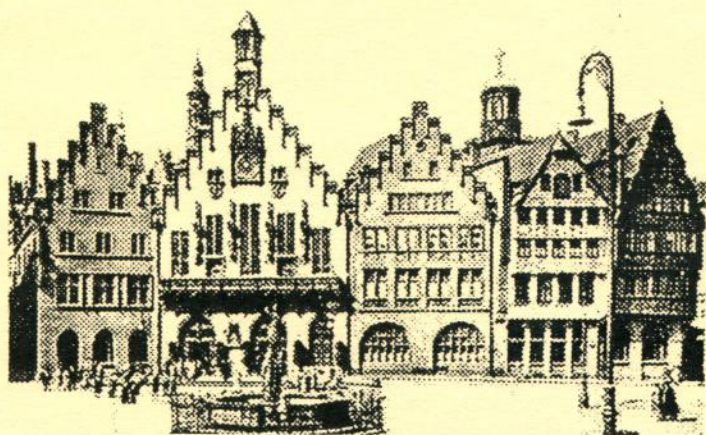


THE  
*Aldburgh*  
CONNECTION

# The Frankfurt Gang



WALTER HALL  
SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2002  
2:30 p.m.

# THE FRANKFURT GANG

SUSAN PLATTS, mezzo

ALEXANDER DOBSON, baritone

STEPHEN RALLS and BRUCE UBUKATA, piano

Music by

Norman O'Neill (1875-1934)

Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950)

Cyril Scott (1879-1970)

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)



In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Frankfurt was one of the musical centres of Germany and, therefore, of Europe. Its conservatory, founded in 1877, was known as 'Dr Hoch's Conservatoire' after the wealthy citizen who endowed it. Many distinguished musicians graced its faculty — the first director was the Swiss composer, Joachim Raff, the head of the piano department was no less than Clara Schumann and the composition teachers included Engelbert Humperdinck. There was nothing very unusual about English musicians travelling abroad for their training: there was a generally held and, probably, correct opinion that musical education on the Continent was superior to that available at home. Sullivan, Stanford, Delius and Ethel Smyth all followed the European path. Elgar wanted to study in Leipzig and was prevented by insufficient funds - foreign study implied a family background of at least moderate affluence. Another factor to be taken into account was that musicians returning home after some years might find it difficult to readjust to the British musical climate. This became increasingly a problem in the anti-German period from 1914 onwards.

The five composers known by their contemporaries as 'the Frankfurt gang' were never actually all together at one time in the German city; their studies there overlapped in various ways over a period of seven or eight years, from 1891 to 1899. Their friendships, however, survived well into the next century, only Norman O'Neill and Percy Grainger retaining always a certain coolness for each other. O'Neill is perhaps the least-known to present day audiences: he returned to London in 1897 and occupied himself with a highly successful career as a composer for the West End theatre. Henry Balfour Gardiner's *Evening Hymn* is still a fre-



quently performed anthem, but his composing career was virtually over after the Great War. The well-known conductor, John Eliot Gardiner, is his great-nephew.

Roger Quilter achieved the greatest success of any of 'the gang', as a composer of finely-wrought songs. These gained the widest circulation in the first decades of the twentieth century, but after that became unfairly, but increasingly, neglected as examples of an outmoded style. Quilter was a gentle, kindly man who ended his days in despondency and insanity. Grainger and Cyril Scott were the youngest of the group, the most innovative and the least predictable as far as their artistic development was concerned. In their young days, they egged each other on in feats of invention and throughout most of their lives their spirit of friendly rivalry and mutual encouragement continued. Scott was the longest lived of the five. His son, Desmond Scott, lives in Toronto and has been a catalyst in the production of this programme about 'The Frankfurt Gang.'



This afternoon, naturally, we focus on songs and piano music. The two halves of the programme reflect the changes, both social and cultural, resulting from the Great War.



### Part 1: A GOLDEN AGE

Love's Philosophy (*Percy Bysshe Shelley*) (Op.3/1) (1905) Quilter

A Song of Autumn (*Adam Lindsey Gordon*)(1899) Grainger

The Stranger's Song (*Thomas Hardy*) (1903) Gardiner

This brief song, the tale of a hangman, might have found its way into a Hardy opera which Balfour Gardiner was considering. The only thing materialising from this idea, however, was *Shepherd Fennel's Dance* which became very popular in both its orchestral and piano versions.

## Shepherd Fennel's Dance (1911)

Gardiner

From a programme note at the premiere by Rosa Newmarch:

"Those who have read Thomas Hardy's *Wessex Tales* will remember the christening party given by Shepherd Fennel and his wife, in honour of their second daughter... Good Mrs Fennel, hospitable yet thrifty, had intended to limit the exhilaration of the dance to a quarter of an hour at a time. But she reckoned without the enthusiasm of her musicians. 'Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction ... And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.'

Beginning with a few preliminary bars in slow time, we are soon carried away by the rapid rhythm of the dance. The quieter middle section reflects the simplicity and bonhomie of the shepherd and his wife, and affords effective relief and contrast to the prevailing mood of boisterous and careless gaiety."

A Lost Love (*words from the Chinese by Herbert Giles*) (Op.62/1) (1908)

Scott

Lullaby (*Christina Rossetti*) (Op.57/2) (1908)

Scott

This song lay deep in the consciousness of Benjamin Britten, who remembered his mother singing it to him when he was a child.

A Song of London (*Rosamund Marriott Watson*) (Op.52/1) (1906)

Scott

Scott's literary tastes were varied. For instance, he set 15 poems by Rosamund Marriott Watson, wife of the novelist H.B. Marriott Watson. Scott admired her better verse, although he admitted that 'Rosamund often permitted herself to drift into poetic platitudes in order to reap a few guineas from the editors of magazines.'

Night-Song (*Watson*) (1915)

Scott



And so I made a Villanelle (*Dowson*) (Op.65) (1908)

Scott

In Frankfurt, Scott met the symbolist poet, Stefan George, whose work he translated. George introduced him to the poetry of Ernest Dowson, 'the poet,' as the composer stated, 'that inspired me most at the start of my career.' He made 21 settings of Dowson, whose brief, unhappy life (1867-1900) was described as that of 'an English Poe, half angel, half Bohemian — a saint of the gutter, a Catullus lost in the wilderness of English respectability' (Donald Davidson).

Now sleeps the crimson petal (*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*) (Op.3/2) (1904)

Quilter

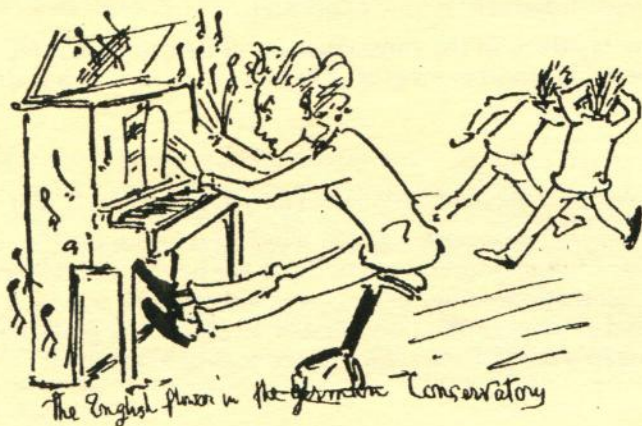
Love's Aftermath (*Dowson*) (1911)

Scott

Variations and Fugue on an Irish Air, Op.17 (1904)

O'Neill

Norman O'Neill married a girl whom he met in Frankfurt, a pupil of Clara Schumann named Adine Rückert. Under her married name, she became a well-known pianist in London and also taught music (alongside Gustav Holst) at St Paul's Girls' School. The O'Neills would often play these variations together in recital.



Aubrey Beardsley's impression of Norman O'Neill, at about eighteen, in his early days at the Frankfurt Conservatory

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## INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the Torel Room  
with the kind assistance of students  
of the Opera Division, Faculty of Music

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### Part 2: TOWARDS AUSTERITY

Allegro con brio, from *Three Symphonic Dances* (1902/1920)

Scott, arr. Grainger

The three dances first saw the light of day as Symphony No. 2, written in 1901/2. They were arranged for two pianos by Percy Grainger, then in New York City, in 1920 and the two composers recorded them on a piano-roll that same year.

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Some words from Desmond Scott, son of the composer

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Six Dukes went afishin' (*Lincolnshire folksong*) (1912) arr. Grainger

In the printed copy of this arrangement, Grainger makes elaborate efforts to reproduce the dialect of George Gouldthorpe, the countryman whose singing he had recorded on the phonograph.

Dream Valley (*William Blake*) (Op.20/1) (1916)

Quilter

The Fuchsia Tree (*Old Manx ballad*) (1923)

Quilter



Music and Moonlight (*Shelley*) (1935)

Quilter

Scherzo patetico, from *Sonata No. 3* (1956)

Scott

This movement is no more than an interlude in a large-scale three movement work, but it gives a taste of Scott's later style with its rhythmic and harmonic ingenuity.

The Ballad of Fair Helen (*anon.*) (1925)

Scott

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The final concert in our Sunday Series will take place on April 28, with *Music for the Masseys* — a look at the influence of this important family on musical and artistic life in Canada. Because of the large subscriber audience for these concerts, you are advised to reserve in advance by calling: (416) 444-3976.

We finish our Recital Series on Wednesday, May 8 with our annual *Greta Kraus Schubertiad*, featuring baritone **Brett Polegato** and the **Elmer Iseler Singers**. For ticket inquiries, please contact the Glenn Gould Studio Box Office at (416) 205-5555.

Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; grants, corporate funding and individual donations are needed for the balance. Audience members are asked to consider joining one of our supporting categories: **Benefactor** (\$1,000 or more), **Champion** (\$500 or more),

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following in presenting today's concert:

- Desmond Scott
- Muriel Lessmann
- Sissinghurst, which has provided today's floral arrangements
- The Ontario Arts Council and The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council

We also wish to thank the Department of Canadian Heritage for its support of our trio of 20th Anniversary concerts in January.



**Aldeburgh** is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic directors Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers, as has a large number of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

**Susan Platts** is heard with leading orchestras across Canada. She has sung Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* with Jiri Belohlavek at the National Arts Centre, Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Winnipeg Symphony, Mahler's *Rückert Lieder* and *B Minor Mass* with the Vancouver Symphony, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir. She recently made her Toronto Symphony Orchestra debut with Jukka-Pekka Saraste and most recently, her COC Orchestra debut singing Schoenberg's *Waldtaube* and Wagner's *Wesendonk-Lieder*. In the United States, she has appeared at the Oregon Bach Festival performing the *B Minor Mass* with Helmuth Rilling, with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the L.A. Chamber Orchestra, the Houston Symphony and the Florida Philharmonic. This past summer, Ms Platts appeared at the Bard Festival in New York, the European Music Festival in Stuttgart, made her Orchestre de Paris debut with Christoph Eschenbach, sang Verdi's *Requiem* and *Messa per Rossini* at the Oregon



Bach Festival. Upcoming highlights include debuts with Les Violons du Roy, the Kansas City Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra as well as debut recitals in Washington D.C. and at New York's Lincoln Center.

Alexander Dobson was a laureate in June 2001 at the International Voice Competition of Paris and won further distinction with the Edward Marshall Foundation Prize awarded to the outstanding baritone at that competition. His operatic appearances have included Guglielmo in L'Opéra de Montréal's production of *Così fan tutte*, Ned Keene in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Opera in Concert's *Linda di Chamoni*, and mainstage roles in *Salome*, *Otello*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with L'Opéra de Montréal, where he will sing Junius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. Recent oratorio appearances were as soloist in Holman's *A Song to David*, in the Fauré *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and he performed Schubert's *Die Winterreise* in Toronto, Montréal and England. He has been broadcast on CBC Radio performing a solo recital as a winner of a Debut Young Artist Award and in a programme of Beethoven's folksongs of the British Isles with the Gryphon Trio and Karina Gauvin. Other upcoming engagements include Vaughan William's *The First Nowell* with the Niagara Symphony and Bach's *B minor Mass* with the Cellar Singers. Alexander will also be in Toronto to sing the Pirate King in Toronto Operetta Theatre's *Pirates of Penzance*.

Shortbread cookies from LA ZECCA (tel: (416) 778-4207)

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Cover illustration: The Römerberg, the old market square in Frankfurt



# CYRIL SCOTT.

OPUS 65.

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