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Charles Villiers Stanford, by Paul Rodmell (review)

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Crimp provides a valuable reception history of romantic piano concertos in the years during and after World War II, serving as a backdrop for the reception history of Bliss's own concerto. Crimp considers certain "romantic" concertos of the period failures (e.g., those by Vaughan Williams, John Ireland, and Benjamin Britten) but does not consider that they may have been intended as works firmly ensconced within the twentieth century. It is unfortunate that musical examples are not provided, for they would have made his discussion easier to follow.

Among the articles which focus on an aspect of Bliss's career, Lewis Foreman's article, "In Search of a Progressive Music Policy: Arthur Bliss at the BBC," is especially rewarding. Here we have the benefit of Foreman's extensive knowledge of, and contacts with, the British Broadcasting Corporation. Foreman sheds light on one of the most interesting times for the BBC, the years of World War II. The inclusion of the full texts (or nearly full) of many letters and documents allows for new and fascinating insights into the inner machinations of one of the most powerful broadcasting corporations of the world. The letters also provide greater insight into the man behind the music and, for a few short years, the man behind the corporation.

There has been far more critical research on Sir Michael Tippett than on Bliss and therefore *Michael Tippett: Music and Literature* has a narrower focus than that of the Bliss volume. Six of the ten articles are devoted to Tippett's intimate relationship with literature, including a piece by Tippett himself. (The remaining four deal with more varied topics.) The editor, Suzanne Robinson, is known for her work on the influence of T. S. Eliot on Tippett, and the collaborations between W. H. Auden and Benjamin Britten. Her introduction provides an invaluable discussion of Tippett's reading habits, which contributed greatly to his musical career. Included in this introduction is a thorough survey of the literature read by Tippett, the literary influences, and the multiple influences found within single musical works. Robinson also provides the uninitiated with an overview of the pioneering scholars on Tippett studies.

Many of the rest of the articles examine various facets of Tippett's original leftist

and agnostic beliefs and explore his gradual movement away from communism that paralleled his conversion to Christianity. These events had a significant effect on his musical composition, as did his registration as a conscientious objector during World War II.

Although there is no general bibliography—one must rely on the notes at the end of each of the ten articles—the volume includes a list of books written both by and about Tippett. Because of the more extensive literature available on Sir Michael Tippett, it is perhaps inevitable that readers will find Suzanne Robinson's *Michael Tippett: Music and Literature* the more rewarding of these two books. The overview provided by Stewart Craggs in *Arthur Bliss: Music and Literature*, however, will serve to point scholars and admirers of this neglected composer's music in the right direction.

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Charles Villiers Stanford. By Paul Rodmell. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002. [xxi, 495 p. ISBN 1-85928-198-2. \$99.95.] Music examples, illustrations, select list of works, bibliography, discography indexes.

The Anglo-Irish composer Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) occupies an important place in the history of music in the British Isles. At the height of his fame, his operas and instrumental works were well received in Germany; he was an intimate of Joseph Joachim, Hans Richter, and other celebrated continental musicians; and his European connections extended to such figures as Johannes Brahms, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Sergey Rachmaninoff, the major works of whom he introduced to the English musical public. In Britain, he was renowned for his precocity and industry. Appointed organist of Trinity College, Cambridge, while still an undergraduate, he began producing major compositions by his early twenties, built the Cambridge University Music Society into a vital force in British music, and became Professor of Music at Cambridge in 1887. Other affiliations included the conductorships of the London Bach Choir and the Leeds Festival, and

(from 1883 until his death) the post of professor of composition at the Royal College of Music (RCM). In this last capacity, he left his mark on some of the most distinguished British musicians of the next two generations, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Arthur Bliss, and Frank Bridge among them. This considerable workload did not prevent him from composing prolifically: his catalog runs to 194 opus numbers with works in all genres, including nine operas (still other large-scale works are unnumbered).

Stanford thus stood at the very center of the English music of his time, and he played a pivotal role in the English musical renaissance around 1900. Yet he remains largely a forgotten figure, a shadowy presence inhabiting the margins of monographs on his more famous pupils, but rarely examined in his own right. Paul Rodmell has corrected this omission in his engaging new book on the composer, a standard life-and-works volume offering a general overview of Stanford's huge output as well as a portrait of his personality and times. Rodmell realizes this traditional format exceptionally well. He offers a thorough chronological survey of the works, but keeps the discussion moving forward by wisely varying the amount of detail given to each piece. A prefatory note justifies this on the grounds that a book of this kind must inevitably be "a starting point" (p. xx) for the study of Stanford's music; the examples that he does discuss are well chosen, and the points of more detailed analysis often rewarding. (There are ninety-nine music examples in the text, as well as a detailed worklist and discography.) The effort to bring Stanford's personality to light is more difficult, owing to the dearth of information about his private life. The author compensates for this with his skillful handling of the composer's writings and letters, as well as the accounts of him left by pupils and contemporaries—including his RCM colleague Hubert Parry, whose private diary is the source of much vivid information. Rodmell is particularly good at placing Stanford in his social milieu, specifically that of the declining Anglo-Irish ascendancy of mid-nineteenth century Dublin, a group whose isolation from the Catholic majority after the 1800 Act of Union engendered a strong social and political conser-

vatism. Certainly this background helps explain Stanford's reactionary position on many issues of the day. One quibbles, however, with Rodmell's uncomplicated reading of the composer's attitude towards his own Anglo-Irish identity. It is undoubtedly true that Stanford's notorious irascibility and moodiness, even his pathetic moments of self-interest—admirably brought out by the author—are owing to his sensitivity as an artist, but it also seems possible to attribute these traits, at least in part, to the conflicted emotions and ideological paralysis that membership in a besieged elite may typically call forth.

Excellent as this first part of the book is, the second is even better. Moving beyond the consideration of Stanford's works and personality, it examines, by way of an extended conclusion, his legacy as a teacher and composer. This departure from the standard life-and-works format is a masterstroke, and demonstrates the extent to which Stanford influenced developments in twentieth-century British music. This contribution has not properly been acknowledged in standard accounts of the renaissance, largely because his grounding in continental, especially German, music has run afoul of a historiography that has focused almost exclusively on the development of "British" styles. But as Rodmell's study makes clear, Stanford anticipated most of the concerns of the nationalists who followed him—interest in folk song, promotion of early English music, aspiration for a national opera, attraction to the modes as an alternative to major-minor tonality. Even his devotion to the German classics had an effect, since his Brahmsian emphasis on generative process and classical economy is a notable feature of the music of Vaughan Williams, Bliss, Bridge, and other former pupils at the RCM, almost all of whom favored the purely instrumental genres of the German tradition.

If Rodmell's examination of Stanford thus serves to set the record straight, this is also because he is anxious to reach beyond the insular triumphalism of traditional accounts of the renaissance and view it critically in the context of twentieth-century European music as a whole. Why was British music from this period less adventurous and experimental than contemporaneous continental music? What role did

Victorian society, its morals and musical institutions, play in determining this? Was nationalism beneficial to English composition or did it ultimately serve to limit its forms of expression? These are among the most pressing questions of current British musicology, and by considering Stanford in their light the author contributes significantly to our evolving understanding of the period. His wry account of the composer's sanitized depictions of "a peaceful, rural, peasant Ireland of which he knew little" (p. 398), for example, offers a lesson about the politics of idealization informing the work of the nationalist composers who followed him. (That Stanford's Irishness was filtered through a political allegiance to the United Kingdom, meanwhile, underscores our need to acknowledge the imperialist dimension that even English musical nationalism around 1900, for all its claims to insularity, undoubtedly had.) Rodmell's discussion of Stanford's "emotional restraint" (p. 403) and stylistic conservatism, the source of many of his limitations as a composer, is even more important, for he attributes these traits not to some personal failing on Stanford's part but rather to the peculiarities of the British scene—the highly commercial nature of the British musical world, the low status of musicians and the practical need to ensure a livelihood, and the enormous time-lag with which new continental works were heard in Britain. Though originating in the Victorian period, these social and economic factors continued to exert pressure on British musicians well into the twentieth century, and arguably hold the key to understanding why English composers, from Vaughan Williams to Benjamin Britten, wrote in a more conservative idiom than their continental contemporaries.

Viewed in this long perspective, Stanford emerges not as a marginal figure who impeded the arrival of the renaissance dawn but rather as a major figure who anticipated, and even set the pattern for, the path the renaissance would take. Thanks to Paul Rodmell's book, we may begin to see Stanford and the renaissance in the historical and critical light they deserve.

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Gustav Mahler als Konzert- und Operndirigent in Hamburg. By Bernd Schabbing. (*Musicologica Berolinensia*, 9). Berlin: Ernst Kuhn, 2002. [371 p. ISBN 3-928864-86-6. DM 49.95.] Illustrations, bibliography, index.

When we consider Gustav Mahler as a re-creative musician, there is an undeniable tendency to focus solely on his years at the helm of the Vienna Court Opera, from 1897 to 1907. Bernd Schabbing's 2001 Hamburg dissertation, written under the supervision of Constantin Floros and now appearing in print, adds a welcome perspective to the topic by its thorough and fascinating study of Mahler in Hamburg. The Hamburg period (1891–97) was important for Mahler for various reasons. He then had the opportunity to conduct symphonic works with some regularity; he enjoyed close personal and professional relationships with Anna von Mildenburg and Bruno Walter; his success in Hamburg reinforced the admiration influential contemporaries such as Johannes Brahms and Hans von Bülow already had for him; and it served as a successful springboard to the Vienna post. Most importantly, perhaps, it marked a return to regular composition, after something of a block in Budapest, with the completion of the Second and Third Symphonies, the revision of the First, and the composition of numerous songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. In Hamburg he also developed his lifelong pattern of composing in the summer, and orchestrating and recopying his summer work during the rest of the year.

Schabbing's book comprises eight chapters, each broken down into subsections of usually no more than a page or two. A detailed table of contents makes it easy to find topics of interest, and the sectional structure may make the volume manageable for readers with little German. The excellent apparatus—which occupies about a third of the book—includes seven appendices drawing on primary sources, an index of names, tables, and an exhaustive bibliography, arranged topically.

The first chapter serves as an introduction in the form of a literature survey that evaluates critically how Mahler the conduc-