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Review Article

Wrong Notes, Cowpats, and Freak Fests

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Erica Siegel, *The Life and Music of Elizabeth Maconchy*. Music in Britain, 1600–2000. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2023. vii + 335 pp. ISBN 9781837650514 (hard cover); 9781787448285 (ebook).

Annika Forkert, *Elisabeth Lutyens and Edward Clark: The Orchestration of Progress in British Twentieth-Century Music*. Music in Context. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. ix + 241 pp. ISBN 9781009337359 (hard cover); 9781009337342 (ebook).

Karen Arrandale, *Edward J. Dent: A Life of Words and Music*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2023. vii + 543 pp. ISBN 9781783272051 (hard cover); 9781787448261 (ebook).

Byron Adams and Daniel M. Grimley, eds., *Vaughan Williams and His World*. The Bard Music Festival. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023. vii + 330 pp. ISBN 9780226830445 (hard cover); 9780226830452 (paperback); 9780226830469 (ebook).

Late in 1947 Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) wrote to Alan Frank, music editor at Oxford University Press. He asked Frank if he or his wife, the composer Phyllis Tate, could 'suggest any pieces of the *wrong note* school' as he wanted to use some of their compositional techniques.[1] Elisabeth Lutyens (1906–83), the British serial composer, appeared on his list of possible candidates alongside Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Roberto Gerhard. In the early 1950s, Lutyens, always wilfully controversial, distanced herself from the music of the previous generation of British composers, chief among them Vaughan Williams, acidly dismissing it as 'cow-pat music'. Decades earlier, in a letter to 'My Darling Betty', his beloved former student, Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–94), 'Uncle Ralph' had made a passing derogatory reference to a 'Freak Fest', his nickname for the annual festivals organized by the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM).[2] But, it was Vaughan Williams's close friend Edward

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[1] Ralph Vaughan Williams to Alan Frank, 3 December [1947], Vaughan Williams Letters (henceforth VWL) 4308. Vaughan Williams's Letters are available online at https://vaughanwilliamsfoundation.org/discover/letters/.

[2] Ralph Vaughan Williams to Elizabeth Maconchy, [23 September 1933], VWL1097.

Dent (1876–1957), a musicologist, who had helped to found the 'Freak Fest' in 1922. Both Dent and Edward Clark (1888–1962), a champion of modern European music and a BBC programmer during the institution's early days, went on to be president of the society. Throughout this period, works by Maconchy, Lutyens (Clark's wife) *and* Vaughan Williams were performed at ISCM festivals. The purpose of the preceding examples is not to highlight the aesthetic differences between the *dramatis personae* of the four volumes under discussion here – Vaughan Williams, Lutyens and Clark, Maconchy, and Dent – but rather to suggest some of the myriad ways their lives intertwined. These tangled webs of personal and professional relationships combined in different formations to produce overlapping musical networks. Together and individually these books provide rich insights into the British musical world during an important period in its development.

The life is central to these four studies. Each constitutes a different way to use lives in terms of both structure and intent. Before going on to explore a series of connections across these books, a brief explanation of how the individual lives figure in the studies along with an overview of the aims and scope of each is necessary. All follow in some way the arc of a life and provide granular accounts of human experience and action that shaped their musical work. Erica Siegel's *The Life and Music of Elizabeth Maconchy* and Karen Arrandale's *Edward J. Dent: A Life of Words and Music* are birth-to-death biographies. Annika Forkert's innovative study of a musical couple, *Elisabeth Lutyens and Edward Clark: The Orchestration of Progress in British Twentieth-Century Music* uses their lives in carefully specific ways to inform her musico-analytical discussions. Finally, in a collected edition, *Vaughan Williams and His World*, edited by Byron Adams and Daniel M. Grimley, thirteen discrete chapters examine his development as a composer and the social, political, intellectual, and cultural contexts that shaped his music from his early years at Cambridge to the reception of his ninth symphony premiered weeks before his death in 1958.

Siegel's account of Elizabeth Maconchy's life and music draws upon what she calls a fragmentary archive: appointment diaries, transcripts of interviews and lectures, correspondence with her long-standing close friend and fellow composer Grace Williams, and her fractious correspondence with the BBC (pp. 2–3). Nevertheless, Siegel's study contributes to the ongoing project of rescuing Maconchy's music and reputation from neglect by offering a picture of her as a private, modest person of considerable integrity and determination.[3] Siegel highlights the problem of isolation caused by tuberculosis, which forced Maconchy to spend much of her life away from London and thus impeded her career. The impact of illness on her professional life was immeasurably compounded by the responsibilities she had as wife and mother.

Given the limited archive, Siegel's account is inevitably skewed towards a discussion of Maconchy's music, its composition and reception. Maconchy's unassuming character, Siegel argues, belies the intensity, concision, and expressive power of her music. She was a musician's musician for whom the focus was always articulating music's 'impassioned argument' (p. 103). Siegel reminds us of the key moment when, given a choice by her teacher Vaughan Williams, Maconchy chose Bartók over Purcell. Vaughan Williams's influence is felt in her embrace of octatonicism and the motive – the 'germ of an idea' (p. 96) which combined to form the foundation of her musical language and resulted in a remarkable body of work: thirteen string quartets, many large-scale orchestral works, operas, and ensemble music. Siegel presents a

[3] Siegel is building on the work of scholars including Jennifer Doctor, Sophie Fuller, Rhiannon Mathias, Christa Brüstle, and Danielle Sofer. See Rhiannon Mathias, *Lutyens, Maconchy, Williams and Twentieth-Century British Music: A Blest Trio of Sirens* (Ashgate, 2012); Jenny Doctor and Sophie Fuller (eds.), *Music, Life, and Changing Times: Selected Correspondence between British Composers Elizabeth Maconchy and Grace Williams, 1927–77* (Routledge, 2020). Christa Brüstle and Danielle Sofer (eds.), *Elizabeth Maconchy: Music as Impassioned Argument* (Studien zur Wertungsforschung, 2018).

picture of Maconchy as uncompromising. At a time when women were still expected to write parlour songs, and when chamber music was falling out of favour because it was seen as too closely associated with continental modernism, she established herself as a modernist composer producing her first string quartet in 1933 and her final and thirteenth in 1985. Siegel also gives a detailed account of Maconchy's difficult interactions with the BBC: the myriad challenges, disappointments, injustices, and miscommunications, tempered by the occasional success. Of particular note also is Siegel's forensic analysis of the critical reception of Maconchy's work in the musical press, shot through, as it was, with insouciant sexism and relentless misogyny.

Karen Arrandale's challenge was very different from that which confronted Siegel. Her biography of the music scholar Edward J. Dent draws upon a prodigious archive. Both in length and scope Arrandale's book resembles a literary biography. She has carefully fashioned the abundant information at her disposal into an account of Dent's 'elusive, multilayered life' in finely wrought detail (p. 155). The biography of a music scholar is unusual, but, as Arrandale shows, in Dent's case it is essential for an understanding of the music scene, both nationally and internationally, as it developed in the first half of the twentieth century. His life was frenetic and peripatetic; he was constantly on the move, both at home and abroad, attending a series of cascading events, concerts, lectures, festivals, meetings, and congresses. Dent was 'a bundle of contradictions' (p. 516), capable of acts of generosity and kindness but also, as Arrandale recognizes, of being 'subversive and serpentine' (p. 1). She sees musicology and homosexuality as the 'two defining characteristics of Dent's life and persona', both of which 'stamped him from the outset as an outsider' (p. 2). At the same time, his public face was shaped by privilege of 'birth and upbringing'. This 'outsider-insider paradox', she argues, was 'at the heart of everything Dent did' (p. 155). It 'forced him to improvise constantly in order to find a way forward without compromising either his musical ideals or his true self' (p. 2). Dent grew up with the spectre of the trial of Oscar Wilde hanging over his head and fear of exposure was never far away. Arguably the need to always tread carefully helped to hone his diplomatic skills. He was known as 'an operator' whose 'genius was as a facilitator' (p. 1), which he used to remarkable effect in the world of cultural internationalism.

Dent came from a respectable upper-middle-class family in Yorkshire, wealthy enough to afford an education at Eton then Cambridge. Music was not seen as a profession for a gentleman; his family regarded it as 'utterly unthinkable' (p. 12). Nevertheless, Dent completed a Bachelor of Music at Cambridge, later becoming King's College's first Fellow of Music, and a professor between 1926 and 1941. Composition did not come naturally to him, and the 'failed composer' became instead a pioneering music scholar. He worked tirelessly to develop music at Cambridge and to have it accepted as part of the Tripos. For Arrandale, Dent's middle-class background gave him an 'impossible, inimitable combination of arrogance, charm and ruthlessness', which combined with a 'formidable intellect' produced an extraordinary and varied career (p. 5). Arrandale sees Dent as 'a new kind of academic musician' (p. 368) with 'a remarkable set of skills': linguist, historian, musician, director, writer, and critical listener. He gained 'extensive experience' of connecting performance with scholarship, and he penned 'cutting-edge publications on a wide range of musical subjects' including biographies of Scarlatti and his close friend, Ferruccio Busoni. After staging the *Magic Flute* at Cambridge, 'opera became the focus and unifying element of Dent's life' as both an organizer and a scholar (p. 177). Later, through his work with Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic, he played a pivotal role in the establishment of the English National Opera, Royal Opera House, and the National Theatre. Although he lived most of his life in the twentieth century, Dent 'described himself as a "late Victorian"' and, notwithstanding his sexuality, espoused many of the political and moral values of that era.

Forkert was faced with a different set of challenges with her decision to write about a musical couple, one that involved two complicated individuals and their difficult and complex relationship. Forkert was intrigued particularly at the prospect of 'how one would write the biography of any man less well known than his wife or female partner' (p. xv). Lutyens was a major British composer, whereas Edward Clark was by any measure a deeply flawed individual who was neither composer nor performer, whose conducting career never flourished due in part to insufficient technical training, and whose professional life was marred by mishap and disappointment. Yet Clark had a deep knowledge of European modernist music with many connections to the European scene (including close friendships with Stravinsky, his one-time teacher Schoenberg, and Webern among many others). Moreover his contribution to modern music in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s as what Forkert terms a 'programme-building conductor' was remarkable. Lutyens saw Clark as her 'single most important influence'; he was her 'aesthetic yardstick' (pp. 14, 31). She 'harnessed' Clark 'into various supporting roles': 'muse, conductor, translator, or appreciative critic' (p. 15). As Forkert shows, he was described variously as 'Janus-faced', 'glittering but elusive', 'mercurial'; he was emotionally incapable of an intimate relationship, but his close friends adored him (pp. 12, 192). And his position had long-term effects on Lutyens's career and compositional persona, both positive and negative.

Furthermore, Forkert has had to contend with Lutyens's autobiography.[4] A carefully crafted piece of self-fashioning, *The Goldfish Bowl* was intended to present Lutyens's 'version of herself',[5] alongside a portrayal of Clark that highlighted, as Forkert explains, his 'innovations around modern music and modern composers, and his considerable, but as [Lutyens] claimed, completely neglected, influence on the development of music in Britain' (p. 192). It is an account comprising anecdotes and memories that forge an origin myth of the neglected modernist hero/ine: the unconventional, anti-Establishment outsider (p. 2). As Meirion and Susie Harries have noted previously, Lutyens's 'life ran on indignation and defiance'.[6] She was a woman and a serialist. Unlike her peers at RCM, Maconchy and Williams, she did not study with Vaughan Williams but was relegated to Harold Darke (who she came to respect deeply). Clark, unlike Dent and Vaughan Williams, was not Cambridge-educated nor part of the 'intellectual gentry' (in fact he had no formal academic qualifications and his training as a conductor was incomplete) but was rather a northerner from Newcastle. Lutyens and Clark shared a propensity to alienate others and prided themselves on their uncompromising aesthetic positions (pp. xv–xvi).

For Forkert their personalities 'loom so large' as to obscure their musical work. She seeks to cut through what she sees as 'biographical residue' to contextualize Lutyens and Clark's 'multi-faceted work in music in broader terms, that is, historically, music-analytically, and culturally' (p. 2). This book is Forkert's self-described attempt 'to trace their orchestration of progress in music of their time, from composing and conducting to programming, teaching and mentoring, organising, and of course listening'. Forkert is clear that analysis of the music 'take[s] precedence over biography', but having said that she deftly brings 'the human actors back on stage'.[7] She constructs an elegant and effective framework based on three concepts: influence, network,

[4] Elisabeth Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl* (Cassell, 1972).
[5] Meirion Harries and Susie Harries, *A Pilgrim Soul: The Life and Work of Elisabeth Lutyens* (Michael Joseph, 1989), p. 2.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma, *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (Routledge, 2017), p. 3.

and craft. Describing her theoretical scaffolding as a 'kind of bricolage', Forkert draws upon and extends the work of, variously, Harold Bloom and Joseph N. Straus (the anxiety of influence), Mark Granovetter (strong and weak ties) combined with Howard E. Gruber's 'network of enterprise', and Richard Sennet's elucidation of the idea of craft.[8] This eclecticism opens the way for a sophisticated discussion of Lutyens's music with an important contribution to an understanding of her film music and of Lutyens and Clark 'as modernists, craftspeople, collaborators, administrators, as a composer and a conductor and their complex roles in British music of their time' (p. 12).

Ostensibly, Adams and Grimley's collected edition, *Vaughan Williams and His World*, stands apart from the other three monographs under consideration here. However, the title and the organization of the book implies an overarching sense of the life of a single composer in much the same way. Having said that, it is also an example of what Jolanta Pekacz has described as one of musicology's 'more flexible formats' wherein history and biography are brought into conversation with creative practice.[9] The collection is part of an ongoing project advocating expanded approaches to understanding Vaughan Williams and his music. The contributors here are working within a revisionist context: an attempt to liberate Vaughan Williams from a 'restricted' understanding of him through an essentialized notion of 'Englishness' (upheld by both supporters and detractors).[10] In his chapter, Leon Botstein considers how, from the final decade of his life, Vaughan Williams's reputation and legacy have been affected negatively by a close proximity to the 'national' and an 'insular' nostalgia (p. 275). Indeed, some of the issues around the telling of Vaughan Williams's life resonate with Jolanta Pekacz's insight about the 'extent to which biography is a site of struggle over the control of cultural memory'.[11]

In keeping with the remit of the series, the volume incorporates different kinds of primary material – such as correspondence, Vaughan Williams's own writings, and early reviews of his Ninth Symphony. The volume takes us from Vaughan Williams's time at Cambridge and RCM as a student and then teacher (chapters by Julian Rushton and Erica Siegel); his thinking on the relationship between sound and notation and his enduring love affair with Bach's St Matthew Passion (Ceri Owen, Eric Saylor); considerations of key works (Philip Rupprecht, O. W. Neighbour and Alain Frogley); a reconsideration of his film music (Forkert); his travels to the United States over three decades and the changes in his attitudes towards nationalism and internationalism over this period (Adams); his politically inflected attitudes to the land (Collins and Grimley); and his deep humanism and key personal influences in the development

[8] See particularly, Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 1973); Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Harvard University Press, 1990); Mark S. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 78.6 (1973), pp. 1360–80; Howard E. Gruber, 'The Evolving Systems Approach to Creative Work', in *Creative People at Work: Twelve Cognitive Case Studies*, ed. by Doris B. Wallace and Howard E. Gruber (Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 3–24; Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (Allen Lane, 2008).

[9] Jolanta T. Pekacz (ed.), *Musical Biography: Towards New Paradigms* (Ashgate, 2006), p. 7.

[10] Examples of earlier efforts include Lewis Foreman (ed.), *Ralph Vaughan Williams in Perspective* (Albion Music, 1998); Alain Frogley (ed.), *Vaughan Williams Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1–22; Alain Frogley and Aidan J. Thomson (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); Julian Onderdonck and Ceri Owen (eds.), *Vaughan Williams in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2024); Eric Saylor, *English Pastoral Music: From Arcadia to Utopia, 1900–1955* (University of Illinois Press, 2017).

[11] Jolanta Pekacz, 'Memory, History and Meaning: Musical Biography and its Discontents', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 23 (2004), pp. 39–80 (p. 60).

of an aesthetic outlook (Botstein). These chapters collectively produce a vivid, multi-layered picture of Vaughan Williams. As a late Victorian, his values were shaped by radical liberalism, and he used his privilege to pursue an agenda of 'civic idealism' characterized by a strong sense of duty as a British composer to the people around an idea of 'musical citizenship' and a 'life-long commitment to social cohesion and belief in the importance of spiritual aspiration' (Neighbour, p. 245). Although conflicted in the area of religion, he held an unwavering belief in music's innate goodness and beauty and its importance for humanity.

Using the Life, 'Fertile Facts', and Connections

Taken together, these four studies raise questions about the use of biography and the relation of the life to the musical work. Musicology developed within a nineteenth-century context that had experienced, on the one hand, the emergence of the idea of the Great Composer, a genius (a hero à la Thomas Carlyle with the attendant vulnerability of hagiography), and, on the other, an aesthetic that insisted on music's autonomy. The relationship of the life to the work is still marked by these 'contradictory impulses'.[12] The two-section life and works model emerged as a way to pay homage to the Great Composer but keep the musical oeuvre untouched: the life was separated from the music. As Christopher Wiley and Paul Watt, and Jolanta Pekacz before them, have observed, the life was a problematic object in musicology as it was in art and literary criticism – all disciplines which traditionally have had a creative work as their main object of study.[13] From the mid-twentieth century, efforts, such as Wimsatt and Beardsley's intentional fallacy and Roland Barthes's seminal essay, 'The Death of the Author', banished the author (or composer) from the analytical process.[14]

Subsequently, part of the intellectual agenda of the New Historicism and the New Musicology was to restore the creative work to its world and to the individuals that inhabited it. In his summative piece on Vaughan Williams's worldview, Botstein notes: 'The manner in which music history continues to be written and understood is tied to a tradition of biography in which a self-referential auto-poetic logic prevails […] Music is too often understood as a hermetically sealed cultural practice' (p. 279). In these volumes, however, the hermetic seal is broken: biography becomes the connecting tissue between the work and its historical context. A consideration of what some historians have identified as the 'biographical turn' is helpful here. Rather than a biography, they identify what they call a 'biographical approach' as an 'important academic innovation' that 'can operate as a critical method in humanities'.[15] Such a biographical approach is evident throughout Forkert's book and also used to great effect in the Vaughan Williams volume.

These volumes invite a different way to engender a deeper understanding of what Forkert has quite rightly identified as the 'richly complex field that was British music in the twentieth century' (p. xv). In his magisterial biographies of the philosophers Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Raymond Monk takes the opportunity to think deeply about the form and

[12] Ibid., p. 74. Pekacz notes the reliance many musicologists have on 'biographical data to support their contentions', while they remain sceptical of biography as a discrete genre (p. 41).

[13] For Pekacz on the life and works model, see ibid., p. 50. Christopher Wiley and Paul Watt, 'Musical Biography in the Musicological Arena', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 38 (2019), pp. 187–92.

[14] W. K. Wimsatt Jr and M. C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', *The Sewanee Review*, 54.3 (1946), pp. 468–88; Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Image Music Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (Hill & Wang, 1977), pp. 142–48.

[15] Renders, de Haan, and Harmsma, *The Biographical Turn*, p. 4.

purpose of biography itself. Taking up the question of whether biography can have a 'philosophical, theoretical foundation', he has instead argued that biography provides 'a crucially important example and model of what Ludwig Wittgenstein called "the kind of understanding that consists in seeing *connections*"'.[16] The genre of biography famously had already detained Virginia Woolf. At the end of her essay 'The Art of Biography', she isolated what she called the fertile or creative fact. The biographer, she told us, 'can give us the creative fact; the fertile fact; the fact that suggests and engenders'.[17] Here I am interested in the usefulness of these two ideas combined: the fertile connection, to explore key fertile connections across these four volumes.

Fertile Connection 1: Friendship

At the opening I made clear that the five individuals across these four volumes knew each other. Some friendships were close and vitally important; others were at the level of professional acquaintance. What also becomes clear is the importance of the idea of friendship for this group and its overlap with formal and informal musical networks. Forkert understands Clark's 'ideal musical world' as one where 'friendships and professional contacts were not just supposed to overlap; they were identical' (p. 144). Similarly, Dent based his professional work on intersecting circles of close personal friends, as Arrandale suggests, 'at the heart of everything he did were strong personal relationships which fostered personal loyalties and discretion' (p. 34). The Victorian gentlemen, Dent and Vaughan Williams, shared a similar familial and educational background, as well as many friends from Cambridge's and London's musical circles, and they had an enduring and close relationship. Vaughan Williams was one of Maconchy's vitally important friendships and his support for her drew upon many of his connections including Dent. At the same time, Dent and Clark also became close friends through their work with the ISCM. As we have seen, Lutyens's connections were more complicated. Apart from Clark, her collaborator and 'aesthetic yardstick', she tended to distance herself from her contemporaries. Despite their years together at the RCM, she was not close to Maconchy who, like Vaughan Williams, disdained her 'wrong note' music.

Maconchy relied on a small circle of important relationships. Siegel makes clear the central position of Vaughan Williams among these and reminds us that although he recognized that her non-tonal musical language would never make her popular at the BBC, he 'lobbied tirelessly' – if unsuccessfully – 'on her behalf' (p. 133). Other key friendships included Grace Williams and Ina Boyle, who she met during her student years at the RCM. Williams and Maconchy led relatively isolated lives, and both maintained their close connection through a lifelong correspondence.[18] Their letters reveal a supportive and encouraging bond that was of enormous importance to her self-belief as a composer.

Lutyens met Clark in late 1938 when she was already a married woman with three children. She was entranced by his persona as the highbrow modernist European-minded gentleman (replete with carnation in buttonhole).[19] As Forkert notes, she saw Clark's links to modernist

[16] Raymond Monk, 'Life without Theory: Biography as an Exemplar of Philosophical Understanding', *Poetics Today*, 28 (2007), pp. 527–70 (p. 528; italics added).
[17] Virginia Woolf, 'The Art of Biography (1939)', in *Biography in Theory*, ed. by Wilhelm Hemecker and Edward Saunders (Walter de Gruyter, 2017), pp. 129–30.
[18] See Doctor and Fuller, *Music, Life, and Changing Times.*
[19] Annika Forkert, '"Always a European": Edward Clark's Musical Work', *The Musical Times*, 159.1943 (2018), pp. 55–80.

European music as a conduit to a 'living tradition of the avant-garde' (p. 18). Their ensuing partnership was based on a shared purpose: to introduce new 'modern' music into Britain. Forkert argues compellingly that for Lutyens and Clark, 'alliances […] and friendships were the foundation of the larger structures of their professional lives and influenced working patterns as well as aesthetic preferences' (p. 21). As she has argued elsewhere, these kinds of modernist collaborations could be fragile.[20] Using Granovetter's idea of strong and weak ties, she demonstrates how weak ties can be more useful as they sidestep the challenges of strongly felt loyalty and argues persuasively that it was Clark's strong ties on many occasions that brought him grief, whereas Lutyens was more adept at gainfully utilizing weaker ones, especially after Clark's death in 1962.

Clark formed some of his most important relationships when in Europe during the first decade of the twentieth century. His time in Berlin from 1909 was formative. Here he decided to study conducting with Oskar Fried. Fried was an unusual choice – an autodidact focused on contemporary rather than mainstream repertoire, but most importantly he introduced the young Clark to the music of Schoenberg – an 'overwhelming revelation' (p. 7). Clark helped Schoenberg move to Berlin from Vienna, became his student and embedded himself in the circle surrounding the Second Viennese School. The extraordinary collection of letters Clark received during his lifetime, a veritable who's who of twentieth-century composers, attest to his deep immersion in this world.[21] During his time at the BBC, and then with his work with the ISCM, he developed a close British network comprising many among the younger generation including among others Denis ApIvor, Alan Bush, Christian Darnton, Alan Rawsthorne, and William Walton.

Forkert understands the ties that Lutyens established in her own right as 'weak', even transactional. Friendship, in certain respects, was challenging for her. On the one hand, she was terrified of being seen as Clark's immature female disciple (Forkert equates this fear to that shared by Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir), which reinforced her underlying isolationist inclinations. Unlike Maconchy, Lutyens did not foster a close supportive female network among musicians. In her stubborn determination to be the outsider, she eschewed the company of musicians for writers and poets. Apart from her dear friend Constant Lambert, she became part of tight-knit group that included Dylan Thomas, Stevie Smith, and Louis MacNeice. Because of Clark's inability to provide for the family financially, Lutyens turned to film music as a means of consistent income. During the 1950s and 1960s, she built important networks around key figures in the film industry such as Reggie Smith and Muir Mathieson. In the last years of her life, she turned to teaching. In this role she became in her own words 'a surrogate mother' to the 'close network of students' she gathered around her (pp. 217, 210).

As Arrandale shows comprehensively across her study of Dent, personal friendship was the basis of his modus operandi, and during his lifetime he amassed a 'vast network of friends and associates' (p. xi). This established him as the successful diplomat and mediator that steered some important musical organizations through their most challenging decades. He was fundamentally sociable, and most comfortable in a homosocial environment. His work was

[20] Annika Forkert, 'Collaborations, Networks, Failures, Weak Ties', *Modernism/modernity*, 6.2 (2021), <https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/collaborations-networks-failures-weak-ties> (accessed 17 April 2024).

[21] Letters to Edward Clark (b. 1888, d. 1962), of the BBC, President of the International Society for Contemporary Music, from composers, conductors, and others; 1920–1960 (1920–1960), Add. MSS 52256-52257, British Library.

carried out at cafés, restaurants, his various abodes, concerts, and exhibitions. Cambridge and King's College were central to his life. He engaged with every aspect of musical life at Cambridge, immersing himself in the Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS) and Cambridge University Musical Club (CUMC) and later making Cambridge the venue for major international festivals and congresses. During these years, Dent gathered some of the finest minds around him. Many discussions were had at his rooms at King's and later at Panton Street, which as Arrandale observes, rapidly 'became the alternative stockpot for new music and theatre, where the brightest and best gravitated naturally, a refuge for troubled souls' (p. 144). In detailing Dent's 'uneven but lifelong friendship with Forster' (p. 91), Arrandale recounts how Dent's complex character – 'attractive, civilised and yet capable of mischief' – provided E. M. Forster with material for novels. The politician Hugh Dalton was a lifelong friend as was Edward 'Ted' Haynes. Dent's voluminous correspondence with Lawrence Haward and Clive Carey provides rich sources for the biographer. He met J. B. Trend in 1908 when still a student. Trend, ultimately Cambridge's first professor in Spanish, went on to become Dent's life partner and collaborator.

Although an ardent pacifist and unable to serve for health reasons, the Great War irrevocably changed Dent's life. He lost close friends on the Front, including Denis Brown with whom he had an 'intense relationship', and Rupert Brooke who died at Gallipoli (his death memorialized in music by another acquaintance of Dent's, F. S. Kelly). Dent and Siegfried Sassoon instantly bonded and he went on to introduce Sassoon to Forster and later the Sitwells. Dent's correspondence with Sassoon, Trend, Carey, and Kennard Bliss in the trenches, as Arrandale has shown, provided an outlet for his critical views on the war and a connection with those he loved.[22]

Of course, it was at Cambridge that he met Vaughan Williams, who Arrandale considers one of his most influential friends (p. 45). They shared a similar belief in the power of music to transform everyday life. Dent helped stage Vaughan Williams's *The Wasps* with CUMS. His review of the performance considered the work 'a landmark in our musical history' (p.170). This was the first of their many musical collaborations at Cambridge across a lifelong friendship.

Much of Dent's work with opera took him to London where he became deeply involved in its artistic and musical circles. Notably, in 1916 he met the conductor Adrian Boult who became a 'lifelong friend and colleague' (p. 252). Musical journalism was an important part of Dent's work, especially before 1926 when he assumed a Cambridge professorship. As a journalist he met a range of influential people. Working for the *Athenaeum* in 1919 brought him into contact with John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield, Aldous Huxley, R. O. Morris, T. S. Eliot, and other members of the Bloomsbury Group. His many trips to Europe and his involvement with the International Musicological Society (IMS) connected him to a network of German and Italian scholars including Max Friedlaender, Johannes Wolf, and Guido Adler. He received an introduction from Sibelius's teacher, Martin Wegelius, to meet Busoni at Weimar, which resulted in another lifelong relationship (p. 102). On being introduced to Clark by Clive Bell in 1919, he was interested to learn that Clark also knew Busoni, but even more he was 'fascinated to find that Clark knew about him [Dent] and his work' (p. 288). Dent, according to Forkert, provided a kind of role model for Clark – 'a great friend' (pp. 161, 178). Arrandale notes that Clark's concerts of contemporary music (Bliss, Schoenberg, Falla) reflected Dent's own 'vague

[22] Karen Arrandale, 'Artists' Rifles and Artistic Licence: Edward Dent's War', *First World War Studies*, 2 (2011), pp. 7–16.

internationalist hopes' (p. 318). Despite many fundamental differences in social background, the two men shared an outward-facing gaze: a cosmopolitan disposition.

Vaughan Williams shared many friends with Dent at Cambridge, notably Carey and Forster, who, as Collins and Grimley relate in detail, he collaborated with later in life. However, it was some friendships formed at Trinity College that profoundly shaped his 'aesthetics and ethical convictions', namely the influence of G. E. Moore and G. M. Trevelyan (p. 2). Like Trevelyan, Vaughan Williams was directly related to what was termed 'the intellectual aristocracy' through his family ties with the Darwins and the Wedgwoods.[23] Indeed, he became acquainted with radical liberalism in part through an introduction by his cousin Ralph Wedgwood to some leading Cambridge Apostles, including Bertrand Russell, Maynard Keynes, and Lytton Strachey (Collins and Grimley, p. 174). As Collins and Grimley observe, 'These groups combined general high-mindedness and physical athleticism with a spiritual, aesthetic, and embodied relationship with a certain type of landscape […] alongside an assurance in their future role in the nation's social and political advancement' (p. 179). Vaughan Williams not only absorbed these values, but also translated them into music. His time at the RCM gave rise to 'long-lasting friendships' with fellow composers, most notably Gustav Holst as well as John Ireland and Thomas Dunhill (Siegel, p. 38). As his relationship with Maconchy illustrates, he was enormously effective as a teacher and was adored for the kindness and respect with which he treated his students.

Fertile Connection 2: Modernism/Internationalism

The individuals discussed across these four volumes were all open-minded and outward-looking. Their experiences exposed them to different ideas and perspectives, and all were active participants in an early British modernism. In 2008 Adams made a case for a 'unique and expressive brand of British modernism' distinct from that on the Continent.[24] A considerable body of work has subsequently appeared exploring expansionist understandings of modernisms, and many of the authors considered here continue to explore how modernism and internationalism shaped British music.[25] In the same 2008 special issue on British Modernism, Jennifer Doctor articulated a British modernism that was not so concerned with the shock of the new. She advocated instead for an idea of parataxis where the modern and traditional sat alongside each other in early twentieth-century British music culture.[26] This duality is certainly true of Vaughan Williams and Dent. The affiliation by Maconchy, Clark, and Lutyens to a form of international modernism was, however, more direct and unproblematic.

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[23] William Whyte, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy Revisited', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 1.10 (2005), pp. 15–45.

[24] Byron Adams, 'Foreword', *The Musical Quarterly*, 91 (2008), pp. 1–7.

[25] See, for example, Sarah Collins, 'Anti-Intellectualism and the Rhetoric of "National Character" in Music: The Vulgarity of Over-Refinement', in *British Musical Criticism and Intellectual Thought, 1850–1950*, ed. by Jeremy Dibble and Julian Horton (Boydell Press, 2018); Annika Forkert, 'British Musical Modernism Defended against its Devotees' (PhD dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2014); J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism, 1895–1960* (Ashgate, 2010).

[26] Jenny Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"', *The Musical Quarterly*, 91 (2008), pp. 89–115.

In Siegel's account, Maconchy's modernism is unquestioned and is understood as aesthetically closer to that on the Continent. As McNaught claimed in 1938, she was a composer 'whom international modernism [hailed] as one of its leading lights' (Siegel, pp. 94–96). Vaughan Williams echoed these sentiments when he wrote, 'Yours is nearly the only "wrong note" music I see any point in.'[27] Her music was often criticized with the usual antimodernist tropes – it was cold, unattractive, anti-emotional, anti-sensual, overly intellectual – in short un-English. A turning point for Maconchy was her introduction to the music of Bartók, which Vaughan Williams encouraged. And despite his own ambivalence towards Continental modernism, he endeavoured to help his students gain international experience, understanding its importance given his own time with Ravel and Bruch. On this point he sought the advice of Dent about where to send Maconchy.[28] Whereas Vaughan Williams went to study with Wellesz, Maconchy went to Prague to study with Karel Jirák, an associate of Dent in the ISCM. Her music was later to come to the attention of conductor and new music specialist Hermann Scherchen, who included her in an article on young British composers in the *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* (Siegel, p. 98). Maconchy's accounts of her compositional process are compelling and succinct. Siegel makes clear that octatonicism gave her the freedom to pursue her principle of 'impassioned argument' through motivic counterpoint.

Clark emerged from his years in Paris and Berlin as a quintessential highbrow modernist. A self-made 'mediator of European avant-garde in Britain' (Forkert, p. 42), he set about promoting new European music as a programme-builder and conductor. As Forkert tells us, he was 'deeply embedded in, and for some would come to personify, this rebellious modernist music scene' (pp. 30–31). In 1919 he and Boult conducted the Ballets Russes London season. His Queen's Hall concert series of 1921 sought to find a balance between British and European contemporary music. He continued to pioneer international modernism during his years curating programmes at the BBC. During the 1930s, Clark undertook several tours to Moscow, bringing new British and French music to Russian audiences. His work with the BBC, and later the ISCM, kept him travelling across Europe.

Although Lutyens is obviously the most 'extreme' modernist of this group – in that she adopted serialism – her relationship with international modernism was severely complicated by her marriage to its leading British expert. In 1922, as a sixteen-year-old she spent an important year in Paris staying with pianist Marcelle de Manziarly, a close friend of Nadia Boulanger, and was exposed to a range of developments in modern music. She claimed that it was on hearing new sounds (namely Webern) while at the RCM that she 'gradually […] came to have less and less in common with [her] English contemporaries' (Forkert, p. 46). She chose twelve-tone music to 'distinguish herself from the crowd'. Unfortunately, her proximity to Clark made her vulnerable to unkind comparisons to the Second Viennese School and charges of imitation and derivativeness. Her response was to refuse any 'compositional connection' to the European avant-garde; she flatly denied knowing major composers' music and techniques, particularly those of Schoenberg and Webern. Given Clark's intimate knowledge of dodecaphony and his extensive library of scores and recordings, Lutyens's 'narrative of complete independence of Schoenberg and Webern's techniques […] has seemed', as Forkert wryly observes, 'unlikely to most' (p. 79).

In her close musical analyses drawing upon both post-tonal theory and neo-Riemannian analysis, Forkert provides compelling accounts of a selection of Lutyens's music that take her

[27] Vaughan Williams to Maconchy, [7 June 1943], VWL1785.
[28] Vaughan Williams to Dent, 1 July [1926], VWL632.

out of her self-imposed isolation (one that Forkert understands as a form of Bloomian *askesis*, one of Bloom's 'six revisionary ratios' comprising his theory of anxiety of influence) and bring her music into contact with other composers including Stravinsky, Berg, and Webern in ways that are illuminating and reveal a composer in creative and fruitful dialogue with fellow modernists. In her reading of the Symphonies for Solo Piano, Wind, Harps and Percussion for BBC Proms 1961 (p. 100), Forkert adds her own 'strategy' to Straus's eight musical strategies outlined in *Remaking the Past* – that of *Verwechslung* or the 'exchange of influences' (p. 18).[29] The obvious influence through title and instrumentation is Stravinsky's Symphonies of Wind Instruments (she was by this time close personal friends with Stravinsky), but Forkert shows that the rich intertextual references extend to include Webern and Bartók (p. 102). Lutyens was again thwarting expectations. Although she travelled throughout her life, she considered her time in Warsaw in 1939 with Clark when she heard her second quartet performed at the ISCM as 'the halcyon period of [her] whole life' (p. 77). With the 'meeting of new friends, the convivial evenings, the music and merriment' she saw what she wanted: to be a composer untouched by nationality or gender, to be among like-minded musicians – an experience she found hard to replicate back in Britain (p. 77).

Dent fell in love with travel at an early age, and Arrandale details the extended periods he spent outside of Britain from 1896 researching, socializing, and establishing international networks. Alongside his passionate support of national opera and his ground-breaking scholarly work in early Italian opera as well as Purcell, Handel, and Mozart, he balanced a lifelong dedication to modern music. As with Vaughan Williams, his work exemplifies Doctor's 'dichotomy of modernization and traditional ideals'.[30] His friend Francis Toye made a similar observation, considering him on the one hand '[a] subversive modernist in most of his opinions', and on the other 'a lover of tradition' (Arrandale, p. 116).

His concerted efforts to come to grips with the new happened in the aftermath of the Great War. Annegret Fauser sees his musical modernism as falling 'squarely into an internationalist postwar world'.[31] Arrandale skilfully builds a picture of his post-war experiences in Weimar Germany, arguing that much of Dent's activities during this time laid the ground for his involvement in the ISCM and shaped his ideas of how such an organization should run. Central to this was the assignment given to him by the liberal internationalist *Athenaeum.* Dent was to report on the cultural renaissance happening in post-war Berlin. His 'Letters from Germany' captured much of the extraordinary ferment of cultural activity for his British readers. This next short period was formative for Dent. He learnt much about new music through his close dealing with Busoni and his circle. Dent loved Busoni and learnt much from his musical outlook, going on to write his biography twenty years later. Through this connection he met other key figures in Berlin's new music world such Otto Schneider, Wellesz, and Scherchen. Schneider was involved in the *Berlin Neue Musikgesellschaft des Anbruchs* and Scherchen was a conductor and editor of the modern music journal *Melos.* Both *Anbruch* and *Melos* combined scholarly work with performance, an approach that chimed well with Dent's musical outlook. He wrote in his diary on 20 November 1920: 'I felt at last I had got into the sort of circle I wanted' (p. 309). These experiences combined with his diplomatic skills and keen administrative sense positioned him as an ideal inaugural president of the ISCM, itself a focal point of musical modernism. As

[29] Straus, *Remaking the Past*.
[30] Doctor, 'The Parataxis of "British Musical Modernism"', p. 89.
[31] Annegret Fauser, 'The Scholar Behind the Medal: Edward J. Dent (1876–1957) and the Politics of Music History', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 139 (2014), pp. 235–60 (p. 248).

the political situation deteriorated during the 1930s, Dent began to feel that Europe had run its course, which coincided with his first visits to the United States. Adams powerfully communicates Vaughan Williams's immediate love for America through the lens of his beloved Whitman. Similarly, Arrandale shows us how his close friend Dent also fell for the New World. It became for him 'the best ground for a new cultural future' (p. 463).

The question of Vaughan Williams and modernism is complex and has been the subject of much recent scholarship. Kirstie Asmussen, for example, has looked at how the composer's image underwent a 'remarkable reversal' from that of 'leading exponent of a progressive, identifiably British strain of musical modernism' to one that 'consistently produced more conservative, rural music', in effect producing a picture of Vaughan Williams as Lutyens's 'cow-pat' composer.[32] As noted previously, Adams and Grimley's collection is part of a broader movement to refocus on Vaughan Williams's complex relationship with musical modernism (Adams and Grimley, p. 207). To take one example in detail, Rupprecht's contribution offers a subtle and thoughtful reading of the ballet *Job: A Masque for Dancing* (1930) to examine how Vaughan Williams's music captured William Blake's set of engravings upon which the dance is based. He does not attempt to argue for a modernism drawn from dissonance or rhythmic complexity but draws his approach from the reviews of contemporaries who remarked on the work's asceticism and austerity (p. 75). Rupprecht looks to modernist innovation in literature and dance, in particular T. E. Hulme's theory of imagism expressed for example in the poetry of Ezra Pound and the innovations of *Job*'s choreographer Ninette de Valois, to understand better what Vaughan Williams was doing musically (p. 99). He describes a mosaic-like form emerging from a set of discrete and disconnected aural images created through unexpected tonal shifts (p. 87).

Fertile Connection 3: The Urge to Organize

Musical friendship and sociability easily assumed an associational impulse: a desire to organize. The interwar period saw a proliferation of societies and organizations to support and promote new music.[33] The extensive work undertaken by these five individuals in establishing the many societies for new music that sprang up after the First World War is a major theme across the books by Siegel, Forkert, and Arrandale. Indeed, the idea of organization is implicit in Forkert's title as is that of the vanguard. Dent's impulse to mobilize 'personal trusted networks' were 'channelled into forming national and international music institutions, creating the dynamic tension between solid institutions and networks of like-minded people' (p. 155).[34] Equally for Clark there was no real distinction between personal friendship and professional undertaking.

These four volumes remind us of the absolute centrality of the BBC and its programming policies regarding contemporary music. As Doctor has noted, the BBC 'quickly became a primary impresario for new music'.[35] Siegel's detailed account of Maconchy's difficult but

[32] Wiley and Watt, 'Musical Biography in the Musicological Arena', 191. See in the same issue, Kirstie Asmussen, 'Biographical Revisionism: Hubert Foss's Conflicting Portrayals of Vaughan Williams,' *Journal of Musicological Research*, 38 (2019), pp. 285–97.

[33] See Francis Routh, *Contemporary British Music to 1970: The Twenty-Five Years from 1945 to 1970* (Macdonald, 1972), pp. 18–21.

[34] At different times Dent was a member of the British Academy, president of the Musical Association, the Philharmonic Society, the Purcell Society, and the Liszt Society. He was involved in the British Music Society from the outset and helped to fund the Drama League.

[35] Jenny Doctor, 'Afterthoughts', in Fuller and Doctor, *Music, Life, and Changing Times*, pp. xvi–xx.

important relationship with the BBC supports Doctor's claim of 'how vital it was for British composers to interact with their BBC contacts, gain BBC performances, and networks to further BBC opportunities'. This was not always easy, especially if one was a woman. Clark's years at the BBC were, as Forkert asserts, the 'most influential of his career' (p. 9) where he was best able to realize his dreams for international modern music.[36] With his propensity to fail administratively, his seeming incapacity 'to work in a team' and his mercurial temperament, Clark's downfall at the BBC was as spectacular as it was tragic. He told Lutyens in 1938 that he had been 'blacklisted' by his former employer. Certainly, they were thereafter reluctant to employ him in any gainful way.

A key theme of Forkert's study of Lutyens and Clark is their shared 'network of enterprise' – the many collaborations they undertook to realize their vision for contemporary music in Britain. It may seem strange then to take Lutyens away from Clark and set her instead alongside Maconchy. However, there are some telling similarities in their organizational work, particularly in the later periods of their lives. Lutyens's role as organizer began in the early 1930s. Several years before meeting Clark, Lutyens, frustrated by the lack of opportunity to have her work performed, joined forces in 1931 with violinist Anne Macnaghten and conductor Iris Lemare to establish a concert series designed to bring new British works to the public. It takes its place as the first of several of Lutyens's ventures that were 'designed as networks of shared aesthetics' (Forkert, p. 6).[37] Although not involved organizationally, Maconchy benefitted from their efforts with several performances of her music given in the concert series.

Both women came into their own later in life when the demands of their domestic spheres were easing. During the 1950s, Maconchy was heavily involved in the Composers' Guild of Great Britain and in 1954 was elected to the council, becoming chairperson in 1959 – the first woman to do so. Her rise through the ranks 'dramatically elevated her visibility and public profile' (Siegel, p. 188). Maconchy was a talented administrator, known for her 'openmindedness' and 'gift for diplomacy' (p. 251). Ironically, given her past difficulties with them, Maconchy joined the BBC's Central Music Advisory Committee in 1961, an acknowledgement of her professional status.

In this period, Lutyens had more to do with the ISCM and the groups connected to it – the London Contemporary Music Centre (LCMC), and the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) following its merger with the LCMC in 1953. As a former member of the LCMC Executive Committee, she joined the ICA Music Section (also the ISCM British Section), again becoming a very active participant. Difficulty and division had continued to follow Clark wherever he went, to the point where Forkert sees his 'conflict with ISCM, L.C.M.C., and its rival CPNM [Committee for the Promotion of New Music]' as 'jeopardising [Lutyens's] performance opportunities in London and Europe, her network, promotion, and other work in music' (p. 184). As Clark's presence at the ICA receded, Lutyens came into her own. Indeed, she took over his position on the ICA steering committee. As noted, she was always more successful than Clark at harnessing 'weak ties' to her advantage (Forkert, p. 147). Both women were involved with the Dartington Summer School and later in the 1970s the Society for the Promotion of New Music (SPNM), Maconchy becoming its chairperson in 1974. Despite the many

[36] For a comprehensive account of Clark's years at the BBC, see Jennifer Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936: Shaping a Nation's Taste* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[37] For a detailed account of this endeavour, see Sophie Fuller, '"Putting the BBC and T. Beecham to Shame": The Macnaghten–Lemare Concerts, 1931–7', *Journal of the Royal Music Association*, 138 (2013), pp. 377–414.

differences in their music, history, and personality, both were awarded a CBE in acknowledgement of their contribution to British music.

The early history of the ISCM is well known.[38] Arrandale and Forkel give fascinating accounts of its important early decades. Dent, the first president, was of course part of the story from 1922 and Clark was deeply involved with it from at least the mid-1930s. After the BBC, it was his most important role. He became its honorary secretary in 1938 and president in 1947. The ISCM was central to both men's lives. In her extended account of Clark's and Lutyens's involvement in the society, Forkert describes Clark's affiliation as 'one of the longest, but also most controversial in his career' (p. 159). She details his fall from grace and the bizarre story of his defamation court battle with fellow composer Benjamin Frankel. Arrandale shows how Dent's interests and travels almost inevitably led him to be involved in such an organization. He shaped it to reflect his core beliefs in internationalism, political neutrality, the importance of contemporary music and music's power as a diplomatic art. He cultivated an 'ISCM spirit' founded 'on a basis of personal friendship' (p. 351).

Under Dent's careful guidance, and with the support of music critic Edwin Evans, it was decided that London would be the ISCM's head office under the auspices of the recently formed British Music Society (BMS). The BMS was initiated by Arthur Eaglefield Hull in 1919 and many leading musical figures including Dent were involved from the outset. The LCMC was its London branch that continued its mission of promoting new music well after the BMS had collapsed in 1933. Apart from its role as the home of the British Section of the ISCM, the LCMC tirelessly promoted modern music. Although initially under the chairmanship of Evans, the LCMC became 'another of Clark's ventures' (Forkert, p. 178), and the repertoire reflected his internationalist modernist taste. As they became more established, Maconchy's and Lutyens's music was programmed, and Lutyens went on to organize a Composers' Concourse series in the early 1950s through the LCMC with Maconchy contributing at least one lecture, 'Composing and Its Problems'.

Dent's involvement with numerous other societies both in Britain and internationally are elucidated in detail across Arrandale's biography. He had a similar role with the IMS as with the ISCM. He had been drawn into it before 1914, had established a network of like-minded scholars, and was instrumental in its resurrection after the war, becoming its president in 1931. His ability to bring the ISCM and IMS together in joint festivals/congresses such as in Liège in 1930 and Barcelona in 1936 reflected his deep belief in bringing performance into contact with scholarship. His involvement in the reconstruction of post-war British musical life after 1945 was equally important. Keynes sought his advice when appointed chairman of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA). He gave advice to the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), and he continued his long battle to realize his vision for English theatre opera through his support for the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells.

Forkert's extensive discussion of the Association of British Musicians, Lutyens's and Clark's joint venture in late 1939, might seem unusual in that it was largely unrealized due to the outbreak of war that coincided with the first and final concert. It works well, however, as an

[38] For the ISCM, see Sarah Collins, 'What Was Contemporary Music? The New, the Modern and the Contemporary in the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM),' in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. by Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (Routledge, 2018), pp. 56–85; Anton Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM): Ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart* (Atlantis, 1982); Giles Masters, 'New-Music Internationalism: The ISCM Festival, 1922–1939' (PhD dissertation, King's College, London, 2021).

example that reveals Lutyens's and Clark's networks and their shared aesthetic vision (pp. 148–59). The council included William Walton, Frederic Austin, and John Ireland. Forkert's archival sources reveal many other names considered for roles within the association including Benjamin Britten, Michael Tippett, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, and Maconchy. Dent and music critics Evans and Edward Newman contributed programme notes. It is also a rare instance of direct communication between Clark, Lutyens, and Vaughan Williams, the last of whom turned down their requests for him to become the association's chairman. He explained in a formal tone that he was already involved in too many other competing organizations and questioned the utility of their plan given the existence of these other organizations.[39]

Fertile Connection 4: Gender and Sexuality

It is pertinent to remember here that the RCM's segregated staircases separating women from men had only been removed a matter of years before Maconchy and Lutyens arrived, a physical expression of the deep misogyny that pervaded their musical world.[40] Understandably given the degree to which it was weaponized against them, they both strenuously resisted the term 'woman composer'. As Forkert suggests, for Lutyens it was a 'logical strategy to protect the integrity of her music from misogynist criticism and BBC officials' (p. 19). Lutyens's anxiety around her gender was compounded by her proximity to Clark, which further entrenched her 'stubborn narrative of isolation from peers and contemporary European trends'. Forkert again enlisted *askesis* to understand this determination to negate influence. *Askesis*, Lutyens hoped, provided an escape from 'the criticism of influence as immaturity (or worse – femininity)' (p. 19).

Siegel takes close account of the many reviews containing passages of 'sexist vitriol' aimed at Maconchy. Lambert, Evans, William McNaught, and Harold Rutland's writings used condescension, contempt and sarcasm to exploit many of the stereotypical strategies to undermine women. Maconchy's music was masculine, 'pugnacious', cerebral, overly earnest – unfeminine. In a shameful review for the *Radio Times*, Rutland noted with false jocularity that 'most women have quite enough to do, to keep the world going, without their being expected to indulge in fantasies, or the concentrated thought and feeling that brings these fantasies to fruition as works of art' (p. 136).

Rutland had unwittingly hit upon a key complaint that dominated Maconchy's public and private views on her gender and profession: the struggle to balance career with motherhood. Most challenging was the lack of time. In her 1953 presentation at Lutyens's Composers' Concourse, Maconchy described composing as the 'most exacting job in the world, needing the composer's whole mind & undivided concentration […] If he is a woman, there is the added problem of rearing children, which is the most time-taking & wearing job of all' (p. 149). Equally challenging was the constant interruption and limited opportunities to meet other musicians and hear other music. Later in life Maconchy took on the role as spokeswoman for women musicians, wryly observing that 'the idea of masculine superiority takes an unconscionable time a-dying' (p. 245). Siegel reminds us of the pervasiveness of gender inequality, giving the BBC figures of 1961: Britten had 152 broadcasts; Lennox Berkeley, 29; Edmund Rubbra, 26; Rawsthorne, 20, Tippett, 17; and Maconchy, a mere 6 (p. 199).

[39] See Vaughan Williams to Lutyens, 6 November [1939], VWL1621.

[40] For recent feminist scholarship, see Rhiannon Mathias (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Women's Work in Music* (Routledge, 2022), esp. Sophie Fuller, 'Grace, Betty, Maude and Me: 30 Years of Fighting for Women Composers', pp. 9–18.

Lutyens's experience was more extreme than Maconchy's. Soon after meeting Clark she was faced with the confronting reality that he was incapable of financial or emotional support and inclined to depression. At this time, she had three young children and would soon have a fourth. Clark never regained a steady income after 1936. The war years were especially challenging. Describing herself as a 'bloody char', Lutyens was 'trying to juggle family duties, composing, and caring for Clark', and by 1942 had suffered a breakdown and was hospitalized (Forkert, pp. 51–52).

Arrandale persuasively argues throughout her biography that homosexuality shaped Dent's relationship with the world.[41] Dent was a product of the homosocial culture of the British public school and university system. Cambridge proved an ideal place with a thriving queer subculture; it provided what Arrandale describes as 'a tiny self-contained universe which opened up unimaginable possibilities to young men raised in stuffy late-Victorian parlours' (p. 24).[42] Dent did not, like some friends, move on to heterosexual life and marriage after graduation. Misogyny was more than a cover for his own sexuality, he found the company of women profoundly discomfiting. The majority of his closest friendships were with other homosexual men including many young musicians. He read Walter Pater, Walt Whitman, and Havelock Ellis, discussed sexuality and poetry with Sassoon, and he, along with Forster, visited Edward Carpenter and George Merrill at Millthorpe just before the Great War. As noted earlier, Wilde's trial reminded homosexual men of their precarious place in British society. Homophobia and fear of public exposure remained with Dent throughout his life, and he was circumspect and discreet to a fault. As Arrandale reports, '[e]xplicit references to homosexuality are rare in his extant correspondence' (p. 3).

As he began to travel, Dent realized that the Continent was in fundamental ways easier for homosexual men. He felt free in Europe. Munich and Berlin provided access to exciting artistic and homosexual subcultures. In Berlin in 1903 he met the pioneering sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. Arrandale gives a fascinating account of this important relationship that continued until Hirschfeld's murder by the Nazis in 1935. Dent was deeply interested in Hirschfeld's research and his Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee and he socialized with transvestites and other members of his institute. Hirschfeld would stay with Dent when in Britain and they were both involved in the establishment of the British Society for the Study of Sexual Psychology (BSSS) in 1914. Carpenter, a founding member, nominated Dent for membership. During his last trip to Berlin before the outbreak of war, Dent witnessed the persecution and murder of homosexuals by the Nazis. He went on to assist European homosexuals seeking refuge in Britain, occasionally providing them marriages of convenience.

Vaughan Williams's place here is interesting. In today's parlance we might call him an ally. He is recognized for his equitable approach to gender in his teaching. Many of his female students went on to become recognized composers with his unstinting support. Many of them maintained close and affectionate relationships with their former teacher (Siegel in Adams and

[41] For an earlier account of Dent's sexuality and its imbrication with his musicological self, see Philip Brett, 'Musicology and Sexuality: The Example of Edward J. Dent', in *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity*, ed. by Sophie Fuller and Lloyd Whitesell (University of Illinois Press, 2008), pp. 177–215.

[42] For greater context, see Emily Rutherford, 'Impossible Love and Victorian Values: J. A. Symonds and the Intellectual History of Homosexuality', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75 (2014), pp. 605–27; Ross Brooks, 'Beyond Brideshead: The Male Homoerotics of 1930s Oxford', *Journal of British Studies*, 59 (October 2020), pp. 821–56; Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850–1920* (Indiana University Press, 2005).

Grimley, pp. 47–50).[43] Likewise, his very close friendships with both Dent and Forster speak to an open-mindedness that extended to sexuality.

Fertile Connection 5: Politics

All shared similar leftist political leanings across a spectrum that ranged from radical liberalism to communism. Lutyens was the only one of the five to join the Communist Party, which she did in response to the Spanish Civil War, an event she described later as 'the Vietnam of our time'.[44] Clark, described by his son James as a 'grand old-fashioned Bolshevik', may not have joined the Party but left-wing politics shaped his worldview.[45] His study was piled high with copies of the *Daily Worker*. He felt a close bond to the USSR, excitedly setting off for Moscow's 'May Day jollifications' in 1939.[46] After his departure from the BBC, Alan Bush enlisted him on several projects, including the Festival of Music for the People (FMP), which had a strong antifascist agenda. Maconchy, not as extreme in politics or musical style, nonetheless demonstrated throughout her life a 'strong commitment to socialism and liberation' (p. 247), involving herself in leftist political causes such as the anti-apartheid movement and, much earlier, Bush's Workers' Music Association (WMA). Her contributions to the WMA included, among others, *Pioneers of Rochdale*, a work for piano and chorus. During the 1930s she participated in antifascist activities and helped her close friends from Prague escape to the United States via London. She went with Bush to Moscow in 1960 to the International Conference of Composers representing the Composers' Guild.

The politics of the late Victorians – Vaughan Williams and Dent – comes out of a tradition of radical liberalism. Both were by nature anti-authoritarian and believed deeply in freedom and democracy. Both were motivated by an idea of the people: for Vaughan Williams it produced an abiding interest in an idea of collective musical activity – a musical commonwealth; for Dent it fuelled his work with Lilian Bayliss at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells. As Adams and Botstein remind us, Walt Whitman's 'vision of democratic freedom' was transformative for Vaughan Williams (Adams, p. 136; Botstein, p. 300). It fed into his growing interest in political internationalism, which intensified during the 1930s leading to his involvement with the Federal Union, a peace and pro-democracy movement predicated upon the creation of a federated Europe modelled on 'the U.S. model' (Botstein, p. 308). Vaughan Williams reconciled his political internationalism with his cultural nationalism in his 1942 essay 'Nationalism and Internationalism', declaring: 'I believe, then, that political internationalism is not only compatible with cultural patriotism, but that one is an essential concomitant of the other' (Adams, p. 153). Collins and Grimley resituate him in a political landscape of radical liberalism shaped by values of tolerance, reason, and a very English form of gradualism to offer a fascinating alternative view of Vaughan Williams's politics based on his relationship as a member of a privileged elite with the land and landscape. Contextualizing Vaughan Williams's involvement with propaganda film during the war, and earlier incursions into historical pageantry with Forster in the 1930s (the *Abinger Pageant* and *England's Pleasant Land*), they argue that his

[43] See also Jennifer Doctor, '"Working for Her Own Salvation": Vaughan Williams as Teacher of Elizabeth Maconchy, Grace Williams and Ina Boyle', in Foreman, *Ralph Vaughan Williams in Perspective*, pp. 181–201.
[44] Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl*, p. 74.
[45] Quoted in Harries and Harries, *A Pilgrim Soul*, p. 77.
[46] Edward Clark to Mary Hinton, 5 April 1939, Alan Bush Collection, MS 624, British Library, London.

'pastoral tendencies' should be seen 'not merely as a reflection of a particular musical sensibility toward landscape, but rather as part of an ongoing attempt to sustain a progressivist view of history (and the reformist agenda it shaped) along the lines of the radical liberalism of Vaughan Williams's peers during his formative years' (p. 173). Central to Collins and Grimley's argument is an understanding of the long-standing Land Question, which they see as 'a preoccupation for the generation of radical liberals of the 1890s' (p. 196). They describe Vaughan Williams's musical activities in political causes centred on maintaining 'land for common use'. Their analytical account of his oratorio *Sancta Civitas* (the Holy City) brings it into contact with the garden city movement, a progressive response to the challenges of rapid urbanization.

Despite Dent's privileged background, he was a lifelong Labour voter. The widening of his horizons through travel made him both an internationalist early in his life and a committed pacifist from 1914. He hated war and its attendant jingoism and submitted pacifist articles to the *Cambridge Magazine*, which became an important source for alternative views on the war. The political maelstrom that hit the ISCM and the IMS during the 1930s was particularly difficult for Dent with his steadfast commitment to political neutrality to navigate.[47] Arrandale's account of this period is enriched by her consideration of what Dent called the 'Nazi International' – the Permanent Council established by Richard Strauss for the Reich in 1934. Considered alongside the dramas caused by Communist composers such as Eisler with their close connections to Moscow, she captures the nuanced and complicated environment the musical world found itself in with the rise of fascism and communism. Dent's apolitical stance is further complicated by his own personal involvement with young male Nazis. While reminding us that Dent's 'life's work since the last war had been poured into internationalist movements and keeping the arts alive for everyone', Arrandale at once bemoans his 'failure of the imagination' and inability 'to spot how this world was changing' (p. 457). Dent was nonetheless tireless in his practical support of the waves of refugees escaping Europe, many of whom were his friends and colleagues (p. 415).[48] Yet again, the language in the personal correspondence is often confronting as Dent complained of the pressures put on him using unacceptable antisemitic language. Arrandale's reminder here of his fear that his sexuality would be used for blackmail further complicates the context. Despite these unsettling aspects, he was instrumental in saving many people who were on Nazi death lists including Roberto and Poldi Gerhard. Vaughan Williams also assisted refugees in their flight from Europe and was involved in helping musicians out of internment camps during the war.

The 1930s saw an intensification of antifascist activities in progressive cultural circles. In 1938 Dent joined Clark in the organization of antifascist modern music concerts to accompany a degenerate art exhibition held at the Burlington Galleries in 1938. Vaughan Williams was a patron of the event.[49] The gravity of the situation saw Dent and Vaughan Williams turn to more radical political action. At Bush's instigation, Dent joined Lutyens, Ireland, Rutland Boughton,

[47] See Fauser, 'The Scholar Behind the Medal', esp. p. 252; Anne C. Shreffler, 'The International Society for Contemporary Music and its Political Context (Prague, 1935)', in *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht (Berghahn Books, 2015), pp. 58–92; Anne C. Shreffler, '"Music Left and Right": A Tale of Two Histories of Progressive Music', in *Red Strains: Music and Communism Outside the Communist Bloc*, ed. by Robert Adlington (British Academy, 2013), pp. 67–88; and Julie A. Waters, 'Marxists, Manifestos, and "Musical Uproar": Alan Bush, the 1948 Prague Congress, and the British Composers' Guild', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 30 (2011), pp. 23–45.

[48] Florian Scheding, 'Who is British Music? Placing Migrants in National Music History', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 15 (2018), pp. 439–92, Erik Levi, '"Those damn foreigners": Xenophobia and British Musical Life during the First Half of the Twentieth Century', in *Twentieth-Century Music and Politics: Essays in Memory of Neil Edmunds*, ed. by Pauline Fairclough (Ashgate, 2013), pp. 82–96.

[49] Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl*, p. 77.

and Rawsthorne to sign the radical manifesto, the People's Convention.[50] In a humorous letter to Bush, Dent offered to set Bush's Convention Song under the pseudonym Samuel Goldberg.[51] The BBC responded strongly to the Convention, threatening to ban the signatories' music. Bush's music was duly proscribed. For Vaughan Williams, defender of freedom, this act of censorship went too far (even though he noted his lack of sympathy for Bush's politics), and he published a letter in *The Times* announcing his withdrawal of a BBC commission in protest. Although Vaughan Williams made clear his fundamental opposition to Bush's politics, in particular, what he saw as Bush's appropriation of 'the People' to his own Stalinist ideology, he supported Bush in other antifascist endeavours. The FMP was one such project which brought together all five of the individuals under discussion here. Vaughan Williams agreed (if reluctantly) to write the opening 'Flourish'. Clark, who was organizing secretary, arranged for Lutyens and Maconchy to arrange music for the episodes of the opening pageant, and Dent was in the audience. His account in a letter to Trend was hilarious and merciless: 'It was quite dreadful!' It was not the political message he objected to but the dramatic execution: 'I never, never saw such opportunities just thrown away for sheer ignorance of what to do.'[52]

Conclusion

Each of these four volumes is grounded in primary research, brimming with important ideas, and offers new interpretations of lives and musical work. There is much here for the scholar of musical modernism in Britain and beyond. Siegel makes a powerful case for Maconchy as a composer of profound talent and significance; moreover, her account of Maconchy's struggles to achieve recognition in the face of gendered discrimination is compelling and moving. Forkert's skilful employment of carefully crafted theoretical concepts shapes a fascinating account of the work and lives of two important British musicians extending our understandings of influence, craft, and gender in a musical context. Arrandale captures the panoramic sweep of Dent's extraordinary life, reminding us that the study of British music should not be confined to composers and performers. There are many other perspectives to be taken. Many of these are found in the Vaughan Williams volume, which offers new and refreshing ways to understand Vaughan Williams and his musical world. Taken together, these volumes also provoke renewed thinking about musicology and life writing – the relationship between music and human action. The many resonances between them – the shared themes of friendship, networks, associational life, questions of gender and sexuality, and a range of similar aesthetic and political outlooks – prompted this exploration guided by the synthesizing idea of a fertile connection. Tracking these five musicians across the volumes by way of these connections vividly reproduces their shared musical world. Separately and together the studies make a serious contribution to our understanding of British musical culture in the twentieth century and offer new interpretative frameworks with which to pursue further research.

[50] For Alan Bush, see Joanna Bullivant, *Alan Bush, Modern Music, and the Cold War: The Cultural Left in Britain and the Communist Bloc* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). For the FMP, see Mike Wallis, 'Pageantry and the Popular Front: Ideological Production in the "Thirties"', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 10.38 (1994), pp. 132–56; Mike Wallis, 'The Popular Front Pageant: Its Emergence and Decline', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 11.41 (1995), pp. 17–32.

[51] Dent to Bush, 8 February 1941, Alan Bush Collection, Music Correspondence, MS Mus. 455, British Library.

[52] Dent to Trend, 7 April 1939, EJD/4/111/17/8, The Papers of Edward Joseph Dent, King's College Archive Centre, University of Cambridge.