Conducted by Dr. Gary D. Cannon

RVW and Friends

Saturday, May 21 2022
7:30pm
Church of the Holy Cross
11526 162nd Ave NE
Redmond, Washington

Sunday, May 22 2022
3:00 pm
Eastside Baha'i Center
16007 NE 8th St
Bellevue, Washington

*In alignment with many local arts and culture organizations, we request that audience members wear masks and practice social distancing throughout the concert.
In addition, audience members are expected to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

Microsoft

The Cascadian Chorale

Sopranos

Frances Acheson
Holly Allin
Heather Irwin
Sue Maybee
Marilyn McAdoo
Genie Middaugh
Tessa Ravagni
Jenifer Rees
Billie Shung
Cami Woodruff

Altos

Annie Doubleday
Christine Dunbar
Gail Erickson
Carol Fielding
Tara O'Brien Pride
Nikki Schilling
Pamela Silimperi
Elaine Tsang

Tenors

Brandon Higa
Dustin Kaspar
Kalinda Pride
Fred Williams

Basses

Alazel Acheson
Ken Black
Jeremy Kings
David Nichols
Trevor Tsang
Doug Wyatt

Artistic Staff

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Program notes by Gary D. Cannon
Program produced by Doug Wyatt
Cover design by Cami Woodruff

RVW and Friends

In youth is pleasure (1915) .... Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

Three Shakespeare Songs (1951) .... Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

1. Full fathom five
2. The cloud-capp'd towers
3. Over hill, over dale

I love my love (1916) .... Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

There is an old belief (1915) .... Hubert Parry (1848–1918)

Ward, the pirate (1912) .... Ralph Vaughan Williams

intermission

Ave Maria (1900) .... Gustav Holst

Clear and gentle stream (1934?) .... Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

The hills (1953) .... John Ireland (1879–1962)

Five English Folksongs (1913) .... Ralph Vaughan Williams

1. The dark-eyed sailor
2. The spring time of the year
3. Just as the tide was flowing
4. The lover's ghost
5. Wassail Song

Cascadian Chorale
Gary D. Cannon, *conductor*

Gary D. Cannon, Conductor

Dr. Gary D. Cannon is one of Seattle's most versatile choral personalities, active as conductor, singer, and musicologist. Since 2008 he is Artistic Director of Cascadian Chorale and of the 100-voice Vashon Island Chorale. In 2016 he founded the Emerald Ensemble, a professional chamber choir. At the invitation of the Early Music Guild, he founded and directed a Renaissance choir, Sine Nomine (2008–15). He has conducted for Vashon Opera three times, and has also directed Anna's Bay Chamber Choir, Choral Arts, Earth Day Singers, Kirkland Choral Society, and the Northwest Mahler Festival.

As a tenor soloist, he has appeared with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Philharmonic, and the Auburn, Eastside, Rainier, and Sammamish Symphony Orchestras, as well as many Seattle-area choirs. He lectures for Seattle Symphony and provides program notes for choirs across the country. His independent musicological research has a special emphasis on the music of William Walton. A California native, Dr. Cannon holds degrees from the University of California at Davis and the University of Washington.

Ingrid Verhulsdonk, Pianist

Very active as a freelance accompanist in the area, Ingrid Verhulsdonk became the Cascadian Chorale's staff pianist in 2011. She is also principal organist at Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue and accompanist for The Market Street Singers of Ballard. She is on staff at the University of Washington drama department, and has been a regular accompanist with Northwest Opera In Schools, Etcetera (NOISE) and Cornish College of the Arts.

Ingrid has been the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships. She has performed as a soloist with the University of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as winner of the 2001 student concerto competition, and was a finalist in the Ladies Musical Club competition.

Ingrid holds degrees in piano performance from the University of Washington and the University of Hawaii. She also thoroughly enjoys teaching, and operates a small piano studio in the area.

In youth is pleasure (1915)
by **Herbert Howells** (1892–1983)

Herbert Howells decided when just a boy that he would become a composer. Studies followed with Herbert Brewer, the acclaimed organist at nearby Gloucester Cathedral, and at age twenty Howells entered the Royal College of Music in London. His mentor there was the indomitable Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, who conducted the lad's First Piano Concerto (1913) and predicted great things for him. Howells's researches into composers of the Tudor era achieved early fruit in an unaccompanied Mass (1912) written for Westminster Cathedral, the seat of English Catholicism.

The five-voice *In youth is pleasure* demonstrates that his interest extended to the Renaissance madrigalists too. Close imitations abound, such as the four-fold overlapping entrances at the very start. There are frequent forays into the Mixolydian mode, with its flat seventh. The two sopranos playfully toss back and forth in "mirth and play." The second stanza includes several Renaissance touches of texture, though clearly viewed through a dramatic, late-Romantic prism, as at "but when I waked, it was not so."

In a harbour grene, aslepe whereas I lay,
The byrdes sang swete in the middes of the day,
I dreamed fast of mirth and play:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Methought I walked still to and fro,
And from her company I could not go—
But when I waked, it was not so:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Therefore my hart is surely pyght*
Of her alone to have a sight
Which is my joy and hartes delight:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

— Robert Wever (flourished c.1550–1565)

**pyght: resolved, determined (literally "pitched", fixed)*

Three Shakespeare Songs (1951)
by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

Upon the death of Edward Elgar in 1934, Ralph Vaughan Williams became English music's unofficial Grand Old Man. One might expect that he would have settled into complacency, focusing his compositions into the neo-Renaissance and neo-folksong styles with which he had found great success. Instead, Vaughan Williams chose the opposite route. His works from the 1930s, such as the ballet *Job* (1930), the one-act opera *Riders to the Sea* (1932), the Fourth Symphony (1934), and the choral cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem* (1936), employ a more dissonant harmonic palette. By the late 1940s, he also became enamored of unusual instrumental sonorities, as illustrated in his score to the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) and the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies (1956 and 1958 respectively). This exploration of unusual harmonic twists and unorthodox sonorities also influenced his late choral works.

In early 1951, the composer and administrator Armstrong Gibbs asked Vaughan Williams for a new work that would be the centerpiece of a choral competition under the auspices of the British Federation of Music Festivals to be held on June 23rd. Vaughan Williams hesitated, preferring that competitions focus on standard repertoire. But in late April, Vaughan Williams's long-invalid wife, Adeline, died. Within weeks, Gibbs received a thick envelope containing a manuscript with a simple inscription: "Dear Armstrong. Here are three Shakespeare settings. Do what you like with them… Yours ever R.V.W." The cycle, itself destined to become standard choral repertoire, is dedicated to Gibbs.

After Adeline's death, Vaughan Williams did not cancel his appointments, but threw himself even more deeply into his work. The first two of these *Three Shakespeare Songs* make it clear, however, that Adeline remained poignantly in his thoughts. Both are settings from *The Tempest*. The first text is sung by the spirit Ariel to Ferdinand, who believes his father has drowned. Vaughan Williams's harmonic explorations bear fruit as the sopranos' opening sonority—an F major triad with an interloping G—is soon interrupted by the tenors' dissonant but sonorous D-flat. The basses are given the bulk of the text as the other voices intone an imaginary underwater funeral knell. The second text is extracted from a speech by the elderly magician Prospero. A few years prior, Vaughan Williams had cited these final lines as befitting the bleak closing pages of his Sixth Symphony (1947), with its eerie juxtaposition of E minor and E-flat major. He uses a similarly ambiguous harmonic color here, in rich eight-part chords. The text of the third number comes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The sopranos portray a nameless fairy recounting their task for the evening: to add dewdrops to each flowering cowslip. Other fairies flitter about in the lower voices' quick patter.

1. Full Fathom Five —*The Tempest,* Act I, Sc. 2

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell.

2. The Cloud-Capp'd Towers —*The Tempest,* Act IV, Sc. 1

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

3. Over Hill, Over Dale —*A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Act II, Sc. 1

Over hill, over dale,
  Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
  Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moonè's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.

I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

— William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

I love my love, from *Six Choral Folksongs*, opus 36b (1916)

Cornish folksong, arranged by **Gustav Holst** (1874–1934)

The title page of this work bears the names of three men whose combined histories tell the story of this music's genesis. First is George Barnet Gardiner (1852–1910): Scotsman, teacher of classics at Edinburgh Academy, and one of a growing number of scholars interested in folksong. Such individuals often walked from village to village, transcribing folksong texts and melodies they encountered. In 1904, Gardiner began his investigations into the folk music of England's southwest, especially of Hampshire. In just six years, he collected 1460 folksong texts and 1165 melodies. It was in the region of Cornwall, at the extreme southwestern corner of Great Britain, that he encountered the folksong *I love my love*.

Another individual prominent in the field of folksong-collecting was the composer Gustav Holst: born of Latvian-German descent in Cheltenham, former student of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music, and teacher of music at St. Paul's Girls' School and Morley College in London. Holst and others celebrated their country's folksong tradition by making arrangements of the tunes for choir, orchestra, piano, solo voice, or wind band. As Holst arranged *I love my love* for unaccompanied mixed choir, he had recently completed the behemoth orchestral suite *The Planets* which later brought him global renown.

The third man represented on the title page is Charles Kennedy Scott (1876–1965): Englishman educated at the Brussels Conservatoire, scholar of English Renaissance madrigals, and founding conductor of the Oriana Madrigal Society. "C.K.S. and the Oriana," as the score's dedication identifies them, were renowned for their editions and performances of English secular music from around the year 1600, especially the madrigals of John Wilbye and his ilk. They eventually added traditional English carols and newly composed works to their repertory. Scott remained with the Oriana Society for over fifty years. His work with them, the Philharmonic Choir, the professional A Cappella Singers, and the Bach Cantata Club brought him a reputation as one of the leading choral conductors in Britain.

Holst's arrangement of the folksong *I love my love* has many story-telling, text-centric features of the madrigals beloved of Scott and the Oriana Society. The first two verses are straightforward, the folk melody assigned to the sopranos as the three lower voices harmonize. They introduce the story of a maiden who has been committed to an asylum by her beloved's cruel parents; they have gone so far as to send their son to sea. In the third verse, the tenors sing of the maiden's confidence that she will be rescued, but the sopranos' and altos' gently repeated phrases ("I love my love, love my love… I love my love, love my love…") give the impression that she sits alone, rocking back and forth as her patience challenges her mental faculties. The basses return to the texture as the sailor returns home and flies dramatically—the score is marked "con passione" ("with passion")—to his lover's aid. The maiden is at first afraid, but the sailor promises to remedy all. For the sixth and final verse the tenors tell the comforting moral of the story, but the sopranos and altos return to their gentle oscillations: though the maiden is loved and now well tended, she has nevertheless gone mad.

Abroad as I was walking, one evening in the spring,
I heard a maid in Bedlam* so sweetly for to sing;
Her chains she rattled with her hands, and thus replied she:
“I love my love because I know my love loves me!

“O cruel were his parents who sent my love to sea,
And cruel was the ship that bore my love from me;
Yet I love his parents since they’re his although they’ve ruined me:
I love my love because I know my love loves me!

“With straw I’ll weave a garland, I’ll weave it very fine;
With roses, lilies, daisies, I’ll mix the eglantine;
And I’ll present it to my love when he returns from sea.
For I love my love, because I know my love loves me.”

Just as she there sat weeping, her love he came on land.
Then, hearing she was in Bedlam, he ran straight out of hand;
He flew into her snow-white arms, and thus replied he:
“I love my love, because I know my love loves me.”

She said: “My love don’t frighten me; are you my love or no?”
“O yes, my dearest Nancy, I am your love, also
I am return’d to make amends for all your injury;
I love my love because I know my love loves me."

So now these two are married, and happy may they be
Like turtle doves together, in love and unity.
All pretty maids with patience wait that have got loves at sea;
I love my love because I know my love loves me.

**Bedlam: Bethlem Royal Hospital, which notoriously specialized in extreme treatment of mental illnesses.*

There is an old belief (1907, revised 1913–15?), from *Songs of Farewell* (1913–15)
by **Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry** (1848–1918)

In the late nineteenth century, Germans took to referring to England as "das Land ohne Musik"—the land without music. For over two centuries, no English composer had made a major international reputation. Instead, the English borrowed Continental composers—most notably Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Dvořák—and tried to adopt them as their own (only in the case of Handel were they successful). But while the Germans jested, a new acorn of greatness sprouted into a second Renaissance of English music. The most prominent pioneers were Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford, and especially Edward Elgar.

Parry taught at the Royal College of Music and received honorary doctorates from both Oxford and Cambridge. His symphonies were well received and his oratorios were performed throughout England. As Elgar's star rose around 1900, Parry's fell, but his compositional prowess never wavered. As the First World War ravaged a younger generation of composers, Parry turned to reflective poetry from English history. He composed six *Songs of Farewell*, church motets that would prove to be his final works. They are the pinnacle of the great flowering of English unaccompanied choral music during the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

"There is an old belief," the fourth of the *Songs of Farewell*, sets a text by the nineteenth-century Scottish writer John Gibson Lockhart, best known as Sir Walter Scott's biographer. The poet recounts the philosophy that we will, upon our death, awaken to be greeted by friends who have died before us. He concludes that if this philosophy is *not* true, he would prefer to remain permanently asleep. Much of Parry's motet is in thick six-part counterpoint in close imitation, appropriate to Lockhart's depth of thought. At the mid-point ("That creed I fain would keep") Parry confidently quotes an ancient Catholic chant ("Credo in unum Deum"—"I believe in one God"). The final two lines are given more dissonant music in turn dour and hopeful, with the whole choir moving homophonically as one.

There is an old belief,
  that on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
  dear friends shall meet once more:

Beyond the sphere of Time
  and Sin, and Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
  of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
  that hope I'll ne'er forgo;
Eternal be the sleep
  if not to waken so.

— John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854),
adapted by the composer

Ward, the pirate (1912)
arranged by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

In the late nineteenth century, Germany invented a new science, researching the history of music. Until then, no composer could justifiably claim that their music might be performed beyond their lifetimes. (One could argue that only Palestrina, Mozart, and Beethoven had hitherto truly maintained their fame posthumously.) This science caught on in England, where it came to be called "musicology." One of the unusual characteristics of English music research was an interest in the island's native folksongs. Musicologists, composers, and enthusiastic amateurs (such as George Barnet Gardiner, who collected *I love my love*) wandered the countryside on foot, asking the oldest residents they encountered to sing a tune from their youth. They thus preserved several thousand folk melodies and verses that would surely have been lost.

Vaughan Williams was one of the leaders of this activity, often traveling in company of his closest friend, Gustav Holst. Both men occasionally arranged the tunes they encountered for solo voice or for chorus. Four-part men's voices were the chosen medium for Vaughan Williams's take on *Ward, the pirate*, a tune that originally evolved in the seafaring eastern counties. The first stanza claims to be recruiting sailors to join a royal force to combat the ostensibly evil pirate, Captain Ward. But one cannot ignore that Vaughan Williams's music for Ward himself is just as heroic and romanticized. Perhaps Vaughan Williams was aware of another version of the song, in which the ship is called the Saucy Rainbow, with a mere 1,100 aboard (inflated over time to the 1,300 of Vaughan Williams's text). In that alternate version, Ward proclaims to the Rainbow, "Although you show your brass without, I am pure steel within." He invites the English ship to pass unharmed, but the Rainbow's intransigence brings on battle. At the end, Ward claims that he has "never robbed an English ship … nor yet the blaggard Dutchman," who were allies of the English against the French and Spanish. Could Ward be not a wily villain, but an unwittingly loyal Englishman? Regardless, that's not the version Vaughan Williams set. So maybe it's inconsequential to this music. But it's still a fun story. Vaughan Williams would approve.

Come all you gallant seamen bold, all you that march to drum,
Let's go and look for Captain Ward, far on the sea he roams;
He is the biggest robber that ever you did hear,
There's not been such a robber found for above this hundred year.

A ship was sailing from the east and going to the west,
Loaded with silks and satins and velvets of the best,
But meeting there with Captain Ward, it proved a bad meeting;
He robbèd them of all their wealth and bid them tell their king.

O then the King provided a ship of noble fame,
She's called the "Royal Rainbow," if you would know her name;
She was as well provided for as any ship could be,
Full thirteen hundred men on board, to bear her company.

'Twas eight o' clock in the morning when they began to fight,
And so they did continue there till nine o' clock at night.
"Fight on, fight on," says Captain Ward, "This sport well pleases me,
For if you fight this month or more, your master I will be."

O then the gallant "Rainbow" she fired, she fired in vain,
Till six and thirty of her men all on the deck were slain.
"Go home, go home," says Captain Ward, "and tell your king from me,
If he reigns king on all the land, Ward will reign king on sea."

intermission

Ave Maria (1900)

by **Gustav Holst** (1874–1934)

Some composers, like Bach or Mozart, show great promise in their youth. But others, like Holst and Vaughan Williams, take time to develop their brilliance. The pair of best friends met while studying at the Royal College of Music in the 1890s. Their shared teacher, Charles Villiers Stanford, was noted for his extreme demands. While Vaughan Williams flourished in such an environment, others didn't, most notably John Ireland. Holst was somewhere in the middle: he just didn't get much out of college. Which happens sometimes, even to the most well-meaning students. His early works were undistinguished, and only marginally interesting. There was no reason to suspect he had any special talent. To make ends meet, he played trombone in two orchestras.

But… there were a few glimmers of his promise, for those who dared to pay attention. One of the earliest was the *Ave Maria*, written in 1900, two years after leaving the RCM. It is scored for eight-part women's chorus and dedicated to the memory of his mother, who had died when Holst was a boy. To look at the page, it seems he is merely imitating the German predecessors on whom he had modeled his student works—folks like Mendelssohn and Rheinberger. To *hear* the work, however, is a different experience. The subtle falling scales, the reservation of the sopranos' high range into a dialogue of unisons, the deft handling of dissonance without resorting to Wagnerian chromaticism, the varied interactions between the two choirs, the static pacing of the middle section ("et benedictus"), the occasional bursting forth of an inner voice, the suave sidle into recapitulation, the final introspective "Amen"—these are signs of a craft that would, eventually, bear fruit.

Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.	Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. Amen.	Holy Mary, pray for us. Amen.

Clear and gentle stream (1934?), from *Seven Partsongs*, opus 17 (1931–7)

by **Gerald Finzi** (1901–1956)

Gerald Finzi was beset by tragedy early in life. Thanks largely to the First World War, before he was eighteen Finzi lost his father, three brothers, and beloved teacher, Ernest Farrar. He studied with Edward Bairstow in York for a few years, then went to Gloucestershire, a man in his twenties of independent wealth trying to find himself in the idyllic hills of the West Country. He did eventually move to London, where he taught at the Royal Academy of Music, attended vast numbers of concerts, and hobnobbed with England's musical elite. But his heart was in the countryside, and so in 1937 he and his artist wife built a house in rural Hampshire. It became a haven for musicians and composers, Ralph Vaughan Williams prominent among them. There Finzi composed.

Though respected among his colleagues, Finzi had, by the outbreak of the Second World War, gained hardly a jot of public recognition. He was known for a few songs on Thomas Hardy, such as the cycle *A Young Man's Exhortation* (1926–9), but nothing else. This assuredly had much to do with the many non-compositional projects he undertook. He arranged for the preservation and publication of the poems and songs of Ivor Gurney, a friend who suffered psychologically from the First War. He curated the manuscripts of Hubert Parry for the Bodleian Library at Oxford. He collected music manuscripts and published scores from England

in the period of roughly 1740 to 1780. He passionately read and collected poetry and many other volumes. He devoted much of his sixteen acres to an apple orchard, saving dozens of varieties from extinction. He founded in 1940 the Newport String Players, an amateur orchestra with which he performed standard string repertoire, unknown works by his beloved eighteenth-century English composers, and periodically works by young, as yet undiscovered composers. His own compositions progressed, bit by bit, steadily and slowly.

Among them was a series of choral partsongs written throughout the 1930s on texts of Robert Bridges, who at the turn of the century had been considered one of England's leading poets but is now all but forgotten. *Clear and gentle stream* exemplifies Finzi's methods of setting text organically—organic, yes; simple, no. The text is stated straight through, without repetition, like a recitation, though the four parts often imitate each others' entrances. All four voices are treated as contrapuntal equals, trading opportunities to introduce each new line of text. (Finzi argued that this number is best heard when sung by solo voices, as with madrigals of old.) The tempo is marked *Andante placido*, and placidity likewise infuses the dynamic, which only three times rises as far as *mezzoforte.* Though Bridges's poem seems a peaceful recollection while visiting a dear location from the poet's youth, the title is telling: "Elegy."

Clear and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day;
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament,
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray,
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon,
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

— Robert Bridges (1844–1930)

The hills (1953)
by **John Ireland** (1879–1962)

At the end of the nineteenth century, Charles Villiers Stanford was the primary composition instructor at the Royal College of Music in London. He was also rude, cruel, and irascible: what the Victorians would have called a typical Irishman. One of his students was the mild-mannered, easily intimidated, introspective, insecure, orphaned—and very English—John Ireland. It was a horrible match. But Ireland did learn much from Stanford's absolute insistence on solid craft. Ireland left the RCM to become organist and choirmaster at St. Luke's Church in London's fashionable Chelsea neighborhood. Steadily his reputation as a composer grew, led by the choral anthem *Greater love hath no man* (1911), the song *Sea-Fever* (1913), and *The Holy Boy* (1913), a piano work that came to be arranged for various forces, including as a hymn. Around 1920 he began to teach at the RCM and entered a more prominent role in British musical society. He even finally tackled one of the larger forms: his Piano Concerto (1930) is among the best ever written by an Englishman. Ireland stopped teaching in 1939, and largely stopped composing in the mid-1940s, while in his sixties. But he finally found a degree of inner peace.

One occasion for which he came out of retirement was the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Ireland was one of ten composers commissioned to contribute to *A Garland for the Queen*, a volume of modern madrigals. The poem by James Kirkup could hardly have better suited Ireland's personality. Much of England is noted for its gentle hills, which here are hailed as "altars of the sun" and, most appropriately for a coronation text, "the earth's enduring thrones." Amid bouts of silence, Ireland vividly depicts various aspects of nature. The "profounder rivers run" with steadily moving lines. A smooth unison descent prepares the hills' "strong humility," a phrase which indeed could describe John Ireland himself.

How calm, how constant are the hills!
How green and white and golden in the summer light!
Their lakes, their leaping wells are bright
With flow'r, leaf, and rain,
And their profounder rivers run
From rocks that are the altars of the sun.

How calm, how constant are the hills!
Our time's dark gale of ice and fire
Thunders around them, but removes them never.
No tempest overthrows their strong humility.
They are both god and temple,
And their stones are holy, the earth's enduring thrones.

How calm, how constant are the hills.

— James Kirkup (1918–2009)

Five English Folksongs (1913)

arranged by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

Over the course of his life, Vaughan Williams made at least sixty-one arrangements of folksongs for chorus, and sixty more for solo voice and piano. And this excludes those that found their way into over a dozen other works, such as the opera *Hugh the Drover* (1914), the *English Folksong Suite* (1923) for military band, the *Six Studies in English Folksong* (1926) for cello and piano, and of course works for chorus and orchestra like *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (1912) and *Folksongs of the Four Seasons* (1949). Throughout his career, Vaughan Williams constantly returned to the folksong for inspiration. But the *Five English Folksongs*—published in 1913, while Vaughan Williams was still building his reputation—stand apart. He doesn't limit himself to simple statements of the tune, but builds each into an elaborate fantasia, using the choir to depict and explore the story dramatically. It is no surprise that by 1920 they were being performed across England.

Four of the group deal with the popular trope of a sailor returning home and finding love. In the first, a sailor meets a "young lady fair" on her evening promenade. She laments that her lover is dead "at the bottom of the sea," but then he reveals himself as the very fellow. (Never mind that she didn't recognize him on her own. Perhaps she was crying too hard? Or he grew a beard?) The moral to the story—shared by Holst's *I love my love*—is: "maids, be true while your love's away." (Not very woke; sorry.) In the second song, the poet overhears a sailor (apparently a tenor) and his lady singing in a Scottish valley, "proclaim[ing] the lovely spring." The refrain of "Just as the tide was flowing" receives a magnificently rolling statement, as a sailor comes home, meets a maiden on her walk (sound familiar?), and rhapsodically requests to join her.

But the fourth song takes a new approach. The lover returns from a "long time" at sea, ready to share with his beloved a fleet of ships replete with resonant music, silken sails, and a golden mast. Only the title bears the hint that she is in fact being visited by "the lover's ghost," who has returned "for the sake, my love, of thee." (We never learn what she thinks of this visitation.) Archaic cadential patterns and oddly prolonged phrase patterns reveal the specter's measured pace, and the final C-sharp major ("thee") is surely one of history's greatest closing shifts from minor to major.

And now for something completely different, trading the sea for Christmas. Carolers invoke blessings upon the master of the house, who after all has provided them with white bread and brown ale—very opulent indeed! Warm wishes are bestowed on his livestock, his fields, even his servants (but woe betide the chintzy butler!). Eventually, the party ends and the carolers wander off, singing into the distance .

1. The dark-eyed sailor

It was a comely young lady fair,
Was walking out for to take the air;
She met a sailor all on her way,
So I paid attention to what they did say.

Said William, "Lady why walk alone?
The night is coming and the day near gone."
She said, while tears from her eyes did fall,
"It's a dark-eyed sailor that's proving my downfall.

"It's two long years since he left the land;
He took a gold ring from off my hand;
We broke the token, here's part with me,
And the other lies rolling at the bottom of the sea."

Then half the ring did young William show,
She was distracted midst joy and woe.
"O welcome, William, I've lands and gold
For my dark-eyed sailor, so manly, true and bold."

Then in a village down by the sea,
They joined in wedlock and well agree.
So maids be true while your love's away,
For a cloudy morning brings forth a shining day.

2. The spring time of the year

As I walked out one morning,
In the springtime of the year,
I overheard a sailor boy,
Likewise a lady fair.

They sang a song together,
Made the valleys for to ring,
While the birds on spray
And the meadows gay
Proclaimed the lovely spring.

3. Just as the tide was flowing

One morning in the month of May,
Down by some rolling river,
A jolly sailor, I did stray,
When I beheld my lover.
She carelessly along did stray,
A-picking of the daisies gay;
And sweetly sang her roundelay,
Just as the tide was flowing.

O! her dress it was so white as milk,
And jewels did adorn her.
Her shoes were made of the crimson silk,
Just like some lady of honour.
Her cheeks were red, her eyes were brown,
Her hair in ringlets hanging down;
She'd a lovely brow without a frown,
Just as the tide was flowing.

I made a bow and said, "Fair maid,
How came you here so early;
My heart by you it is betray'd
For I do love you dearly.
I am a sailor come from sea,
If you will accept of my company
To walk and view the fishes play,"
Just as the tide was flowing.

No more we said, but on our way
We gang'd along together;
The small birds sang, and the lambs did play,
And pleasant was the weather.
When we were weary we did sit down,
Beneath a tree with branches round;
For my true love at last I'd found,
Just as the tide was flowing.

4. The lover's ghost

Well met, well met my own true love;
Long time I have been absent from thee,
I am lately come from the salt sea,
And 'tis all for the sake, my love, of thee.

I have three ships all on the salt sea,
And one of them has brought me to land,
I've four and twenty mariners on board,
You shall have music at your command.

The ship wherein my love shall sail
Is glorious for to behold,
The sails shall be of shining silk,
The mast shall be of the fine beaten gold.

I might have had a King's daughter,
And fain she would have married me,
But I forsook her crown of gold,
And 'tis all for the sake, my love, of thee.

5. Wassail Song

Wassail, Wassail, all over the town,
Our bread it is white and ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the green maple tree;
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right eye,
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,
A good Christmas pie as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right horn,
Pray God send our master a good crop of corn,
A good crop of corn as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his long tail,
Pray God send our master a good cask of ale,
A good cask of ale as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best;
Then I pray that your soul in heaven may rest;
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,
May the Devil take butler, bowl and all!

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,
Who tripp'd to the door and slipp'd back the lock;
Who tripp'd to the door and pull'd back the pin,
For to let these jolly Wassailers walk in.

Wassail, Wassail, all over the town.

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is to express and nurture a love of choral music by:

- inspiring and educating our singers, our audience and the broader community;
- presenting quality performances of fine choral music from various historical, cultural and stylistic traditions; and
- collaborating with composers, professional musicians and other arts organizations.

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