

THE  
*Aldburgh*  
CONNECTION



UPSTAIRS  
DOWNSTAIRS

WALTER HALL  
SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2003  
2:30 p.m.

We wish to thank  
Carol and Ken Anderson  
for sponsoring Laura Whalen,  
Michiel Horn  
for sponsoring Norine Burgess  
and

Sally Holton and Stephen Ireland  
for sponsoring Jesse Clark  
in today's concert

Today's programme is performed  
on the Edith McConica Steinway



## UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS

LAURA WHALEN, soprano

NORINE BURGESS, mezzo

JESSE CLARK, baritone

STEPHEN RALLS and BRUCE UBUKATA, piano



"I was born into a generation that still took light music seriously. The lyrics and melodies of Gilbert and Sullivan were hummed and strummed into my consciousness at an early age. My father sang them, my mother played them, my nurse, Emma, breathed them through her teeth while she was washing me, dressing me and undressing me and putting me to bed. My aunts and uncles, who were legion, sang them singly and in unison at the slightest provocation. The whole Edwardian era was saturated with operetta and musical comedy. In addition to popular foreign imitations, our own native composers were writing musical scores of a quality that has never been equalled in this country since the 1914-18 war.

"In the years immediately preceding the first world war, the American invasion began innocuously with a few isolated song hits, until Irving Berlin established a beach-head with *Alexander's ragtime band*. English composers, taken by surprise and startled by vital Negro-Jewish rhythms from the New World, fell back in some disorder; conservative musical opinion was shocked and horrified by such alien noises and, instead of saluting the new order and welcoming the new vitality, turned up its patrician nose and retired disgruntled from the arena.

"At this moment the war began, and there was no longer any time. It is reasonable to suppose that a large number of potential young composers were wiped out in those sad years and that had they not been, the annihilation of English light music would not have been so complete. As it was, when finally the surviving boys came home, it was to an occupied country; the American victory was a *fait accompli*."

Thus Noel Coward summed up the state of English popular music in the 1920s. English composers of light music like Coward or Ivor Novello were exceptions which proved the rule; and even they made no attempt to match the craze for transatlantic jazz, preferring to rely on a typically English, nostalgic blend of operetta and music-hall.

Our programme this afternoon attempts the mammoth task of presenting an overview of the English musical scene from about 1900 to 1930. In so doing we shall concentrate on the middle ground of taste rather than on the higher forms of art music. We shall include the kind of songs which

appealed to the leisured upper classes in their London drawing-rooms and concert halls on the one hand, and to the working classes in their taverns and music-halls on the other.

Those 'upstairs', of course, took frequent trips 'downstairs' to hear the popular entertainment which was maybe more to their taste. The greatest music-hall artistes were big stars in the West End, and the best known female performer, Marie Lloyd, was once howled off the stage by an East End audience who considered the lyrics of her songs, all the rage 'up West', far too indecent for their ears (or for those of their wives).

At the turn of the century the household names of the entertainment world were either prima donnas of the opera house or artistes of the music-hall. By 1930, both had been ousted from preeminence by the stars of the Hollywood film and the Broadway musical, who received the adoration of peers and commoners alike.



This programme was originally performed in our Sunday Series on March 16, 1986. The title was taken from the long-running British television series of the same name, set in Edwardian London. More recently, *Gosford Park* has presented the kind of social scene with which this programme deals — this time, in the early 1930s. The film's scene of domestic staff listening outside the drawing-room doors while Ivor Novello entertained the house party was a precise depiction of a genuine cultural moment.



Our spoken extracts are taken from the following:

*Clara Butt: Her life story*, by Winifred Ponder (1928)  
*Old Days and New*, by Lord Ernest Hamilton (1923)  
*Gervase Elwes*, by Lady Winefride and Richard Elwes (1935)  
 The diary of Sir Hubert Parry, Bart.  
 and newspapers and journals of the period



## PROLOGUE: CONTRASTS

Love's old sweet song (*Clifton Bingham*)

James Molloy (1837-1909)

The lyricist of this most popular of late Victorian ballads reported that various composers vied for the privilege of setting his poem to music; Molloy won, being the first to contact him via the electric telegraph. This duet arrangement was made some time in the 1920s.



Let's all go down the Strand

Harry Castling & C.W. Murphy

A typical music-hall song, with its gentle xenophobia and its topical references, this time to polar exploration.

**THE PRIMA DONNAS: 1. Dame Clara Butt (1873-1936)**

When Clara Butt sang *Land of hope and glory* at a rally in Hyde Park she could be heard, it was said, more than a mile away. With a height (six foot two) to match the size of her voice, she so impressed the venerable Saint-Saëns that he urged her to undertake the role of Delilah. But English law, alas, forbade Biblical subjects in opera. She preferred to make her name in oratorio and, above all, the sentimental ballad.

In Haven (*Sea Pictures*) (C. Alice Elgar)

Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Clara Butt gave the first performance of *Sea Pictures* at the Norwich Festival in 1899; this song had already been published as *Lute Song*.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps (*Shakespeare*)

Liza Lehmann (1862-1918)

Dame Clara gave many concerts with her husband, Kennerly Rumford, 'a modestly endowed, typically English baritone, whose natural elegance and refinement were both an example and a restraining influence' (Michael Scott). This duet, written for them, uses words from *The Merchant of Venice*.

A fairy went a-marketing (*Rose Fyleman*)

Arthur M. Goodhart (fl. c.1918)

The words appeared in *Punch*, January 2nd, 1918. The composer, amazingly enough, was a music master at Eton.

**THE PRIMA DONNAS: 2. Dame Nellie Melba (1859-1931)**

With a stage name derived from her birthplace, Melbourne, this Australian soprano made her debut in 1887 after only twelve months' study. Success was instantaneous, and her operatic career continued for thirty-nine years. 'In her brilliant execution of the most difficult *fioriture* nothing impressed more than a wonderful flexibility, unless it was the unflinching ease and perfect sense of restraint with which the singer accomplished her *tours de force*' (Grove).

Goodbye! (G.J. Whyte-Melville)

Sir Paolo Tosti (1846-1916)

Melba often sang the songs of the Italian composer, Tosti, who in 1880 was appointed singing teacher and accompanist at the English court. On the strength of this, he was able to charge one shilling a minute for piano lessons.

The Banks of Allan Water

Scottish folksong

## ART SONG VERSUS MUSIC-HALL

Upstairs and downstairs, the same themes, usually love and marriage, occurred repeatedly in the bulk of songs. But the direct, humorous approach of the music-hall often contrasts amusingly with the more introverted, soulful poetry of the drawing-room.

Isobel (*Digby Goddard-Fenwick*)

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Written in 1913, this is one of the last of Bridge's early songs, relating back to the Victorian ballad and forward to the later songs which were to make his voice a far more individual one.

Josh-u-ah

George Arthurs & Bert Lee

A waltz song of the music-hall, dating from 1916.

A little of what you fancy does you good

Fred Leigh & George Arthurs

This was a favourite of Marie Lloyd (1870-1922), 'Queen of the Halls'. T.S. Eliot described her as 'the most perfect, in her own style, of British actresses'.

Two songs from *A Shropshire lad* (A.E. Housman)

Sir Arthur Somervell (1863-1937)

Bredon Hill

The street sounds

Somervell's cycle (1904) is the earliest, and one of the best, of the many collections of songs written to Housman's poetry. First published in 1896, the poems of *A Shropshire lad* seized the imagination of the literary public in the decade leading up to the Great War, which they often uncannily prefigure.



## THE HOME FIRES

Keep the home fires burning (*Lena Gilbert Ford*)

Ivor Novello (1893-1951)

Appearing in the first year of the war, this song was its composer's first great success and the guarantee of his lasting fame.

A Hymn for Aviators (*Mary Hamilton*)

Sir Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

Parry's twelve volumes of *English Lyrics* comprise one of the finest collections of English song. This occasional piece, while not part of the collection, is a fine example of its composer's aristocratic style.

Marching song of the Royal Flying Corps

C. Converse

This kind of parody song was particularly popular in the Great War, and would have existed in various versions according to the unit singing.

With rue my heart is laden (*Housman*) George Butterworth (1885-1916)

Lieutenant George Butterworth was killed in August, 1916, in the Battle of the Somme.



## INTERMISSION

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



## ENGLAND ON HOLIDAY

### 1. A day trip

I do like to be beside the seaside

John A. Glover-Kind

Day trips to Margate or Southend were the best that most of the music-hall's patrons could hope for in the way of holidays.

Tango-Pasodoblé (*Façade*)

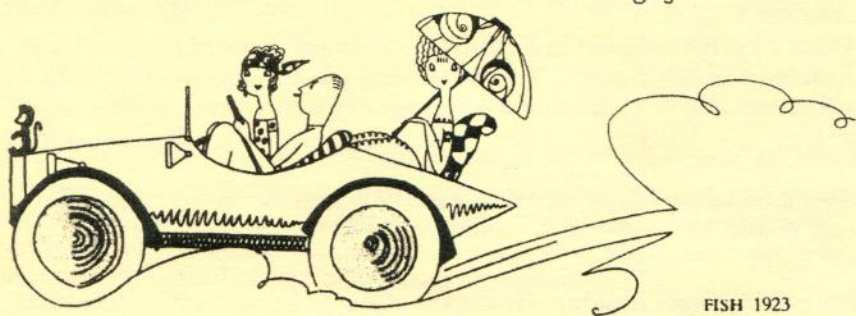
Sir William Walton (1902-83)

Walton's 'Entertainment', based on poems of Edith Sitwell, brought its composer great notoriety in the 1920s. This movement is based on the music-hall song just heard.

And her mother came too (*Dion Titheradge*)

Ivor Novello

Here we see an upper class gentleman on rather grander outings. The song shows the new sophistication of the 1920s revue — it appeared in 1921, in *A to Z*, a show starring Gertrude Lawrence and Jack Buchanan.



## 2. The folk-song craze

The pastimes of folk-song collecting seized the imagination of the artistic world during the 1900s and '10s. Whole parties of upper class people would tour the countryside, pumping the bemused countryfolk for the last dregs of popular melody remaining in their collective memory. Practically all major English composers indulged, and produced their own versions — Grainger arranged some sixty-odd songs and dances. It is impossible to deny the incalculable value of what was done, both in purely artistic terms and also as a massive rescue operation; at the same time, the craze can be seen as a last-ditch attempt, conscious or unconscious, by composers to bridge the ever-widening gulf between popular and 'art' music.

Willow willow

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)

This folk-song was the original of the song which Desdemona sings in *Othello* Act IV. The arrangement was Grainger's earliest, published in 1912 with a dedication (in Maori!) to Roger Quilter.

British waterside (or The jolly sailor)

Grainger

Grainger took this song down from Mr Samuel Stokes, at the Retford Almshouses, Nottinghamshire, on August 3rd, 1906. The setting was made in September, 1920.



Faroe Island Dance-Folksong — piano duet

Grainger

Grainger also toured Denmark and the Faroe Islands collecting songs, including this one, 'Let's dance gay in green meadow; 'Neath the mould shall never dancer's tread go.' It is dedicated 'to the memory of my friend John Singer Sargent'.

### 3. Abroad with the jazz set

The real American folk-song (*Ira Gershwin*)

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

This, the first song which the brothers Gershwin wrote together, was interpolated in a vaudeville show, *Ladies first* (1918), in which George accompanied Nora Bayes. Singer and pianist soon fell out because of his creative approach to accompaniment, and the song fell into oblivion. Other early Gershwin songs, like *Swanee*, crossed the Atlantic and became all the rage in London.

Someday I'll find you (*Private Lives*)

Noël Coward (1899-1973)

One of Coward's most successful waltz songs, it was used in his most famous play as a theme song of the lovers, portrayed by Coward and his favourite leading lady, Gertrude Lawrence.

The Tale of the Oyster

Cole Porter (1891-1964)

Originally written as *The Scampi* in 1926, this song eventually found its way into *Fifty million Frenchmen* — but was soon dropped as being in bad taste.

Let's do it

Porter

Introduced in London, in *Wake up and dream* (1929), this song had better luck. Even the Lord Chamberlain congratulated Porter on the lyrics and the extensive research that had gone into naming the myriad creatures who 'do it'.



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

Floral arrangements from SISSINGHURST (tel: (416) 461-7217)

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We invite you to come to the Glenn Gould Studio for the last of our three concerts celebrating Hugo Wolf — a performance of his masterpiece, the *Italian Song Book*, on Tuesday, March 25, at 8 pm. Two brilliant singers, **Monica Whicher** and **Russell Braun**, will be accompanied by **Bruce Ubukata** and **Stephen Ralls**. Tickets can be ordered from (416) 205-5555.

Our popular *Greta Kraus Schubertiad* returns to the Glenn Gould Studio on May 7 at 7:30 pm, with four exciting young singers, soprano **Shannon Mercer**, mezzo **Krisztina Szabó**, tenor **Colin Ainsworth** and baritone **Alexander Dobson**. The usual party with delicious Viennese refreshments will take place at intermission. For tickets, please call (416) 205-5555.

The final concert in this Sunday Series is *Catherine Robbin and friends* on April 27. As it is already sold out, please check with our box office at (416) 444-3976 nearer the date for any possible returns.

Our new double-CD set, released this past summer, *The Aldeburgh Connection's Twentieth Anniversary Collection*, is available in the lobby during intermission at a price of \$30, GST included. More than forty of your favourite artists can be heard on more than sixty tracks — two and a half hours of enjoyment, excerpted from our performances over the years. You may also order this CD through our Box Office at (416) 444-3976.

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), **Patron** (\$100 or more) and **Friend** (\$50 or more). Donations may be made by cheque or VISA, and may be made in instalments, if you prefer. You will receive information on our activities, and all donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. Private donors may also act as sponsors for an entire concert, an artist, a special commission, or the intermission tea; however, other donations and suggestions for corporate sponsorship are also very welcome. Your support is vital in helping to ensure the continuation of these concerts.



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

- Carol and Kenneth Anderson
- Michiel Horn
- Sally Holton and Stephen Ireland
- Muriel Lessmann
- Sissinghurst, which has provided today's floral arrangements
- The Ontario Arts Council and The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council
- many individual donors

We also gratefully acknowledge the following:

- The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation for a Senior Artist Grant
- The Ontario Arts Council Foundation for the Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Arts

**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.

**Laura Whalen** was recently chosen as guest soloist for the Governor General's Awards telecast from Ottawa accompanied by the National Arts Centre Orchestra. This season began with her debut as Mimi in *La bohème* for Pacific Opera Victoria, and she created the title role in the world premiere of *Filumena* by John Estacio for the Calgary Opera. She returned to Opera Ontario for 'Popera', and has concert engagements in Tampa, Kitchener-Waterloo, Thunder Bay and London. She has been featured in *Sirens*, an a capella choreographed musical theatre work written for the Queen of Puddings Musical Theatre Company, has appeared with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra in Mozart's *Exsultate, Jubilate*, in Handel's *Messiah* and Fauré's *Requiem* for the Toronto Symphony, sang Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Québec Symphony, and R. Murray Schafer's *Gitanjali* in Hamilton. Other notable appearances include Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* in Calgary, a Rutter/Vaughan Williams concert with Chorus Niagara and an evening of one act operas presented by Tapestry New Opera Works. She toured Europe in the summer of 2002 with the Caritatis Choir singing Brahms' *Requiem* in Helsinki, Tallinn and St. Petersburg and she rounded out the season with Mahler's *Symphony No 2* in Hamilton. On the opera stage, she was the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* for Opera Ontario in Kitchener and Hamilton, and was heard in evenings of Gilbert & Sullivan with the Toronto Philharmonia in Markham and Belleville and in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* for Orchestra London.

**Norine Burgess:** We are delighted to welcome Norine back to our Series in this, her first concert since the birth of twins in November. On April 23, she is in Quebec City singing *Liebeslieder Walzer* with her husband Michael Schade and baritone Russell Braun. Upcoming, also, are a special



Christmas concert in Vienna, and a chamber concert at Carnegie Hall with Michael Schade, Russell Braun and Isabel Bayrakdarian. Her busy 2001-2002 opera season included Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with the Edmonton Opera, Prince Orlofsky in Vancouver Opera's *Die Fledermaus* and Mother Marie in *Dialogues des Carmélites* in Tucson and Phoenix with Arizona Opera. She sang in concert with Michael Schade and the Windsor Symphony and was a featured performer in a fundraising gala for Leukemia Research. She received high praise singing Maddalena in the Vancouver Opera's *Rigoletto* and as Prince Orlofsky in Calgary, has sung *Messiah* with the Calgary Philharmonic, and appeared with the Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir in a performance of the Healey Willan *Requiem*, which was recorded for EMI. She is a frequent guest at the Salzburg Festival, where she has sang the role of Neris in Cherubini's *Médée*, sang in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, and Haydn's *Mass in B flat Major*, "Harmoniemesse". Notable concert engagements have included the Mozart *Requiem* in Leipzig and Halle, *Peer Gynt* with the Toronto Symphony, and Brahms's *Liebesslieder Walzer* and Britten's *Canticles* at the Internationale Bachakademie in Stuttgart. She has recorded Mendelssohn's *Symphony No. 2 "Lobgesang"*, conducted by Helmuth Rilling, with the Internationale Bachakademie, and Mozart's *C minor Mass* for Naxos with the Budapest Philharmonic.

**Jesse Clark** is a graduate of Queen's University with an Honours degree in English Literature, and of the University of Toronto's Opera Division. Roles at the school included Starveling in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Le Fauteuil in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, the Vicar in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Popolani in Offenbach's *Barbe Bleue* and John Wilson in the world premiere of *The Last Duel* by Gary Kulesha. Jesse has also appeared in concert with The Aldeburgh Connection, The Mississauga Choral Society and The Wagner Society of Toronto. Last summer he participated in the Tanglewood Music Festival as a vocal fellow working under the baton of Frederico Cortese and Seiji Ozawa and taking part in masterclasses with Phyllis Curtin, Matthias Goerne and Pierre Vallet. After Tanglewood Jesse travelled to Aldeburgh, England to perform the role of Harlekin in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* directed by Colin Graham. While in Aldeburgh Jesse sang in masterclasses with Malcolm Martineau, Ann Murray and Graham Johnson culminating in a recital of Schubert and Britten at London's prestigious Wigmore Hall accompanied by Graham Johnson. He will return to Aldeburgh this June for a concert performance and recording of Britten's opera, *Gloriana*.

