



Welcome to the latest newsletter. There's plenty of good news to report.

WORKS FOR SOLO VOICE AND PIANO

You have probably been wondering when the next newsletter would appear. I had intended that you would have the newsletter at the beginning of January. The reason for the delay is because I wanted to convey some excellent news, namely that we have now completed the project of transcribing from original manuscript, the remaining works by Holst for voice and piano.

This has been a fairly demanding exercise, not least for the three professional musicians who have very kindly volunteered their time to transcribe a substantial amount of music. The Society is greatly indebted to John Wright, Paul Sarcich and Peter Clulow for their considerable assistance with regard to these transcriptions.

The position today is that the Society now has, with one exception, all the 98 songs composed by Holst. Fifty-four were published and the remaining 43 have now been transcribed. The remaining song at the British Library is incomplete.

Of those 43, six were given a performance (if not a world première, certainly the first performance in 100 years) by James Gilchrist (tenor) accompanied at the piano by John Wright, at the Holst Birthday Concert in Cheltenham last September.

James has expressed considerable interest in the remaining 37 songs. It is also to be hoped that other professional musicians will be interested in giving a public performance of these songs. In due course, let us hope that all will be recorded.

Of the 54 published songs, only 36 have been recorded. Altogether, there are at least 60 songs which have yet to be recorded.

It is therefore excellent news that, later this year, a recording will appear on the Albion record label (part of the Vaughan Williams Society) of songs by Vaughan Williams and Holst. Included will be the following by Holst:-

- The Four Songs H14
- The Six Songs H68
- The Cradle Song H69
- Abroad as I was walking H83/1
- The Willow Tree H83/6
- Four Songs for Voice and Violin H132
- Darest Thou Now O Soul H72

The soloists will be Mary Bevan and Roderick Williams. Will Vann will be the piano accompanist and Thomas Gould will play the violin pieces.

It is good news that this recording will feature no less than 18 songs by Holst, of which no less than seven will be world premières.

The Holst Society's contribution towards the recording has been calculated at a very modest £2000. If any member of the Society is in a position to contribute towards that sum, I would be delighted to hear from them.

I will advise members of the Society just as soon as the recording has become available.

A list of all the songs now appears on the website under the heading "List of works of Gustav Holst".

If any member of the Society would like to promote or record any of these songs (particularly those not previously recorded), would they please let me know. Please also advise of any professional musicians who may be interested.

LIST OF WORKS OF GUSTAV HOLST

As mentioned above, the list of works has been updated as at January 2019. The number of works listed is just over 360.

PUBLICATIONS BY VICE PRESIDENT RAYMOND HEAD

Members of the Society keen to learn more about Holst should seriously consider acquiring the following publications.

Gustav Holst The Planets: New light on a famous work
8,000 words plus many illustrations. £8.50 plus postage £3.00

<https://raymondhead.com/gustav-holst-planets>

Holst the Sanskrit Works 15,000 words with illustrations £15. pdf £13.00

<https://raymondhead.com/gustav-holst-and-india>

Holst and Beni Mora: A man and a Bike in Algeria verbatim lecture with illustrations. (5,200 words) First given at King's College, London University as part of Oxford Uni Blazan Global History Conference in 2014. A pdf only £10.50.

<https://raymondhead.com/gustav-holst-beni-mora>

All three publications have been published by Sky Dance Press. Payment can be made either by PayPal or by sending a cheque to Raymond Head, 10 Worcester Road, Chipping Norton OX7 5XX. For further information please contact raymondhead@phonecoop.coop. His website is www.raymondhead.com.

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BIOGRAPHY

The Society has six copies for sale of vice president Michael Short's excellent biography – Gustav Holst, the Man and his Music. If you would like a copy of the Holst biography, please send your cheque to Hammetts, Kings Nympton, Devon EX37 9ST, payable to the Holst Society in the sum of £18 (which also covers postage and packaging).

BIRTHDAY CONCERT

The annual Holst Birthday Concert will take place on Saturday 5th October 2019 and will feature the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra. We do not, as yet, know the full programme, but understand that it will include Holst's Brook Green Suite.

The Society's AGM will take place in Cheltenham, that afternoon.

THE SAINT LOUIS CHAMBER CHORUS

The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus (Missouri, USA) is conducted by Philip Barnes, who is a keen advocate of Holst's music. At a recent service/concert (13th January) the following works were played:-

- A Piece for Yvonne (piano)
- Introit: O God, Beyond all Praising (to the tune Thaxted)
- Offertory: In the Bleak Midwinter (arranged for trombone and organ by Todd Marchand)
- Anthem: Turn Back O Man
- Postlude – Toccata on a Northumbrian Tune (piano)

Other works performed in recent years include:-

- Autumn Song
- Ave Maria
- Bring us in Good Ale
- Hymn of Jesus
- Third Group from The Rig Veda
- I Love My Love
- Light Leaves Whisper
- Lullay My Liking
- Neptune from The Planets
- Nunc Dimittis
- Of one that is so Fair and Bright
- Seven Choruses from the Alcestis of Euripides
- Six Choral Folk Songs
- Songs from the Princess
- The Autumn is Old
- The Evening Watch

- This have I done for my True Love
- Two Eastern Pictures

It is very good news that Holst is being heard to some considerable extent in Saint Louis.

FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Saturday 9th February, 7.30pm. The Apex, Bury St Edmunds. Beni Mora. Wolsey Orchestra.

Sunday 10th February at 5pm. Parkstone Grammar School, Poole. A Somerset Rhapsody. Magna Sinfonia.

The Society is sponsoring this concert.

Tuesday 12th February at 7.30pm. St John's Smith Square, Longon. Fugal Overture. Salomon Orchestra.

Sunday 10th March at 3pm, St Mary's Church, Barnes, London. First Suite in E Flat. Barnes Concert Band.

Sunday 17th March at 6pm. St John's Smith Square, London. Seven Part Songs. St Paul's Girls' School Symphony Orchestra and Choir.

Saturday 13th April at 7.30pm (approx). St Andrew's Church, Aysgarth, North Yorkshire. The Planets – two-piano transcription. Robert Hunter and Zoe Mather.

NORTH DOWNS SINFONIA

The North Downs Sinfonia performed Holst's Suite de Ballet at its concert on 10th November 2018.

Jon Maynard, NDS chairman and conductor, has written to the Society as follows:-

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to you in reference to the sell out concert of English works performed by the North Downs Sinfonia, containing Holst's Suite de Ballet. The suite featured at the end of a busy first half and was received with unanimous praise, with a lot of comments about how refreshing it was to hear something by Holst that wasn't 'The Planets', and a piece that highlighted his early developmental works.

None of our 45-strong orchestra members had ever played this Holst work, and it was a particular delight (and challenge) to rehearse this in amongst the rest of the pieces in only 4 afternoon rehearsals. I introduced the work from the conductor's podium on the night to give the audience a brief background to the work and to explain that although Holst had deemed this work one of his 'early horrors'; none of us felt the same at all!

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The Danse-Rustique was played with precision and the cross-bar rhythms and tempi changes of the Valse (Waltz) proved tricky to master, but came together for a confident performance on the night. The Scene de Nuit allowed the audience (and woodwind, brass and percussion sections!) time to relax and listen to our orchestral leader, Sylvia Seaton, sing the lyrical themes of this movement. The contrasts of the sweet melodies and fervent and furious passages in the Carnival brought the work to a rousing conclusion with shouts of appreciation from the audience at the end of the final chord.

The BBC4 programme about Holst and Vaughan-Williams that followed our concert around 2 weeks later, reinforced the message we conveyed in the concert, that British music by composers such as Holst has a descriptive element rarely found in other European composers works of the Classical era, and that the recent upsurge in popularity of this is so well deserved.

We are indebted to the Holst Society who made it possible for us to perform this fabulous Holst suite through the hire of the orchestral parts and look forward to further collaborations in the future.

THE WANDERING SCHOLAR

Holst's opera, The Wandering Scholar, is due to be performed at Colorado State University at the beginning of April, together with Vaughan Williams' opera, Riders to the Sea. It is good to hear that these two one-act operas by British composers are being featured in the USA.

Performances will take place on April 4th, 5th and 6th at 7.30pm and at 2pm on April 7th. The venue is the Griffin Concert Hall at the University Center for the Arts at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

OPERA FACTORY FREIBURG

The Holst-Sinfonietta under their conductor Klaus Simon (a member of the Society) is giving an exciting programme of music by Holst on 20th and 21st July 2019, at 8pm at the Pauluskirche, Dreisamstr 3, Freiburg, South West Germany.

The concerts will include performances of:-

- Savitri
- Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda (Second Group)
- Two Eastern Pictures
- Four Songs for Soprano and Violin
- Selection from the Vedic Hymns
- Three Songs from the 12 Humbert Wolfe Songs

Would any member of the Holst Society interested in attending these concerts, please let me know, so that I can notify the organisers, nearer the date.

Opera Factory Freiburg produces high-quality musical theatre and chamber operas using both young and experienced European artists. They seek out works which have been neglected or under-estimated. The Holst-Sinfonietta is their orchestra in residence. They have made various recordings and been nominated for awards.

HOLST CHRISTMAS MUSIC

The other CD which the Society is presently promoting is in conjunction with the Godwine Choir. Our first CD (launched in May 2018) also featured the Godwine Choir and included a number of part songs by Holst.

This recording will feature all Holst's Christmas music including

| | | |
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| 1905 | H73 | In the bleak midwinter |
| 1907 | H82 | 4 old English carols |
| - | H91 | 2 carols - A Welcome Song (1908)/Terly Terlow (1916) |
| 1910 | H109 | Christmas Day |
| 1916 | H129 | Lullay my liking |
| 1916 | H133 | 3 carols - I Saw Three Ships/ Personent Hodie/ Masters in this hall |
| 1916 | H130 | Of one that is so fair |
| 1916 | H128 | This have I done |
| 1916 | H131 | Bring us in good ale |
| 1917 | H139 | A dream of Christmas |
| 1931 | H182 | The wassail song |

Most of these carols have previously been recorded. However, this will be the first time that all Holst's carols will feature on a single CD.

In addition, the recording will include the Four Voluntaries for Organ namely:-

- 1889 A1/11 Funeral March in G Minor
- 1890 A1/8 March in C Major
- 1891 A1/9 Allegretto Pastorale
- 1891 A10 Postlude in C

John Wright FRCO (member of the Holst Society) will be the organist. We hope that the recording will feature the organ at the church in Cheltenham where Holst's father was the organist.

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Also to be included on the CD is an arrangement for organ (four hands) by Richard Brasier of Holst's last orchestral work, namely his Scherzo (H192) dating from 1933. This was the only movement completed by Holst of his proposed symphony.

We hope that Richard, together with his colleague Tom Bell, will be the organists. We are giving some thought to which particular organ will be featured. It may well be the organ in the chapel at Cheltenham College. In any event, this will be the first recording of Richard's transcription.

This recording will include a number of unique features, namely all Holst's Christmas music on CD, together with all four organ works and the transcription of the Scherzo. I should also add that the recording of the Four Voluntaries will also be a world première.

We hope that the organ music will be recorded in June and the Christmas music in July. The CD will be distributed in the autumn, well in time for the Christmas sales.

THE QUEEN'S HALL 15TH NOVEMBER 1920

The painting (recently completed) which appears below is by the Canadian artist Dave Rheame and features the Queen's Hall in London on 15th November 1920, when there took place the first public performance of *The Planets*.



INDRA

Vice president Raymond Head has sent me a cutting from the Oxford Times dating from March 1989. The article's principal interest relates to a work by John Foulds (1880-1939), a near contemporary of Holst's, namely his Apotheosis, recently discovered by Raymond and about to receive its world première on 5th March 1989, nearly 30 years ago. The orchestra was the North Oxfordshire Scratch Orchestra (NOSO) and the conductor was Raymond. The concert also featured the première of another work by Foulds, his Durbar March.

Foulds' music has seen something of a revival in recent years. Much of his orchestral music has been recorded and is well worth exploring. I personally have three CDs of his music. With regard to the Apotheosis, a recording is available on the Warner Classics label. Also on Amazon.

The article also refers to the establishment of the NOSO in November 1987, which went on to premier Holst's Indra. Raymond had discovered the manuscript in the British Library in 1985. Indra, a symphonic poem, dates from 1903. The edited version by vice president Colin Matthews was recorded on the Lyrita label in 1993 (SRCD 209) with the LPO under David Atherton and is still available.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Due to appear at the beginning of April. Any contributions please forward to me at chairman@holstsociety.org by the end of March.

Chris Cope
Chairman
31st January 2019