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Historic Sound

Peter Warlock

Collected 78rpm recordings



remastered from original 78rpm discs
in the John Bishop Collection

original recordings - 1925-51

digitally remastered

Peter Warlock: Collected 78rpm recordings from the John Bishop Collection

DISC 1		total duration 65.52
1	Capriol Suite London Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Anthony Bernard <i>from Decca K576 (KA53/54) recorded 24 March 1931</i>	8.26
2	Serenade for Strings NGS Chamber Orchestra, conducted by John Barbirolli <i>From NGS75 (NGS601/61E) recorded by Vocalion c. 1928</i>	7.21
3	Capriol Suite (arranged by Josef Szigeti) Josef Szigeti (violin), Nikita Magaloff (piano) <i>From Columbia LB32 (CA15651/2) recorded 6 March 1936</i>	5.23
4	Serenade for Strings The Constant Lambert String Orchestra, conducted by Constant Lambert <i>From HMV C2908 (2EA4723/4) recorded 3 April 1937</i>	6.40
5	Capriol Suite The Constant Lambert String Orchestra, conducted by Constant Lambert <i>From HMV C2904 (2EA4721/2) recorded 3 April 1937</i>	8.41
6	Purcell, arr. Warlock: Fantaisie no. 3 The Pasquier Trio <i>From Columbia DX776 (CPTX123) recorded c. 1935</i>	4.17
7	Purcell, arr. Warlock: Four Part Fantasia no. 9 The Griller String Quartet <i>From Decca AK1719 (AR11391) recorded 20 June 1947</i>	3.09
8	The Curlew René Soames, Leon Goossens, The Aeolian String Quartet <i>From HMV C7934-6 (2EA14560/1) recorded 27 March 1950; 2EA14586/7 recorded 12 April 1950, WEA 14585 (re-take made 27 August 1952)</i>	21.53

DISC 2**total duration 78.15**

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1 | Captain Stratton's Fancy
Peter Dawson (bass), Gerald Moore (piano)
<i>From HMV B2561 (Bb11878) recorded 4 September 1927</i> | 1.49 |
| 2 | Oh Good Ale (The Toper's Song)
John Goss (baritone), Cathedral Male Voice Quartet
<i>From HMV B2017 (Bb5888) recorded 17 March 1925</i> | 1.26 |
| 3 | Flow not fast, ye fountains
John Goss (baritone), Diana Poulton (lute)
<i>From HMV B2822 (Bb12359 – part) recorded 13 January 1928</i> | 2.09 |
| 4 | There is a garden in her face
John Goss (baritone), Diana Poulton (lute)
<i>From HMV B2822 (Bb12359 – part) recorded 13 January 1928</i> | 1.20 |
| 5 | O eyes, O mortal stars
John Goss (baritone), Diana Poulton (lute)
<i>From HMV B2822 (Bb12362 – part) recorded 13 January 1928</i> | 1.28 |
| 6 | Come, my Celia
John Goss (baritone), Diana Poulton (lute)
<i>From HMV B2822 (Bb12362- part) recorded 13 January 1928</i> | 1.39 |
| 7 | Corpus Christi
The English Singers
<i>From Roycroft 157 (3012) recorded c. 1927</i> | 3.03 |
| 8 | Sleep
John Armstrong (baritone), International String Quartet
<i>From NGS165 (WAX6043 - part) recorded by Columbia in March 1931</i> | 2.12 |
| 9 | Chop Cherry
John Armstrong (baritone), International String Quartet
<i>From NGS165 (WAX6043 – part) recorded by Columbia in March 1931</i> | 0.59 |
| 10 | The Fox
Parry Jones (tenor), with anonymous piano accompaniment
<i>From Columbia DB1521 (CA14654) recorded 5 September 1934</i> | 2.42 |

11	Sleep Parry Jones (tenor) with anonymous piano accompaniment <i>From Columbia DB1521 (CA14654) recorded 5 September 1934</i>	2.24
12	Take o take those lips away Parry Jones (tenor), with anonymous piano accompaniment <i>From Columbia DB1443 (CA14645) recorded 4 September 1934</i>	2.07
13	Sweet and Kind Parry Jones (tenor) with anonymous piano accompaniment <i>From Columbia DB1443 (CA14647) recorded 4 September 1934</i>	2.13
14	As Ever I Saw Parry Jones (tenor) with anonymous piano accompaniment <i>From Columbia DB1489 (CA14646) recorded 4 September 1934</i>	1.41
15	The Passionate Shepherd Parry Jones (tenor) with anonymous piano accompaniment <i>From Columbia DB1489 (CA14653) recorded 4 September 1934</i>	2.08
16	Corpus Christi Ann Wood (contralto), Peter Pears (tenor), The BBC Chorus, conducted by Leslie Woodgate <i>From Decca K827 (TA2256) recorded 24 June 1936</i>	3.58
17	A Cornish Christmas Carol The BBC Chorus, conducted by Leslie Woodgate <i>From Decca K827 (TA2258) recorded 24 June 1936</i>	3.55
18	Six Nursery Jingles Cecil Cope (baritone) <i>From London Transcription Service NPH447 recorded c. 1941</i>	3.08
19	Milkmaids Roy Henderson (baritone), Eric Griffen (piano) <i>From Decca M563 (DR7969 - part) recorded 16 December 1943</i>	1.43
20	Captain Stratton's Fancy Roy Henderson (baritone), Eric Griffen (piano) <i>From Decca M563 (DR7969 – part) recorded 16 December 1943</i>	1.43
21	Sigh no More Roy Henderson (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From Decca M514 (DR6184 – part) recorded 29 August 1941</i>	1.20

22	Pretty Ring Time (A lover and his Lass) Roy Henderson (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From Decca M514 (DR6184 – part) recorded 29 August 1941</i>	1.11
23	Passing By Roy Henderson (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From Decca M514 (DR6185) recorded 29 August 1941</i>	2.26
24	My Own Country Roy Henderson (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From Decca M519 (DR6187) recorded 29 August 1941</i>	2.55
25	Fair and True Roy Henderson (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From Decca M519 (DR6186 – part) recorded 29 August 1941</i>	2.27
26	Piggiesnie Roy Henderson (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From Decca M519 (DR6186 – part) recorded 29 August 1941</i>	0.58
27	Sweet and Twenty Nancy Evans (contralto), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From HMV B9332 (0EA10010 – part) recorded 10 June 1943</i>	1.14
28	Consider Nancy Evans (contralto), Gerald Moore (Piano) <i>From HMV B9332 (0EA10010 – part) recorded 10 June 1943</i>	1.50
29	Sleep Nancy Evans (contralto), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From HMV B9332 (0EA10011) recorded 10 June 1943</i>	2.58
30	Rest Sweet Nymphs Truro County Girl's School Choir, conducted by Miss Sanders <i>From HMV C3527 (2ER936 – part) recorded 27 June 1946</i>	2.08
31	The First Mercy Master Billy Neeley (boy soprano) <i>From HMV B10373 (0EA14815) recorded 20 June 1950</i>	2.48
32	Corpus Christi Flora Nielsen (contralto), René Soames (tenor), The Festival Singers, conducted by Leslie Woodgate <i>From HMV C7934 (2EA14568) recorded 31 March 1950</i>	4.45

33	The Frostbound Wood Dennis Noble (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From HMV B10075 (0EA15471) recorded 5 April 1951</i>	3.10
34	The Fox Dennis Noble (baritone), Gerald Moore (piano) <i>From HMV B10075 (0EA15472) recorded 5 April 1951</i>	2.29
35	Captain Stratton's Fancy Oscar Natzke (bass) <i>From Parlophone R2737 (E10282) recorded c.1939</i>	1.46



Original 78rpm discs from the John Bishop Collection, transferred by Stephen Sutton of Divine Art and digitally restored and re-mastered by Andrew Rose of Pristine Audio.

Producer, technical notes and design: Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)

Notes on Warlock and orchestral works: Barry Smith

Notes on vocal music: Giles Davies

Cover photograph by Stephen Shore MacNamara, c. 1926

Photo of Warlock on page 22 by Herbert Lambert, 1923

Photo of school choir supplied by Romola Harper and restored by Stephen Sutton

Other photographs supplied by the Tully Potter Collection

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HISTORIC SOUND

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

One of England's great song-writers, Philip Heseltine, better known as 'Peter Warlock', was once described by Lennox Berkeley as 'most colourful talents in English 20th-century music'. A sensitive soul, critical and tormented with self-doubt, he was a curious mixture of gentleness and vitriol, kindness and cruelty. It was these opposing traits which led Cecil Gray to put forward his theory of schizophrenia in his memoir of Warlock published in 1934. Although Philip's friends were unanimous in denouncing Gray's Jekyll and Hyde portrait (claiming the difference to be no more than 'Philip sober and Philip drunk') misconceptions about Warlock, the man and his music still persist.

For example, he is often described as having produced only a slender output, yet if one looks at what he accomplished during a brief fourteen years, he could almost be described as prolific. His compositions include over a hundred solo songs with piano accompaniment, more than twenty choral works (some unaccompanied, some with keyboard accompaniment and a few with orchestra), the remaining few works being for orchestra or for piano. But the story doesn't end there: he was also a distinguished editor and transcriber of a vast amount of early music as well as an author of several books and many articles, editor and music critic. Although also often described as 'an Elizabethan born out of his time', Warlock was, in many respects, way ahead of his time. He was the first scholarly editor of early English music and his editorial practice and faithfulness to the composer's intentions is a model even in this authenticity-obsessed era.

Born into a large, well-to-do London family, his mother came from Wales with which he had strong ties throughout his life. Educated at Eton, at adolescence he developed an all-consuming passion for the music of Delius and, by the time of their first meeting in 1911 (his final year at school), he was totally obsessed with his music. After a desperately unhappy year at Oxford he dropped out, moved to London and spent a few frustrated months in 1915 as music critic on the staff of the Daily Mail. Soon after this he met D. H. Lawrence and followed him to Cornwall the next year, becoming involved in an ultimately unsuccessful venture to publish Lawrence's books. His meeting in June 1916 with the enigmatic, Anglo-Dutch composer, Bernard van Dieren (1887-1936) also had a profound effect on him. The

obsession with the music of Delius was largely eclipsed and his growing efforts at composition began to show this new influence.

Alarmed by the possibility of conscription, Philip fled to Ireland in 1917 where he remained for a year. During this period he dabbled in the occult which his friend Cecil Gray claimed caused him 'certain psychological injuries from which . . . he never entirely recovered'. There was also a sudden surge of remarkable artistic productivity when, in the space of a fortnight, he wrote ten songs, some of which rank amongst his finest compositions, a number of which were published by Winthrop Rogers under the pseudonym, Peter Warlock. Bearing in mind these associations, this choice of pseudonym is highly significant. From then on he became increasingly involved in a number of public and private quarrels directed at music-critics he thought incompetent and those he suspected of being a charlatan or sham.

In 1920 Rogers appointed him editor of a new musical journal, *The Sackbut*, of which nine issues appeared and which included material of a controversial nature. However, just as the journal was beginning to succeed, Rogers, nervous of the implications of this contentious material, withdrew his backing. Curwen eventually took over the publication, and an embittered Philip was summarily relieved of the editorship. After this he moved back to the family home in Wales where he lived almost continuously for the next three years. Here he applied himself to completing a book on Delius, making arrangements of Delius's works, transcribing an enormous amount of early music, and also composing a large number of original songs, including his acknowledged masterpiece, the song-cycle *The Curlew*.

In 1925 he moved to rural Eynsford in Kent sharing a cottage with E. J. Moeran. There he ran a kind of open house and from this period much of the Warlock 'legend' originates. During these years he wrote a study of Gesualdo, a book entitled *The English Ayre*, continued with his early music transcriptions, as well as producing a slowly decreasing number of original compositions, including perhaps his best-known piece, *Capriol* for string orchestra. He also wrote a series of entertaining and scurrilous limericks in which contemporary composers and critics were cruelly and often crudely lampooned.

Having felt the onset of a drying up of his creative abilities, he was more than grateful when Beecham invited him to assist in the organization of the great Delius Festival held in October

1929. But as 1930 progressed life became bleaker and bleaker and there was little demand for his songs, if indeed the inspiration or will to compose was still there. Black moods of depression settled more frequently and he was found dead, of gas poisoning, in his Chelsea flat on the morning of 17 December 1930. At the inquest the coroner recorded a verdict of insufficient evidence as to whether death was suicide or an accident.

The orchestral and chamber music

The orchestral offerings in this collection provide a fascinating kaleidoscope of interpretations. There are three versions of *Capriol*: Anthony Bernard (variously described by Warlock in his letters as a 'misbegotten baboon' and later even more insultingly as 'that emasculated offspring of a wet dream and a virgin's menstree') sounds in 1931 as if he was anxious to finish the recording session in record time or perhaps try to fit the suite on to just one side of a 78rpm disc! On the other hand Constant Lambert's tempi are well judged and the work is played with very professional care and authority. The abbreviated version arranged by violinist Joseph Szigeti and played by himself with Nikita Magaloff on piano has a curiosity value with some surprisingly rough playing from so eminent a string player.

John Barbiroli invests his performance of the *Serenade for Strings* with warmth and affection (and plenty of characteristic portamenti) showing a musical sense of flow in this heart-felt homage to Delius. By contrast Lambert's performance of the same work seems hurried and almost uninvolved.

The two examples of Warlock's Purcell scholarship are given careful performances by the Pasquier Trio and the Griller Quartet with some lively playing though, when compared with performing practice, things occasionally become bogged down in the slower sections.

Notes on Philip Warlock and the Orchestral Music © 2008 Barry Smith

The Vocal Works

The wide and varied vocal selections of Peter Warlock's work here span the years 1927 to the early 1950s.

The earliest recordings from the 1920s feature the composer's good friend, the singer, scholar, writer, and 'bon vivant' John Goss. Goss, a lyric baritone with innate musical sensibilities and a great sense of humour, was the original dedicatee of some of Warlock's songs, and many were written with his voice in mind. He also appears in many composer biographies, notably in the life stories of E. J. Moeran, Bernard van Dieren, Rebecca Clarke and Frederick Delius. He was also of importance, as the man who 'discovered' the Maestro Sir John Barbiroli, aside from his own publications, notably the novel 'Cockroaches and Diamonds', and the song collections both folk and classical, 'Ballads of Britain', and the 'Anthology of Song'. He was also a political left wing activist, which was to prove his downfall in the tense climate of America in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The archive tracks here illustrate why John Goss was the favoured mouthpiece of many of the inter-war songwriters. In 'O Good Ale', with his own Cathedral Male Quartet, he shows his mastery of the drinking song genre, notably comic timing and superb diction. Goss used a deliberately 'folkey', more tenorial colour in ballads, as here. Goss and his Cathedral Male Quartet, with pianist Kathleen Markwell recorded many traditional ballads and folksongs for HMV at Hayes in the 1920s, which were regularly broadcast on the radio during the period. (His song repertoire including items with male quartet can be heard on the Divine Art CD, DDA25048 - 'Gossiana'.)

The four Elizabethan songs were highly experimental recordings for their time, with a lute player, Diana Poulton, rather than in Warlock's keyboard transcriptions. The tessitura in these is high in the vocal range for a baritone, and here Goss shows his easy upper register, impeccable intonation, clear vowels and a fine legato. For any singer approaching the demanding songs of Warlock, the recordings of John Goss remain the most important historically, and are a fascinating glimpse at his own personal style of interpretation.

Despite an amusing moment of insecurity from the lute player in 'There is a garden in her face', Goss excels in Ferrabosco's 'O eyes, O mortal stars', and only a hard hearted listener could fail to be moved by this noble singing, as Goss shows his warm baritone quality here, rather than his folksy 'character' sound. There is a humanity and directness in his singing that transcends passing trends and musical tastes. Goss studied with the same voice teacher as his French contemporary Pierre Bernac, also a baritone and friend of the composer Poulenc, and it is most interesting to compare the differences in their varying vocal traits. It should also be remembered that unlike the current studio tricks of editing music together often phrase by phrase with computer software, the material on this compilation represents single takes with no 'splicing', (with the exception of the 1950's 'Curlew', recorded across three dates), and illustrates just how good these singers were.

It is a tragedy that the names and the lives of these wonderful artists are now largely forgotten, even in Britain, and this collection will hopefully introduce these performers and their interpretations to a new generation of music lovers, and to singers and accompanists new to this material. Few today can equal their style, vocal honesty, diction, and commitment to music and words.

A performance known only to devoted Warlockians, the René Soames 1950/1952 'Curlew' with the Aeolian Quartet has an atmosphere, intensity and world-weariness of its own, no doubt due to the period of recording, shortly after the carnage of the Second World War. (At this time, John Goss, who gave the successful second performance of the work, on that occasion a baritone rather than the usual tenor, was still alive, shortly before his sudden death in 1953). René Soames was a versatile tenor who appears on Sir Thomas Beecham's recording of Delius' Opera 'A Village Romeo and Juliet', and on the soundtrack of the gloriously epic technicolour 1951 Powell and Pressburger film of Offenbach's 'The Tales of Hoffmann', as the voice of the crazed dwarf Pitichinaccio in the 'Venice' Act. For Beecham, he recorded the smaller role of Nathaniel on the 1940's recording of the same Opera. In this 'Curlew', there is a memorable, inward utterance from the singer at the line - 'I had a beautiful friend', and throughout his singing combines thoughtful colours with impeccable diction, a master class for any singer attempting this troubling work. At the demanding unaccompanied 'lake' section towards the close, his firm tone, resounding upper register and fine intonation are exemplary.

Warlock himself disliked too much vibrato in voices, and it will be obvious here that most of the fine singers on this compilation use in general less vibrato than some of today's singers in this repertoire, but without losing vocal colours, dynamics, clarity of enunciation or musical expressivity. His instrumental colleagues, some of the finest players of their day, match the singer superbly in this work of many twists and shades, and also use vibrato sparingly to evoke the desolate landscape of the work. The famed Leon Goossens' mesmerising oboe tone is especially haunting and drenched with atmosphere. (Perhaps the instrumental opening was to influence passages in Benjamin Britten's chilling Opera, 'The Turn of the Screw?')

Listeners can compare three versions of Warlock's choral 'Corpus Christi', from 1927, 1936, and 1950. The second features a young Peter Pears on excellent form, but it is the earliest, with a memorable appearance from John Goss as soloist, that remains the most sinister and strange. Soames of the historic 'Curlew', appears as soloist in the same year, on the later 1950 version of this choral work.

Of the other choral pieces here, there is something splendidly quaint and charming in the Truro Girls Grammar School's 'Rest Sweet Nymphs', and the BBC Chorus in 1936 in the 'Cornish Christmas Carol', reveal a warm choral tone, though perhaps at the expense of clear diction.

Comparison can also be made between John Armstrong's recordings of one of Warlock's most famous songs, 'Sleep', for string ensemble and piano respectively. Both these recordings illustrate how this song can be effectively realised at a tempo less indulgent than some modern versions, as Warlock's songs with a nod to the Elizabethans benefit from less 'rubato' and greater attention to rhythmic details. After all, the poet is invoking sleep, as opposed to already enjoying a peaceful rest. In the piano version, the playing is wonderfully 'voiced' and rich in colours, a keyboard sound highly transparent, a far cry from the weightier modern grand piano. Arguably, this song seems to benefit from a restless quality, rather than a lethargic one. John Armstrong is one of the few singers on recording to correctly sing the words 'but a sliding', rather than the unintentionally comedic 'butter sliding'. Both his performances here are movingly sung, and are invested with great conviction in both the music and text. He also recorded a famous 'Curlew' in 1931, with another friend of the Warlockian circle, Constant Lambert. *[note from the Producer: this recording was in the*

collection but had to be omitted for lack of space on the CDs – it is available via Pristine Audio]

Parry Jones's renditions are healthily sung with an opulent tone, but he rather misses the inward, heartbroken quality of 'Take, O take those lips away', although the steady tempo is perfect for this song of regret, which is sometimes rushed in modern performances, due to the taxing nature of the vocal part. 'As ever I saw', dedicated to John Goss, is musically rather four square here from singer and pianist, missing the exuberance and spring of this song of young love. (A lamentable scenario is that we do not have recordings of John Goss himself singing these, although he did broadcast them for the BBC in the 1930s). Jones is far more convincing in the darker 'The Fox' and the rapturous 'There is a Lady', and proves he is an assured Warlockian interpreter.

One of the great delights of this collection are the short 'Nursery Jingles' sung by Cecil Cope, (1941), whose performances are beautifully judged, catching the quirkiness of these delicate, humorous gems without ever overstating them. A songwriter in his own right, here is a singer with a clear, finely produced tone, and excellent, unaffected diction. For listeners who know Warlock's most famous pieces, these miniatures may prove the real find of this collection, along with the earlier material from the 1920s, and the 1950s 'Curlew'. *[note from the Producer: Cope was a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral from 1918 to 1924, so was probably in his early 30s when this was recorded. The Cecil Cope Trophy is still awarded to the winner of the unaccompanied folksong category at the Devon Performing Arts Festival]*

Famous as the singing teacher of Kathleen Ferrier, Roy Henderson was a singer of pedigree, yet in some of the songs recorded here, his somewhat mannered pronunciation may prove a little difficult for modern ears. In the ravishing, 'My own country', a song calling for a folk like simplicity and a warm 'mezza voce', the musical pulse never quite 'settles'. However these recordings are highly characterized, (note the brief falsetto 'chuckle' in 'Milkmaids', Warlock's naughtiest 'nonny no' song) and are important ones in the Warlock discography. Perhaps of these versions, the light-footed 'Piggesnie' is the most successful.

There are moments of genius at the keyboard from the legendary Gerald Moore, who makes the left hand octaves in 'Captain Stratton's Fancy' dance with the true spirit of this sea-fairing

boozer. In this famous song, performer and listener are well to remember this is a character 'getting drunk', enjoying the experience, not already legless! Peter Dawson in his earlier recording from 1927, again with Moore, brings a lovely lightness of touch to this song, without losing the fun of it. Rhythmically, versions differ in the vocal part in the archive recordings of this song, and again one can't help musing on exactly what John Goss would have done with it. 'O Good Ale' is the only track able to offer us some clue here. (Goss himself recorded more of Warlock's songs with Gerald Moore at Abbey Road, sadly the original master plates may have been faulty and these have not survived.) Again, listeners can compare three versions of 'Captain Stratton's Fancy', including an orchestral one which closes the compilation, finely sung by the ripe voice of Oscar Natzke - who indulges in a 'comic' low glissando on "drinking at an Inn" - a touch one can assume that Goss and Warlock themselves might even have approved of? Each of these versions make some modern ones sound ponderous by comparison.

The mezzo-soprano Nancy Evans was a student of the celebrated Maggie Teyte, and alternated in the title role alongside Kathleen Ferrier in the original 1946 Glyndebourne production of Britten's 'The Rape of Lucretia'. Britten then wrote the role of Nancy in his comic masterpiece 'Albert Herring' for her, in which she appeared at Covent Garden a year later. Married first to the HMV producer and impresario Walter Legge, and later to Librettist Eric Crozier who also collaborated with the composer on 'Albert Herring', she was actively involved with the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh in later life. Here she particularly impresses in 'Sweet and Twenty', taken at a swinging pace. Her bright, ringing voice and excellent legato, coupled with the real feeling of a period dance of the Elizabethan period, reveal this version as one of the most intriguing of this fine song, another dedicated to John Goss. Again, too much rubato and a lack of rhythm in modern performances often unbalance this superbly crafted song. 'Consider' and 'Sleep' are also beautifully done, and one can compare the more conventional, meditative tempo for 'Sleep' with the earlier, brisker versions by Armstrong.

Gerald Moore appears again accompanying baritone Dennis Noble. Noble enjoyed a busy operatic and recording career, including performances at Covent Garden. Here he is heard tackling the two late Warlock songs 'The Fox' and 'The Frostbound Wood'. The performances are finely sung and accurate, but there is a sense of mystery and tension absent

from 'The Frostbound Wood', a song remaining one of Warlock's most slippery for performers to grasp. The narrative and words must grip the listener, whilst at the same time the music must seem motionless and icy, cool to the touch, and yet emotionally devastating, as one of the last compositions penned before Warlock's tragic suicide.

Notes on the vocal works © 2008, Giles Davies

The recordings

The music and life of Peter Warlock has drawn together a sizeable number of devotees, and is celebrated by the Peter Warlock Society, who have given generous support in order to enable these recordings to be restored and re-issued. Besides Barry Smith and Giles Davies, who contributed the foregoing programme notes, one of the Society's leading lights was the late John Bishop – also responsible for the later publication of several Warlock works. It is his personal collection of 78rpm discs, left on his death in the care of the Society, that have been used for this new release. Whilst not all of the discs were in wonderful condition, and several were quite frankly poor recordings or pressings to begin with, as usual Andrew Rose of Pristine Audio has produced excellent result, better than we at times had expected.

Sadly, due to lack of space, one item in the collection had to be omitted – the 'Curlew' recording on NGS conducted by Constant Lambert. This version is however available elsewhere.

Many of these recordings were made when microphone technology was new and experimental, leading to a wide range of frequency responses and equalization curves, which makes finding a true balance tricky – indeed the earliest Goss recording here was made acoustically, by the 'shout into a bucket' method. Some early discs were recorded at speeds other than 78rpm and so have had to be re-pitched. Later, while studio conditions and technology improved, the records were blighted (especially during and after World War II) by the use of re-cycled and inferior wax incorporating much grit – the curse of all HMV records of the 1940s. The early Decca recordings were unclear, muddy and dull: indeed at the

beginning of this project it was intended to reject the Peter Pears 'Corpus Christi' as parts were inaudible. However, the decision to persevere paid off, with a final result which while not anywhere near the standard of some material we work with, is perfectly listenable and allows the music to be heard clearly and sweetly.

An eclectic collection such as this, devoted to one composer, naturally includes a range of items from the larger companies of the day, and the vast majority here are from HMV, Columbia and Parlophone, all branches of EMI from 1931, and Decca, established at the very end of the 1920s and now also subsumed into the Universal group. Two items are from issues of the National Gramophonic Society, an early 'record club' set up by the *Gramophone* magazine's editor Compton Mackenzie and which produced the first recordings of Sir John Barbirolli amongst others.

There are rarer items too: The 'Nursery Jingles' disc was produced by the London Transcription Service/Joint Broadcasting Committee. The Joint Broadcasting Service was set up in 1939; its activities to some degree were parallel to those of the BBC, though it the BBC was drawn into the Maelstrom (as Lord Asa Briggs puts it in his *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, volume 3: The war of Word, 1939-1945*) of political maneuvering and a certain degree of mismanagement of political propaganda at the start of the war.

The JBC was set up "to promote international understanding by means of broadcasting" - it was guided by the Home Office and Ministry of Information in many ways; its real aim was to issue "Constructive" British propaganda, mainly through broadcast recordings. BBC officials were dubious and a certain degree of antagonism existed between the two organisations.

The JBC was particularly concerned with the German situation; it was declared that its main function would be to prepare programmes, for distribution in friendly or neutral countries, and for clandestine broadcast in enemy countries, in conjunction with the Ministry of Information. The difference with BBC was that the latter broadcast to those countries always from the UK, whereas JBC recorded its programmes, on tape, film or disc, and had them broadcast from within the other nations. Because of the difficulty in obtaining supplies of film and tape and the lower efficiency of those systems, as it was seen, disc became the preferred method.

Despite these differences, the BBC management became very annoyed with what it saw as interference with its monopoly. Eventually, after much discussion, the JBC was absorbed by the BBC on 1 July 1941 to form the nucleus of the London Transcription Service. The LTS expanded its activities far beyond what JBC had been able to achieve, dispatching programmes of all kinds throughout the world on what they called “virtually unbreakable discs”. The earlier example used here was a standard 10” shellac disc.

The other ‘rare label’ featured here is Roycroft, a label made for an Arts-and-Crafts movement known as the Roycrofters by the Cameo Record Corporation of New York which specialized in Elizabethan choral works and English ballads. The ‘English Singers’, one of the label’s major recording groups, was made up of Flora Mann, Nellie Carson, Lillian Berger, Norman Stone, Norman Notley and Cuthbert Kelly. I am grateful to Michael Pilkington and Fred Tomlinson for providing these names.

These projects often involve fascinating research, and one is either blessed with good luck or not! The recording of ‘Rest Sweet Nymphs’ here is credited on the HMV label to “Girls’ School Choir” - so a challenge was set. A perusal of the EMI Archive original recording ledger helped only a little – the performers here listed as “Girls, age 14 – 16, from a Country Grammar School in the South West”. HMV had made several recordings of school choirs from different parts of the country, ostensibly to demonstrate accentual differences but quite possibly as part of efforts to ‘educate’ folk from the regions in ‘BBC English’.

The next challenge was to identify the school in question. Our PR consultant John Cronin posted a query on Friends Reunited and tour amazement within two days we were in touch a member of that very choir – which turned out to be Truro County Girls’ School. Romola Harper, (née Pascoe) who now lives in Hampshire, was overjoyed to be reminded of the recording (we sent her a copy) and provided this remembrance:

“I can remember all the words and music after all these years – it must have been about 1945, that’s 63 years ago. We also sang some Russian folk songs which are still fresh in my memory. [These were on the other side of the HMV record]. Unfortunately my copy of the record was broken by one of my children when they were small. The attached photograph was taken at Falmouth when we won the County Music Shield actually singing the songs on

the record. In the picture are the Headmistress Miss Cobley, on the left and Miss Sanders the conductor and Latin teacher on the right. The accompanist was Miss Jean Buss the English teacher.

I remember when the recording was having its run-through, a Mr. Bates came to listen and see if we were good enough for HMV. He wore a grey suit with a bright red tie, and 'Sally' which was our nickname for Miss Sanders, was very overcome and flustered, fluttering her eyes at him and blushing, much to the amusement of us girls.

We won the Shield four years running and we were a very proud choir. It was so great to listen to the songs again and reminisce. I was surprised how much I remembered especially as I sang one of the lower parts in the recording. It felt like being transported back 60 years and looking at many of my friends with whom I have lost touch... I have been seeking my best friend since 1953. After contacting a few of the people in the photograph I have been in touch with her and our friendship renewed."

Mrs Harper also mentioned that she is a great fan of Warlock. We are deeply indebted to her for these wonderful memories and the photograph of the choir, in which the young Miss Pascoe is in the second row at the far left.

The recording dates (one or two have not been exactly identified), along with original matrix and catalogue number, are given in the track list on pages 2 and 3.

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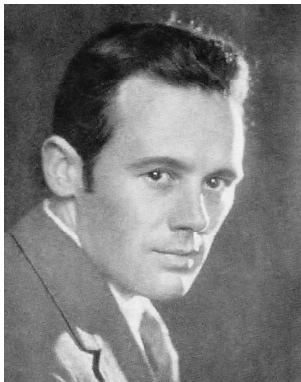
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The Truro County Girls' School Choir, 1946





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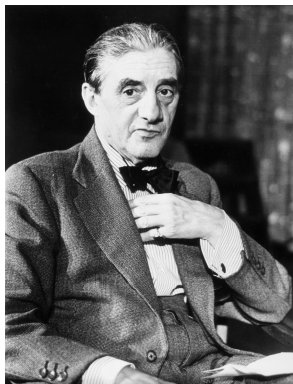


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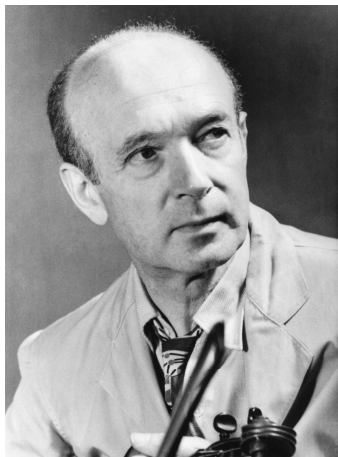
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