

Celebration in Song...

August 5th to 21st, 1988

Elora
Three
Centuries
Festival



Noel Edison
Artistic Director

INDEX OF PROGRAMMES

NINTH ANNUAL

ELORA THREE CENTURIES FESTIVAL

Under the Distinguished Patronage of the
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Three Centuries Festival gratefully acknowledges the generosity of
Spae-Naur Inc., Kitchener, for their grant in support of the promotional
materials for the 1988 Season.

Front cover:

Photograph by Derek Oliver

Editing Team:

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Printing and Layout:

Leaman Printing Ltd., Guelph

UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS

The Aldeburgh Connection

with: Martha Collins, Soprano
Janet Stubbs, Mezzo-Soprano
Daniel Neff, Baritone
Stephen Ralls, Piano
Bruce Ubukata, Piano

Thursday, August 18th, 1988, 8:00 p.m.
St. Mary Immaculate Church, Elora

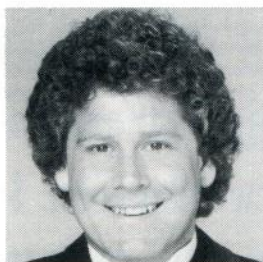


This is a light-hearted and lively glimpse of the Edwardian era set to music. These renowned Canadian performers give a melodic and mischievous performance to delight everyone.

Aldeburgh, on the east coast of England, is the small town where Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears started the Festival of Music which is now one of the most famous musical events in the world. Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers with most of the singers who appear in the concerts of *THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION*.



ALDEBURGH CONNECTION
Stephen Ralls, Bruce Ubukata



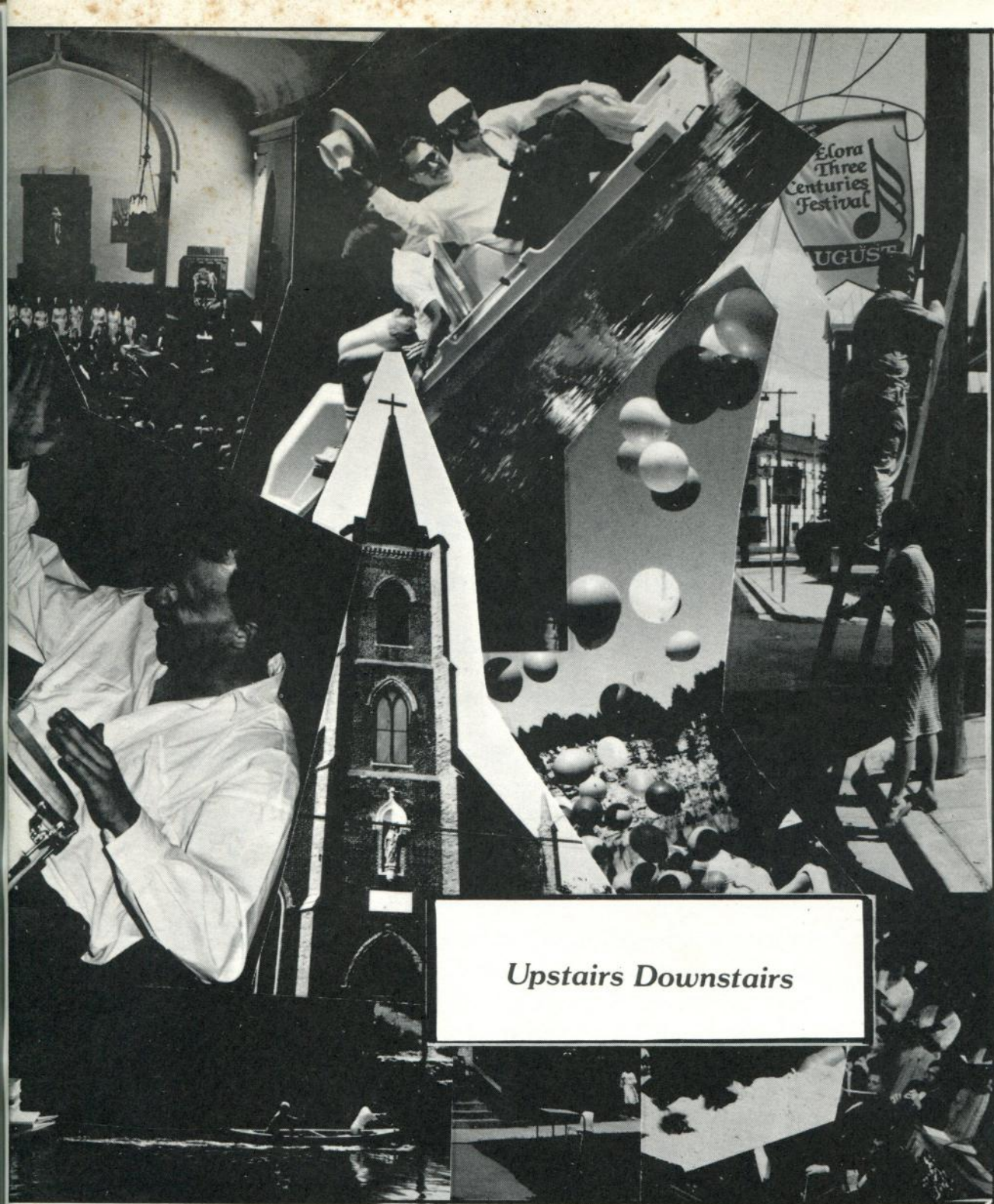
DANIEL NEFF



JANET STUBBS

This programme is sponsored by The Elora Mill Inn, Elora

Three Centuries Festival acknowledges the generous support of Yamaha Canada for providing the Grand Piano for this performance.



Upstairs Downstairs

Upstairs, Downstairs

Thursday, August 18th, 1988, 8:00p.m.

St. Mary Immaculate Church, Elora

This programme is sponsored by The Elora Mill Inn, Elora

UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS

MARTHA COLLINS
soprano

JANET STUBBS
mezzo soprano

DANIEL NEFF
baritone

STEPHEN RALLS & 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.

THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION

The Aldeburgh Connection was founded in 1982 by its artistic directors Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata to provide an opportunity for young singers to perform and for audiences to hear and enjoy the rich and seldom-performed repertoire for voice and piano.

The Connection

For three weeks every June the town of Aldeburgh on the east coast of England is the venue for a major international music festival. This festival, which was founded by Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier, has been an annual event for the past forty years.

Unlike many other major festivals which focus on opera, "Aldeburgh" concentrates on the song repertoire. The Aldeburgh Connection aims to carry this tradition, along with the same high standards of performance, into its concerts.

The Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies, also at Aldeburgh, operates from approximately March to October. Here performing musicians study and take master classes from some of the world's best singers and instrumentalists; Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Hans Hotter, Gerard Souzay, Galina Vishnevskaya, Murray Perahia and Mstislav Rostropovich have all been associated with the School.

Most of the artists featured by the group have worked or studied at Aldeburgh. Ralls and Ubukata have been associated with the School for the past ten years and will be returning again this summer as staff members at the Festival. This year also marks an important premiere for The Aldeburgh Connection which has been invited to perform its "Northern Lights" concert, a program showcasing Canadian singers and composers, at the 1988 Aldeburgh Festival.

Our programme 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 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.

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 Elwas, 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

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 1920's.

Let's all go down the Strand

Harry Castlin & 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 rôle 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
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
Dame Clara gave many concerts with her husband, Kennerley 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 Goodhart
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 unfailing ease and perfect sense of restraint with which the singer accomplished her tours de force' (Grove). Goodbye! (G.J. Whyte-Melville) Sir Paolo Tosti
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
The greatest opera stars would often achieve success with the simplest of folksongs.

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

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

Josh-u-a George Arthurs & Bert Lee

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

Waiting at the church Fred Leigh & Henry Pether

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)

Bredon Hill

The Street sounds

Sir Arthur Somervell

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 Guilbert Ford)
Ivor Novello

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

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

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

INTERVAL

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) - piano duet Sir William Walton

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 pastime of Folk-song collecting seized the imagination of the artistic world during the 1900's and 10's. 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

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

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) Noel Coward

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

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'.