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NEWSLETTER

“Oliver Cromwell”: CD here at last!

Rutland Boughton’s **Symphony No 1 – “Oliver Cromwell”** is now available for the world to hear! The CD, which has just been issued on the Dutton Epoch label (CDLX7185, www.duttonvocalion.co.uk) was made possible through the sponsorship of the Boughton Trust, with financial assistance from the **Oliver Cromwell Association** and private donations. It features the **BBC Concert Orchestra**, conducted by our President, **Dr Vernon Handley**, and **Roderick Williams**, baritone.



At the BBC recording sessions, from left to right, Roderick Williams, Paul Adrian Rooke, Vernon Handley and Lewis Foreman (Photo: Ian Boughton).

This recording, however, wouldn’t have been feasible were it not for our Music Adviser, Paul Adrian Rooke. Having first read the score from the Trust archives, Paul resurrected “Oliver Cromwell” on his Sibelius software, re-establishing the “missing” third movement (March of the Puritans) from the orchestral parts (Boughton had torn out the movement from the full score in fury in having had it scorned by his former tutor Stanford when it was presented to him for performance at the RCM around 1907). Paul proceeded to



conduct his own Hitchin Symphony Orchestra in a highly successful world première performance. That was in November 2005 and Ian Boughton was the baritone soloist on that occasion. The audience who came that night were invited to give feedback on what they thought of the symphony. Here are a few of their comments.

"...it was enjoyable listening and fully held my attention throughout. It was easy to understand...and I find it surprising it has not been performed before.."

"Definitely deserves a wider hearing"

"I enjoyed it – particularly the 2nd and 4th movements"

"A revelation. Highly original, with some lovely moments. I particularly enjoyed the fugato theme in the last movement....It was worth the 200 mile trip!"

"Very well written and orchestrated, it is a work of great interest...the setting of the prayer is very fine and very moving and undoubtedly the highlight for me of the work"

"Judging by what was heard in Hitchin....the work has rich textures, the scoring includes triple winds, usual brass with a third trumpet and a reasonable percussion force.....it was right to give it an airing now.....Paul Adrian Rooke imbued the performance with colourful detail, took finely judged tempi and conducted with a solid grasp of the work's architecture"

"This should be available to everyone"

Instrumental behind the CD was Lewis Foreman who was undertaking a series of recordings for Dutton of British symphonies with BBC forces. The companion on the disc is the little known Symphony No 3 by Edgar Bainton, Boughton's friend and co-student at the RCM and whose opera *Oithona*, incidentally, made its first appearance at the Glastonbury Festivals in 1915.



Ian Boughton and Paul Adrian Rooke with "Oliver Cromwell" at the world première performance, Hitchin, November 2005 (Photo: Howard Etherington)



Rutland Boughton was born and educated in Aylesbury. During the English Civil War the town was stoutly pro-Parliamentarian and according to local sources, Patriot John Hampden, who, having survived the Battle of Aylesbury on 1 November 1642 - following an attack made by Prince Rupert - marched down Buckingham Road where Rutland's father, William Boughton, established his grocery stores some 200 years later. A statue in Hampden's memory stands proudly in the Market Square. Although Boughton was probably impressed by the statue, it was the reading of "Oliver Cromwell" by Thomas Carlyle that actually inspired him to write his symphony in his desire to find a national hero - something he later found in King Arthur at Glastonbury. Ironically, it was also at Glastonbury that Boughton revived with success the masque "Cupid and Death", a work from the seventeenth century by James Shirley set to music by Matthew Locke and Christopher Gibbons. It was written for performance at a school in 1653 during the Puritan Protectorate of Cromwell and until Glastonbury, that piece had not been performed beyond the restoration of the Monarchy.

To help promote the CD, the **Cromwell Association**, with support from Cambridgeshire County Council, will be running an exhibition at the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon from **8 May to 29 July 2007**. Further exhibitions are planned in Ely and Aylesbury. For details, visit www.olivercromwell.co.uk or cromwellmuseum@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

On "Oliver Cromwell" – taken from the CD notes by Paul Adrian Rooke

Intended as a character portrait, the symphony had a chequered early history, with three possible but aborted attempts at performances in Liverpool, at the RCM and by the London Symphony Orchestra. Thereafter, apart from having some of its material recycled in the opera *Alkestis*, the music was mothballed for 100 years.

The symphony has four movements, each with an outline programme: 1. A character study; 2. Cromwell's letter to his wife, after the Battle of Dunbar; 3. March of the Puritans; 4. Death scene. Boughton wrote, however, that "no actual events are depicted in the music". The first movement is a sonata-allegro,

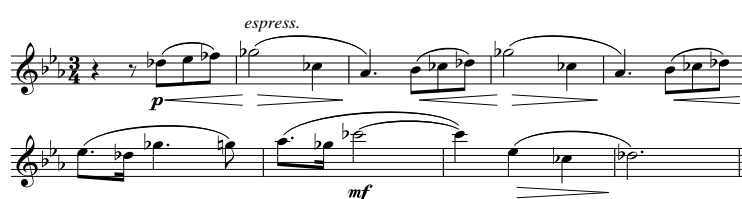


opening immediately with the most salient theme of the work, a kind of Cromwell motto theme.



© Rutland Boughton Music Trust

The second subject (cor anglais) is accompanied by a transformation of this theme. The climactic end of the Exposition leads to a sparser Development, soon working to a *maestoso* Recapitulation of the first subject. The second subject (now oboe) leads to a serene passage, launching towards a heroic conclusion. The second movement has a short introduction (four flutes and violas) and then a lyrical section ending with three trombones and tuba. This leads to a return of the Cromwell theme. The following climax and a reprise of the opening give way to a duet for violin and 'cello soloists, flutes, a hushed reference to the Cromwell theme and an epilogue for muted brass. The third movement soon settles into a broad tempo and proceeds with ample sweep. Its climax gives way to an ominous passage but the end hastens with trills and tremolos and a final repetition of the main theme. The last movement is unique. Quick and slow sections alternate and lead into a fugato section – and the Cromwell theme – after which a heart-easing melody (clarinet) is heard.



© The Rutland Boughton Music Trust

A majestic climax leads to a return of the fugato – and then stillness. Re-ascent, another brief climax and much agitation, then a setting of Cromwell's last prayer:

Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in Covenant with Thee through grace. And I may, I will come to Thee for Thy People. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death; Lord, however Thou do dispose of



me, continue and go on to do some good for them. Give them consistency of judgement, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation; and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments, to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. Even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us [me] a good night, if it be Thy pleasure.

The baritone soloist enters quietly and soon assumes the clarinet melody. The fugato returns (*Thou hast made me*) – and the Cromwell theme – and is followed by a very fine passage built on the heart-easing melody. A climax of great dignity is capped by the Cromwell theme in octaves. The music subsides, the voice re-enters, the fugato returns and the Cromwell theme is transformed into a serene phrase for flute. The music winds to a close of great spiritual calm. © **Paul Adrian Rooke**

Throughout his life, Boughton was seemingly more focused on his operas than any of his other works and even when he conducted his 3rd symphony for the first time in 1939 (see article below), he did not feel moved to promote it. That symphony had to wait until 1983 to be properly realised. Or consider the trumpet concerto that laid idle for 70 years before it was played for the first time; or the string concerto, 90 years before its première!! But when you consider he wrote his “Oliver Cromwell” symphony some 3 years before Elgar had completed his 1st symphony, one wonders what impact it would have had on Boughton’s life had it been accepted for performance. That was nearly 100 years ago.....!!!



Ian Boughton with Roderick Williams and Vernon Handley



Sound the trumpet!!!

On 27 February 2007, Brian Boughton, the youngest son of Rutland Boughton, reached a new milestone and celebrated his 80th year with over 30 members of his family and friends at a retreat in Gloucestershire. Some months earlier, Brian had spent a warm summer's day with English composer, Sir Malcolm Arnold CBE, at his home in Attleborough to reminisce by-gone music days and to compare notes about their passion for the trumpet. Sir Malcolm would have celebrated his 85th year last October and, had he lived to see the day, would have heard the trumpet he used to play but had passed to Brian for repair following years of neglect. It was not to be! Within weeks Sir Malcolm died. Brian was probably his last visitor.



About to cut the cake - Brian with children Diana and Ian

The common link between Sir Malcolm and Brian was brass teacher Ernest Hall who taught them both trumpet at the Royal College of Music. Although the former had a successful career as a performer and in composition, Brian went on to work as a technical craftsman, first at Boosey & Hawkes Ltd and ending at Vauxhall Motors. After leaving the RCM, it was Brian's wish to attend the Royal Navy School of Music in Portsmouth (the former Royal Marines). However, his father – Rutland – denied him that opportunity for reasons that remain unclear. However, he spent a number of "suitcase" years in the pit at the Carl Rosa Opera Company and served his National Service in the Gloucester Regiment, where, from 1946 until 1948, he served in the West Indies. In a recent conversation, his son, Ian, learnt more about Brian's memories.



Brian spent his early years with brother Rutland Sherman (fondly known as Peter) and sister, Jennifer, in a rural setting at Kilcot on the Herefordshire/Gloucestershire border to which the Boughton family moved immediately following the demise of the Glastonbury Festival School. Brian remembers a quotation in *The Independent* that said his father was a "Victorian radical", a statement that is supported by the strict up-bringing imposed on the children and their caring mother Kathleen (the composer's third wife) from 1927. For the children, there was no lying in bed early morning; chores always needed to be done and the animals – goats and chickens – needed constant feeding!

The small holding at Kilcot, especially during the 1940-45 war, was an essential source of income as there was very little generated through any of Rutland's music. His popularity, by then, had fallen into decline and the family had to rely on local resources and skills to maintain a livelihood. At a talk he gave to the St Anne's Women's Luncheon Club back in 1932 on "The Outlook on British Opera", Rutland discussed "goats" advising them that "my home in Gloucester is so far in the country that it is difficult to get an adequate supply of milk for the children, so we started to breed goats but we got so fond of them that we decided not to kill them" and then gave praise to the British Goat Society for all its efforts on behalf of the Kingdom. "I only write opera for living" he said "but I breed goats as a hobby". On reading that Press article, Brian wonders whether his father got it the right way round – breeding animals became the profession whilst composing became a part-time activity. He remembers in particular one goat – they called it "Aphrodite".



Brian as a toddler with Rutland and "Aphrodite" the goat

Brian remembers his father owning a hand-bell which he used to ring when his children were working in the fields to summon them



for meals. If they were late, there was a severe reprimand. Apparently, Rutland was strict about time and 12.30 meant 12.30 and not 12.32!!! Brian always aimed for 12.29....

Educated at Newent Grammar School, some three miles from the family home, Brian studied English, History, Geography, Music, French and Woodwork in classes of up to 33 children, some of whom have kept in touch with him to this day. He learnt to play the trumpet at the age of 8 with a private teacher in Gloucester and became proficient within 3 years. He was recommended for further study and attended at the RCM where he befriended the renowned trumpeter Philip Jones with whom he shared digs. However, Brian felt he learnt more about the instrument during his subsequent military band days than all the lessons taught at the RCM.



Brian L Boughton as the young musician (Photo: Unknown)

In later years, Brian would discuss with his father those composers that had left the most impression upon his life. From a wide list, Bach, Beethoven and Wagner featured highly, followed by Brahms, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Berlioz, Tchaikovsky and Dvorak. Rutland also admired the "light-music" composers - Eric Coates and Ronald Binge - who he felt could write strong melodies, but had less favourable views about the works of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, who produced - what he called - "ear-clanging discords" - and, surprisingly, the enterprises of Gilbert & Sullivan and the operas of Puccini and Verdi! Brian was aware that his father enjoyed watching and listening to "My Fair Lady" when he was in London and is of the opinion that he would have equally enjoyed the "Sound of Music" and "Les Misérables", much for their story-line as for the music.



During his life at Kilcot, Rutland was visited by many famous personalities – Bernard Shaw, Finzi, Boyd Neel, Frederick Woodhouse, Vaughan Williams, Alan Bush, Bernard Stevens and many more and Brian can recall meeting some of these. In 1959, Paul Robeson was on tour in nearby Stratford-upon-Avon and Adolph Borsdorf (an advocate supporter of Rutland) managed to persuade him to visit Kilcot to meet Rutland, along with LPO impresario Thomas Russell and members of the Boughton family. Robeson shared Rutland's politics and after his visit wrote to him to say how much he "enjoyed the day with you, your family and friends". Although in his letter, Robeson implied wanting to visit the Boughton's again during his tour to England in the following year, by then it was too late – Rutland died in January 1960.

In the pre-war years, extracts from "The Immortal Hour" were regular features at the London Promenade concerts but as a family they would always sit and listen to the broadcasts, particularly Monday evenings for performances of Wagner and on Fridays for Beethoven. Music meant a great deal to the family and in the absence of television, singing or playing an instrument with Rutland at the piano was very common, especially after meal times. And if the wireless was switched on during meal times, no-one was permitted to utter a word! Brian recalls having to make strong hand-signals across the table in order to be served salt and pepper!

Brian's strongest memories were those of the year 1934, when Rutland's operas *Bethlehem* and *The Lily Maid* were produced at the Bath Pavilion as part of the festival that Rutland had established there, and in 1939 at the Kingsway Theatre in London. At the latter, he can remember meeting Vaughan Williams; Ernest Irving; Clarence Raybould; Boyd Neel; Frank Mullings and Emil and Adolph Borsdorf, all of whom had been invited to listen to a special programme of his father's music conducted by Rutland himself, which included the first performance of the Symphony No 3 in B minor. Rutland's deliberate act of refusing the Press access to the concert meant the symphony had to wait many years later to be heard by the public and, indeed, not until the early 1980s. It was probably around that time that Brian first met (Sir) Malcolm Arnold.

Brian also recollects the series of broadcasts and concerts to mark his father's own 80th year in 1958, including the full-scale productions of *Bethlehem* at Aylesbury and Glastonbury organised by the original Boughton Trust and conducted by the late Alan G Melville. By this time, Brian was married to Marilyn whom he had



met at a dance-party in Enfield some 6 years earlier and by whom their first child, Diana, was born. Almost fifty years later, Brian was brought back to his home county to share some happy memories with members of his family and friends. It was a pity that Sir Malcolm Arnold could not have shared the same experience.

Michael Hurd remembered



The Petersfield Musical Festival 2007 began this month with a concert in memory of Michael Hurd with performances of his own works by societies and groups with whom he had been associated, including some former members. The combined orchestras of the Petersfield Operatic and Hi-Lights Society opened up the evening with the "Overture to an Unwritten Comedy" that Hurd composed in 1970 – a work later recorded by ASV – and was followed by more familiar pieces in extracts of his "Hip, Hip, Horatio!", sung by the Petersfield Youth and Junior Choirs, and a Waltz from his "Ring around the Moon". The humour in Michael Hurd was brought out through a hilarious rendition of his "Songs from Mrs Beeton's Book" that he wrote and appeared in 1983 and his "A Parley of Owls", based on original texts, sung by the local chamber choir. There were also performances of his "Harlequin Suite" (1971) and two songs from the "Five Songs of Praise" (1999).

Michael Hurd was particularly remembered for conducting the operatic societies in works by G & S and seemingly he had conducted the entire output, the last one that he directed being *The Gondoliers* in 2004. The Festival also featured extracts from some of Michael's favourite light composers - Kern, Monkton, Johann Strauss and Irving Berlin. There was also a tribute to his long association with the two English composers on which he became an



authority and by whom he had completed two biographies - Ivor Gurney and Rutland Boughton. In the former, baritone John Barker sang *The Singer, Down by the Salley Gardens* and *Sleep* whilst the strings of the orchestras played Boughton's *Three Folk Dances* – pieces that Michael himself had conducted on a number of occasions.

Future events

Saturday 19 May 2007, 7.30pm.

St Luke's Church, West Norwood, SE27

Bax: *Tintagel*

Cliffe: Violin Concerto (Soloist: Philippe Graffin)

Boughton Symphony No 3 in B minor

Lambeth Symphony Orchestra.

Christopher Fifield, conductor

Details: Tel: 07812 984236

or visit www.lambeth-orchestra.org.uk

Sunday 15 July 2007

St John's Smith Square, London

Boughton Oboe Concerto No1 in C

(Soloist: Marissa Pueschel – former pupil of Sarah Francis at RCM)

Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra

Details: marissa.pueschel@spc.ox.ac.uk

The Rutland Boughton Music Trust was established in 1978 as a registered charity to encourage performances and more particularly sponsor recordings of Boughton's finest works. The Trust's financial resources depend mainly on royalties generated from performances and broadcasts and donations from third parties. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact the Trust at the following address:

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Tel: 01462 434318. Email: ianrboughton@aol.com.

www.rutlandboughtonmusictrust.org.uk

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