (viola) and W. Senior (piano); piano programmes by Wight Henderson and Jean Harvey; and piano trios by Mary McConnell, Eleanor Cowell and Eva Donaldson.

**Edinburgh**—The Scottish Orchestra continues its series of concerts, under Warwick Braithwaite. Among the less familiar works recently have been Bax's third Symphony and Copland's 'Open Air Overture.'—The Reid Orchestra (Prof. Newman) gives its regular concerts, fortnightly on Fridays. For the second half of the season there were announced a symphony by Boyce, Turina's 'Symphonic Rhapsody' for piano (Kohler) and strings, the 'Ricercare' from Bach's 'Musical Offering,' Bliss's

'Music for Strings,' Britten's 'Variations,' and Bloch's 'Concerto Grosso' for strings. The Mozart 'Requiem' is down for February 23, with the Reid Choir and the University Musical Society Choir.

**Glasgow**—The Scottish Orchestra's concerts continue in St. Andrew's Hall and Green's Playhouse under Mr. Braithwaite with, largely, familiar works. Berners's 'Fantaisie' just before Christmas was among the less well-known ones. Ferguson's piece on Ulster airs, mentioned elsewhere, and Copland's overture have also been heard.—Lunch-hour programmes in the Bute Hall of the University have included a recital by Bessie Spence (violin), and Prof. Bullock (organ) (Vivaldi, Friedemann Bach, John Sebastian, Rheinberger's Op. 150, and part of a 'Kirchen Sonate' by J. Haas).—In mid-December the veteran Lamond gave a Liszt recital, including one of the rarely-played works, the variations on Bach's 'Crucifixus' theme from the Mass.—Purcell J. Mansfield gave in December his twenty-first annual organ recital on behalf of the Organists' Benevolent League, in Pollockshields-Titwood church. The choir sang anthems and carols by Wesley, Jenkins and Holst.—Concerts announced in December notices also included that of the Glasgow Cathedral Choral Society (Mr. W. Emery): the 'Hymn of Praise' and hymns by Vaughan Williams. In this concert the Glasgow String Orchestra (Mr. J. MacArthur) took part, and played Julius Harrison's 'Prelude Music.'—The pre-vacation concert of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music included music by the Choral Society and the Concerto Class (Vaughan Williams's 'Magnificat,' and some Holst, with Arnold Foster's Manx folk-song arrangements).

**Keighley**—The town's Music Club, in its tenth season, gives six concerts, including a piano recital by Frank Merrick, one by the Zorian String Quartet, one of songs (Kathleen Kay, contralto), another of chamber music for various combinations of oboe (Natalie James), bassoon (Cecil James) and piano (Kendall Taylor); and two concerts by the Keighley Orchestral Society (E. R. Myers). That on December 9 had Leon Goossens as soloist in a Cimarosa concerto. Besides Boyce's Symphony in F, No. 4, the first performance was heard of the 'Household Music' by Vaughan Williams (Three Preludes on Welsh hymn-tunes) in the orchestral version.

**Kilmacolm**—It is good to know of the increase of independent activities in various towns around Glasgow (says one of the city's critics): in places like Milngavie, Lenzie and Kilmacolm, which last-named town has been running this winter, under the auspices of C.E.M.A., a second season of four concerts, the artists including the Grierson Trio, the Fellowes Quartet, the Glasgow String Orchestra, etc.

**Leamington Spa**—On December 14, the Royal Leamington Spa Bach Choir, under its conductor, Martindale Sidwell, performed Bach's Christmas Oratorio. Soloists, Mary Linde, Jennifer Vyvyan, Eric Greene, Victor Harding; organist, Dr. Cunningham.

**Liverpool**—The Philharmonic Society invited Sir Thomas Beecham for two special concerts in mid-December.

**Maidstone**—The town's Choral Union, numbering a hundred, gave a recital on January 6, in All Saints' Church; conductor, A. D. Croucher. The programme included Bach's 'God's time is best,' Elgar's setting of the 48th Psalm, anthems by Holst, Charles Wood, Ireland, Gardiner, an extract from Brahms's 'Requiem,' and some carols. Soloists: Gladys Baker, Sidney Dolden, Clement Hardman; Organist, F. Rowles.

**Manchester**—The Hallé, just before beginning its foreign tour, took part in 'The Messiah' at Belle Vue. The Huddersfield Choral Society, through

transport difficulties, was unable to arrive until the later stages of the work; the two other bodies with which it was associated were the Hallé Choir and the Sheffield Philharmonic Society. Dr. Sargent conducted.

**Nottingham**—The city's Symphony Orchestra (Gaze Cooper) gave a concert on January 6, with Maurice Cole as soloist.—On the same evening members of the Nottingham Operatic Society gave a concert in aid of the benevolent fund of the Women's Land Army.—In December the L.P.O. (Fistoulari) visited Nottingham.

**Ottery St. Mary**—The Choral Society of this Devonshire town gave a concert on December 6. The choral music included Thiman's 'Songs of England' and Stanford's 'Songs of the Fleet.' The conductor was Marjorie Jaco; visiting soloists were Victor Harding (bass) and May Bartlett (cello).

**Preston**—The Liverpool Philharmonic (Sargent) appeared on January 5 before 'the biggest audience—over 2,000—yet to hear them in the town.'

**Reading**—The Reading Symphony Orchestra arranged concerts for December, February, March and April. Their third of the season, given in Mid-December, was a Beethoven programme, with Sammons as soloist. The conductor is John Fry.

**Rochdale**—The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, under Vilem Tausky, formerly conductor at the Brno Opera House, and now a lieutenant in the Czechoslovak Army, gave a concert of Czech music in December. This was an E.N.S.A. event for war workers. The items included familiar tone-poems by Smetana and Dvořák's 'New World.'

**Sheffield**—The Sheffield Philharmonic Society gave three Christmas concerts. At the first the L.S.O. appeared, under Coates, and a violinist new to the city, Yfrah Neaman, played the Beethoven Concerto.

**Torquay**—On December 31 the Municipal Orchestra (E. Goss) gave a concert, with Kentner as piano soloist.—The Philharmonic Society, with the Orchestra, performed 'Acis and Galatea' and Elgar's 'Bavarian Highlands' Suite on December 14. Soloists, Helen Anderson, J. van der Gucht, S. Worthington.

**Warrington**—On December 6 'unprecedented scenes' took place because of the great crowds which wished to hear the Hallé, under Barbirolli.

**Windsor**—The Windsor and Eton Choral Society, conducted by Dr. W. H. Harris, gave 'Judas Maccabæus' in Eton College on December 20, as the first concert of its hundred-and-fourth season. The soloists were Elsie Suddaby, Dorothy Hawes, Bamfield Cooper, and W. Barrand.

**Worcester**—The wartime organization of singers and players in the Worcester, Whitbourne, Bromyard and surrounding districts, combined with the Westminster School Choral and Orchestral Society, has given three concerts in Worcester during the past year, in association with C.E.M.A. The combined choirs number 125 and a full symphony orchestra of 70 is assembled for concerts. Programmes have included Mozart's Requiem, Dvořák's Te Deum, Britten's 'Hymn to St. Cecilia,' Moussorgsky's 'Joshua' and 'Defeat of Sennacherib,' Dyson's 'Canterbury Pilgrims' and Vaughan Williams's 'Hundredth Psalm'; Schubert's 'Unfinished' and Borodin's second Symphony, Beethoven's Violin Concerto (with a boy soloist), the 'Prometheus' Overture, and other orchestral works by Kodály and Moussorgsky. In addition, the Westminster School Orchestra (augmented) gave concerts (with an explanatory talk on the orchestra) to the Alice Ottley Girls' School and at a Music Festival open to Youth Clubs, Schools and Women's Institutes. Arnold Foster has been the conductor throughout.