

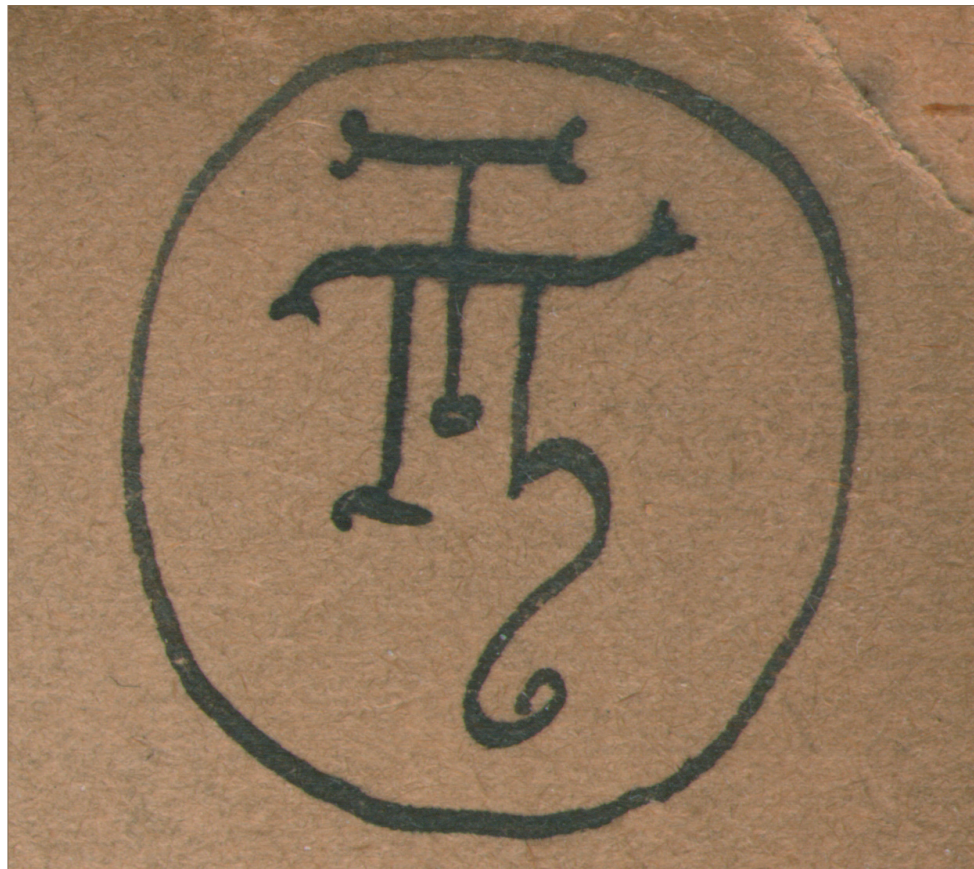
WARLOCK

Choral Music

The full heart • Corpus Christi • Bethlehem Down

Rachel Haworth, Organ

The Carice Singers • George Parris



Peter WARLOCK (1894-1930)

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--------------|-----------|---|-------------|
| 1 | The full heart (1921) (Text: Robert Nichols (1893-1944)) | 4:47 | 14 | Benedicamus Domino (1918) (Text from Sloane MS 2593 (Temp. Henry VI)) | 1:16 |
| 2 | Ha'nacker Mill (1927)* (Text: Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)) | 2:12 | 15 | Adam lay ybounden (1922) (Text: Anon., early 15th century) | 1:03 |
| 3 | The night (1927)* (Text: Hilaire Belloc) | 2:05 | | Three carols | 5:46 |
| 4 | My own country (1927) (Text: Hilaire Belloc)* | 1:54 | 16 | Tyrley tyrLOW (1922) (Text: Anon., early 16th century) | 1:58 |
| 5 | The spring of the year (1925) (Text: Allan Cunningham (1784-1842)) | 2:26 | 17 | Balulalow (1919) (Text: Martin Luther (1483-1546), trans. brothers Wedderburn, 1567) | 2:11 |
| | Three dirges of John Webster | 12:32 | 18 | The sycamore tree (1923) (Text: Traditional) | 1:37 |
| 6 | All the flowers of the spring (1923) (Text: John Webster (1580-1634), from The devil's law case) | 5:32 | 19 | I saw a fair maiden (1927) (Text: Anon., medieval) | 4:56 |
| 7 | Call for the robin redbreast and the wren (1925) (Text: John Webster, from The white devil) | 2:09 | 20 | Carillon carilla (1929) (Text: Hilaire Belloc) | 4:35 |
| 8 | The shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi (1925) (Text: John Webster, from The Duchess of Malfi) | 4:51 | 21 | Kanow Kernow I: Benneth Nadelik ha'n Bledhan Nowedh (A blessing for Christmas and the New Year) (1918) | 1:12 |
| 9 | As dew in Aprylle (1918) (Text: Anon., 15th century) | 1:37 | 22 | Where riches is everlastingly (1927) (Text: Anon., early 16th century) | 2:44 |
| 10 | The five lesser joys of Mary (1929) (Text: D. L. Kelleher (1883-1958)) | 3:13 | 23 | Bethlehem Down (1927) (Text: Bruce Blunt (1899-1957)) | 4:50 |
| 11 | The rich cavalcade (1929) (Text: Frank Kendon (1893-1959)) | 2:34 | 24 | What cheer? Good cheer! (1927) (Text: Anon., early 16th century) | 2:06 |
| 12 | The birds (1926) (Text: Hilaire Belloc)* | 1:36 | 25 | Kanow Kernow II: Kan Nadelik (A Cornish Christmas Carol) (1918) | 4:17 |
| 13 | Corpus Christi (1919) (Text: Anon.) | 4:28 | | * Arr. Fred Tomlinson | |

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

Choral Music

Robert Nichols, visiting Mr Heseltine's rooms in Christ Church College, Oxford in 1913, encountered – whether he wished it or not – the music of Frederick Delius. Philip Heseltine, who metamorphosed into Peter Warlock, declared it a "melody of chords", a description that fits his own and his choral output especially. The earliest examples of the genre would not appear for some years, after the first batch of solo songs, in fact. But they are remarkable for their assuredness and technical grasp. They fall clean and bright from the mould, proclaiming themselves Warlock's natural medium.

Bethlehem Down 23 (1927) has words by his friend Bruce Blunt, a minor poet for whose verse Warlock shows great sympathy. (*The fox* and *The frostbound wood* are but two other, significant collaborations.) Warlock's music for *Bethlehem Down* is a consummate example, complementing the contrasts that occur within a single poem. With remarkably little alteration he suggests the security of a maternal embrace or the fatal instability of the future. Such sensitivities apart, it was rapidly concocted and funded what Blunt called "an immortal carouse" – beer at Christmas!

The full heart (1921) 1, despite its dedication "To the immortal memory of the Prince of Venosa", is not especially Gesualdo-like: deliciously dissonant chords might recall those of the earlier composer but derive equally from Delius. One of only two extant settings of words by Warlock's University friend, an exponent of the "Imagist" school, it was some five years in gestation, unusual for a composer who frequently wrote at speed. Nichols's friendship was one of the few that endured; most people fell out with Peter Warlock sooner or later.

Of five settings of Hilaire Belloc, four were songs for solo voice, given here in arrangements by Fred Tomlinson. *Ha'nacker Mill* 2, *The night* 3 and *My own country* 4, conceived as a set, are from 1927. Their words contemplate mortality passively but not despairingly and appealed to a composer erroneously accused – on the scantiest evidence – of specialising in hedonistic drinking songs.

The spring of the year (1925) 5, the "melody of chords" par excellence, proclaims similar sentiments but more optimistically. Parallel dissonances that open it are resolved in the final line, triumphant but ultimately calm, covertly Christian, rejoicing in a springtime death and Heavenly reunion.

Three dirges of John Webster, texts from plays by the metaphysical dramatist, were not written simultaneously. *All the flowers of the spring* 6 came first (1923), the others following two years later. Despite the time-lapse they function well as a unit, sharing components such as key-relationships and, notably, pedal-points, a favourite device. That of *All the flowers* is masterly, underpinning the onomatopœic evocation of "wind". *The shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* 8 for men's voices contains some of Warlock's most extreme harmonies and now does emulate Gesualdo; *Call for the robin redbreast and the wren* 7 (women's voices) employs false-relations to epitomise the macabre content.

Otherwise, *As dew in Aprylle* 9 has a naïveté befitting this hymn to the Virgin by atheist Warlock. Composed in 1918 it is one his earliest explorations of the genre; that it emerges from – apparently – nowhere, perfectly formed, is remarkable. The source for the words is usually given as *Early English lyrics*, an anthology of 1907 compiled by E K Chambers and F Sidgwick. Warlock employed it often: it provided texts for 15 pieces. But there are some differences of spelling: "style" and "Aprylle" in the song are consistently "stille" and "Aprille" in the book so there could have been another source. His reading was extensive and, as is becoming apparent, eclectic.

Warlock's association with Christmas derives from the popularity of, inter alia, *Bethlehem Down* and *Adam lay ybounden* 15. The latter, alongside *Tyrley tyrLOW* 16 and *The sycamore tree* 18, appeared in the *Oxford book of carols* (1928). But it was a season with which he would feel increasing disaffection and during which he relinquished his life. *The five lesser joys of Mary* 10 and *The rich cavalcade* 11 (both 1929) are amongst his last

works: in the first he attaches some curious harmonies to a not particularly memorable melody; the second, too, is at odds with a style that was evolving more successfully in his solo songs and – ever a severe critic of his own work – he was unhappy with it.

The birds 12 and *Carillon carilla* 20 set Belloc again. The former (originally 1926) paraphrases a tale from the Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, the closest Warlock gets to biblical narrative; the latter would be his last choral Christmas piece (1930) and its lethargy says much about his feelings towards the time of year. Belloc's contentious text inspires what Warlock wryly called his "anti-semitic chords" – in an earlier song, *Mr Belloc's fancy*, he happily set Squire's words, mocking Belloc's prejudice.

The freshness of *Benedicamus Domino* 14 is appealing, though; the late mediæval Latin verses are a joyous, corporate celebration of the Virgin Birth. Another early excursion (1918), it begins with an exposed incantation taken up in later verses. It rarely moves beyond virginal C major (albeit with a pentatonic bias) thereby proclaiming a simplicity appropriate to the unquestioning statement of faith at the core of the text: "Glory, Praise, God is made both man and immortal". (But note the provocatively ironic allocation of "Sine viri semine" to the basses!)

Adam lay ybounden (1922) is deceptively straightforward. Any banality is allayed as references to the apple, instrument of mankind's fall, are marked by niggling chords or melodic contradictions. Contemporary with it are the *Three carols*, dedicated to Ralph Vaughan Williams who, directing the London Bach Choir, gave their first performance (with orchestral accompaniment) in 1923. Only *The sycamore tree* was newly written, the other two items being reconstituted from earlier formats. *Balulalow* 17 (initially from 1919) begins with harmonic anomalies, more false-relations that reappear in a later lullaby, *Cradle song*, for solo voice. Is this an early manifestation of Warlock's Christmastide discomfort? Or did he just not like children? He certainly had a poor relationship with his own son. *Tyrley tyrlow* (1922) has jaunty syncopations, a more jolly affair altogether. Of the set, Vaughan Williams wrote enthusiastically to the composer that the choir had "never moved so fast before!"

I saw a fair maiden 19 was written about the same time as *Bethlehem Down* although its mood is lighter. It is just about the least chromatic of all Warlock's pieces; this simple purity, along with the composer's request that it be "Very slow and quiet" results in another poignant song in praise of Mary. The bass pedal that moderates the opening bars establishes the atmosphere for the whole piece such that even the resolute last verse is measured and, its opening dissonances apart, restrained.

Corpus Christi 18 (1919) is one of only a few of his pieces with which Warlock expressed satisfaction. Two voices emerge from the chorus to represent wounded knight and sorrowing maid, allegories of the crucified Christ and His Mother, perhaps, although there are several textual variants. The bulk of the choir mostly sings wordless figures to contextualise these two characters making the climactic "And in that bed..." the stronger (and the version for string quartet and duet of 1927 less effective). The sacred and profane are never far apart: the final cry is tortured or ecstatic.

Warlock's knowledge of Celtic languages began with his mother's remarriage and resultant move to Montgomeryshire. He learned Welsh when English was the language of the squirearchy. Then came Irish Gaelic during his Hibernian sojourn (1917-18) while his notebooks additionally compare Breton, Manx, Cornish and Scots Gaelic vocabulary and declensions. Here is a more committed, intellectual involvement than that of the refugees of the "Celtic twilight". Both Cornish carols (*Kanow Kernow*) were written in 1918 and the text of *Kan Nadelik* (A Cornish Christmas Carol) 25 underwent changes before publication including the addition of Reed's translation, now the standard vehicle of performance (although Warlock was ambivalent about it). However *Benneth Nadelik ha'n Bledhan Nowedh* (A blessing for Christmas and the New Year) 21 is here recorded in the language proper to it for the first time.

There is a footnote to all of this. Warlock would arrange *Bethlehem Down* for baritone and organ, the topmost line of the original becoming a melody from which new but bitter, cynical chords were hung. It was his last work; within a month he was dead, quite possibly by his own hand.

Brian Collins

Rachel Haworth

Rachel Haworth was born in Bacup, Lancashire, and began learning the organ at the age of ten, continuing her studies in 2009 with Simon Mercer at the Junior Department of the Royal Northern College of Music. Here she also studied piano with the concert pianist Marta Karbownicka and was the accompanist for the JRNCM Vocal Ensemble. She was organist of St Nicholas Church, Newchurch, from 2004 to 2012 and now plays regularly in churches all over the north west. In the summer of 2011 she performed as a soloist at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and has also featured in recitals at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Bolton Parish Church and St Philip's Church, Salford. She is Senior Organ Scholar at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.

The Carice Singers



Named after the daughter of Sir Edward Elgar, The Carice Singers aim to bring a fresh and creative approach to choral music of the Romantic era. The choir was founded in 2011 by George Parris, and consists of some of the United Kingdom's finest young singers, drawn from various universities and conservatoires. While in demand across the country, the choir maintains a tradition of performing in rural areas, and has given concerts in some of the Cotswolds' most picturesque churches. This recording for Naxos was made in September 2013 following a critically acclaimed concert of his music. The choir is looking forward to touring the Republic of Ireland in August 2014, and making further recordings of the works of British composers including John Ireland and Gustav Holst.

Soprano

Lottie Bowden
Emily Burnett
Emily Hall
Angela Hicks
Livy Lewis
Elspeth Piggott

Alto

Helena Cooke
Natasha Cutler
Lucy Curzon
Rosalind Isaacs
Rosie Parker

Tenor

Sam Clarke
Thomas Drew
William Searle
Toby Ward

Bass

Quintin Beer
Jonathan Pacey
Hugo Poplewell
Christopher Webb

George Parris



George Parris is a graduate of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he was a choral scholar and Associate Student Conductor. His main scholarly interest is in British music from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on Elgar. In 2011 he was awarded the Elgar Society's Certificate of Merit for initiating an Elgar Festival at his school, St Edward's Oxford. In the same year he founded the Carice Singers, and conducted his first concert at St James's Church, Chipping Campden. While at Cambridge he planned and directed a number of concerts as President of the college Music Society and was Artistic Director of the Sidney Sussex Arts Festival 2013. In January 2014 he conducted Cambridge instrumentalists in Wagner's *Tristan Prelude* and Elgar's *Symphony No. 1* at the West Road Concert Hall.

A note about the cover image

This is a detail from the front cover of Warlock's own copy of the score of Arnold Schoenberg's *Second String Quartet*. This now fragile document is in the possession of Brian Collins, Warlock's musicographer and a vice president of The Peter Warlock Society. It depicts a monogram in the top right-hand corner of the score, a device that employs the alphabet of the magi. This is not, as has been previously claimed, the letters PW or PH in that alphabet, but more likely has some talismanic or occult meaning. Warlock's "religious" pieces are never liturgical; they allude rather than make direct statements, *Corpus Christi* being the supreme example, so are "occult" in that their meanings are "hidden".

Although he remains best remembered for his solo songs, for the song cycle *The Curlew*, and for his evergreen suite *Capriol*, Peter Warlock's choral works sit firmly in the great English lineage. The music ranges from Hymns to the Virgin to carols, many spiced with his own 'melody of chords' and his typically tangy harmonies. Some of Warlock's most beautiful and sensitive settings are to be heard, not least *Corpus Christi* and *Bethlehem Down*, whilst there is also a very rare setting in Cornish (track 21), recorded for the first time in that language.

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| | | 25 A Cornish Christmas Carol (1918) | 4:17 |

Soprano soloists: Elspeth Piggott **1**; Emily Hall **6**; Livy Lewis **16**; Lottie Bowden **17**;
Angela Hicks **20** • Alto soloist: Natasha Cutler **13**; Tenor soloist: Thomas Drew **13**

Rachel Haworth, Organ **10 15-18 20 22 24**

The Carice Singers • George Parris

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of the score of Arnold Schoenberg's Second String Quartet*