

**Shared Concerns: thoughts on British literature and British music  
in the long nineteenth century**

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One recent branch of musicological studies has involved the exploration of links between Victorian literature and music, highlighting the ways in which music is depicted and referenced within the novel or poem.<sup>1</sup> Inevitably, the interdisciplinary nature of such a wide-ranging topic has led to a variety of approaches. Whilst some studies have focused upon individual writers and the general significance of musical references in their works,<sup>2</sup> others have preferred to concentrate upon specific imagery used in representing music, showing how this might affect aspects of narrative and characterisation, or reflect wider themes in nineteenth-century culture. Phyllis Weliver, for example, has explored the literary representation of woman musicians as ‘angelic’ and ‘demonic’ (through siren imagery) in relation to novels such as *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda* and *Lady Audley’s Secret*,<sup>3</sup> at the same time tracing themes such as music and criminality in Dickens’ *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and music and mesmerism in *Trilby* and *Dracula*. Elsewhere, working-class characters singing with ‘natural’, untrained voices have been contrasted with the more self-conscious nature of middle-class performance in the drawing room; whilst characters such as Gissing’s Thyrsa, and Margaret Jennings in Mrs Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* have been viewed as symbolic of the ‘divine’, Maggie Tulliver in Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* has been linked with the exploration of the pastoral.<sup>4</sup> The role of music has been explored in relation to literary genres such as fin-de-siècle fiction and detective fiction;<sup>5</sup> it has been suggested, for example, that for a character such as Sherlock Holmes, musical experience (specifically, a combination of concert-going and his own improvisational skills as a violinist) represents an aid to detection – balancing an introspective, intuitive and ‘poetic’ approach with his more familiar reliance upon methodical analysis.<sup>6</sup>

Other studies have highlighted literary references to specific composers, identifying the author as ‘reader’ in relation to musical reception. Nicky Losseff, for example, has traced the significance of two types of music in Collins’ *The Woman in White* used to portray the decline of Laura Fairlie:<sup>7</sup> the music of Mozart – whose ‘divine’ status represents “a symbol of the order, sanity and happiness that characterizes Laura’s life before the permeating corruptness of Glyde”<sup>8</sup> - and “new music of the dextrous, tuneless, florid kind”;<sup>9</sup> Losseff suggests the likelihood of Schumann’s music being the

source of the latter (a convincing thesis, given the associations of music, madness and disguise), representative of performances given “under conditions of increasing tyranny and subjugation.”<sup>10</sup> These types of reception issues might be explored further; despite a plethora of studies focusing upon the use of music in Du Maurier’s *Trilby*,<sup>11</sup> for example, more might be said in relation to the music with which Svengali is associated, particularly regarding the apparent limitations of his musicianship:

He [Svengali] had been the best pianist of his time at the Conservatory in Leipsic; and, indeed, there was perhaps some excuse for this overweening conceit, since he was able to lend a quite peculiar individual charm of his own to any music he played, except the highest and best of all, in which he conspicuously failed. He had to draw the line just above Chopin, where he reached his highest level. It will not do to lend your own quite peculiar individual charm to Handel and Bach and Beethoven; and Chopin is not bad as a *pis-aller*.<sup>12</sup>

This tells us something both in relation to Chopin reception, how music is used to develop aspects of characterisation, and perhaps also helps to define aspects of du Maurier’s own musical tastes. Where an author includes persistent references to one musical figure in particular, these are often particularly meaningful, as in the case of Samuel Butler, where Handelian references take on an obsessive quality.<sup>13</sup> Focus upon musical instruments has also been rewarding; Jodi Lustig has explored the role of the piano in the Victorian novel, identifying the instrument as a site of courtship, as a way of defining characters in relation to a domestic ideal, or as a central feature of plot crises in works such as *Emma* and *Jude the Obscure*.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, writers have traced the concertina’s associations with domestication in *The Woman in White*, or, in George Gissing’s case, with the symptoms of bronchial infection.<sup>15</sup>

This brief overview highlights the significance of these studies in exploring shared concerns between music and literature. However, to return to Sherlock Holmes, in ‘The Red-Headed League,’ Holmes explains his reasons for attending a concert at St. James’s Hall as follows:

I observe that there is a good deal of German music on the programme, which is rather more to my taste than Italian or French. It is introspective, and I want to introspect.<sup>16</sup>

Significant by its absence here is British music, which, frustratingly, seems to play little part in the musical references of nineteenth-century literature in general. The British music scholar has to remain content with examples such as Mina Harker’s brief mention of the

Scottish composer Alexander Mackenzie (1837-1935) in *Dracula*,<sup>17</sup> the ‘British provincial home-made music’ familiar to Little Billee in *Trilby*,<sup>18</sup> the passing reference to Ignaz Moscheles (British by association) in G.H. Lewes’ 1848 novel *Rose, Blanche, and Violet*,<sup>19</sup> or the knowledge that the British composer Peter Warlock (1894-1930) inspired several literary characters, including Halliday in Lawrence’s *Women in Love*.<sup>20</sup> One novel does stand out as incorporating elements connected with an ‘English Musical Renaissance’ at the end of the nineteenth century, however – George Bernard Shaw’s *Love Among the Artists* of 1881. As Phyllis Weliver has suggested,<sup>21</sup> the compositions by the fictional character Owen Jack in this novel (including a fantasia for piano and orchestra, and four scenes with chorus for music to Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*) have a striking resonance in terms of early works by the British composer Hubert Parry (1848-1918): Parry’s Piano Concerto and the cantata *Prometheus Unbound* were both completed in 1880.<sup>22</sup> Shaw was able to use these veiled references to advocate a more progressive aesthetic in British music in this period. However, it seems that apart from Shaw, few writers were willing or able to incorporate any literary allusion to an emerging British music around the end of the nineteenth century. Consequently, a perceived lack of obvious connections between British music and literature explains why discussions of musical Romanticism tend to avoid compositions by British composers. An exploration of such connections therefore has potential to heighten the status of British music within the musicological canon, and, with the potential for themed concert events, to establish problematic British works within the performing canon.

In one sense, literary aspects have already been associated with the concept of an ‘English Musical Renaissance.’ Parry’s *Prometheus Unbound*, for example, has been cited by several critics as marking the beginning of a new confidence in British music; although this is partly owing to its Wagnerian properties (its declamatory approach, the significant role of the orchestra, its through-composed nature, the use of leit motives), the dramatic and political nature of Shelley’s poem has marked it out as a ‘dangerous’ text, and one of a higher literary standard than the majority of cantata libretti. Parry’s extensive book lists compiled at the back of his diaries, together with the wide range of texts which he set, identify him as a ‘literary’ composer. This is reflected by the title and content of his twelve sets of *English Lyrics*, which lie at the centre of his solo song output; these settings show how a British composer could explore a sense of national identity through the exploration of a literary canon, ranging from Shakespeare to Parry’s contemporaries such as Julian Sturgis and Mary Coleridge. However, literary associations are also part of the

negative reception of several British composers of the Victorian and Edwardian era; hence the misleadingly selective view of Parry's literary tastes as redolent of conservatism and traditionalism,<sup>23</sup> the criticism of Elgar's choice of Longfellow in particular and of the texts of his songs in general,<sup>24</sup> or the suggestion that Mackenzie simply lacked a basic literary discrimination.<sup>25</sup> In reassessing the benefits of a literary focus in relation to British nineteenth-century music, some of the most promising studies are likely to be found where a literary context can help an understanding of a composer, musical approach or specific work that critics have often found somehow 'problematic.' A number of areas have significant potential: (1) Composer-Author affinities, where biographical and aesthetic parallels might be explored; (2) Settings of text, focusing upon the ways in which texts can be interpreted, and how any musical 'readings' might represent critical interpretations of specific texts, thereby adding to their literary reception; (3) Collaborations, tracing a particular relationship between composer and poet, which reflects wider issues relating to the relative status of music and poetry; (4) Genre, where musical definitions would benefit from an awareness of their literary counterparts; (5) Narrative and meaning, where a literary perspective might provide a possible explanation for the nature and sequence of musical events within selected compositions.

### (1) **Composer-Author affinities**

Tracing an affinity between composer and author/poet can help to identify a range of aesthetic issues. Particular focus upon the works of Walter Scott which influenced Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900), for example (resulting in the masque *Kenilworth*, the romantic opera *Ivanhoe*, and the *Marmion* Overture), might help any discussion of Sullivan in terms of an English Romanticism; similarly, Granville Bantock's interest in the exotic might be highlighted with reference to the works of Southey – in particular, the composer's characteristically ambitious (and ultimately unfinished) project to create twenty-four orchestral scenes based on the 1810 epic poem 'The Curse of Kehama.'<sup>26</sup> Another striking link is that between the British composer John Ireland (1879-1962) and the Welsh writer Arthur Machen (1863-1947).<sup>27</sup> The composer's fascination with Machen began in 1906, when he bought a copy of the novel *The House of Souls*, a work which directly inspired the last of three *Decorations* for piano (1912-13);<sup>28</sup> Ireland's *Legend* for piano and orchestra (1930), invokes parallels with Machen's short story *The Happy Children*, and the exploration of Pan-inspired imagery, prehistoric sites and *genius loci* in compositions such as *Le Catiaroc*, *Mai Dun*, and *The Forgotten Rite* have highlighted the shared

concerns of composer and writer. As Fiona Richards has suggested, Machen's concept of 'a London *cognita* and a London *incognita*'<sup>29</sup> can also be traced in Ireland's musical evocations of cityscape, *Chelsea Reach* and *Ragamuffin* (1917), *Merry Andrew* (1918), *Soho forenoons* (1920), *Ballade of London Nights* (c.1930), and *A London Overture* (1936). Affinities between composer and writer can be explored even further, however. In terms of musical narrative, Ireland's pagan works tend to adopt a specific approach:

The structure for all of Ireland's pagan works is a type of musical narrative with peculiarly personal extra musical references. The structure most often includes an explicit setting and an event, usually a single incident, and sometimes a plot and characters, though there is little in the way of specific characterization. He favours ternary structures, at the start of which a mood is set up, followed by a central section in which conflict or confrontation occurs, after which there is a return to the original, now altered scene.<sup>30</sup>

It is this sense of transformed nature which is a recurring image in Machen's writings; a passage from the *Hill of Dreams* provides a suitable illustration:

And then the air changed once more; the flush increased, and a spot like blood appeared in the pond by the gate, and all the clouds were touched with fiery spots and dapples of flame; here and there it looked as if awful furnace doors were being opened... As the red gained in the sky, the earth and all upon it glowed, even the grey winter fields and the bare hillsides crimsoned, the waterpools were cisterns of molten brass, and the very road glittered. He [Lucien] was wonder-struck, almost aghast, before the scarlet magic of the afterglow.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to narrative parallels, there are also similarities concerning the sensations of language and music; Machen's description of the importance of language in *The Hill of Dreams*, for example -

chiefly important for the beauty of its sounds, by its possession of words resonant, glorious to the ear, by its capacity, when exquisitely arranged, of suggesting wonderful and indefinable impressions... Here lay hidden the secret of the sensuous art of literature, it was the secret of suggestion, the art of causing delicious sensation by the use of words.<sup>32</sup>

- is revised by Richards to characterise Ireland's musical Impressionism:

chiefly important for the beauty of its sounds, by its possession of timbres and harmonies resonant, glorious to the ear, by its capacity, when exquisitely arranged, of suggesting wonderful and indefinable impressions... Here lay hidden the secret of the sensuous art of music, it was the secret of suggestion, the art of causing delicious sensation by the use of sounds.<sup>33</sup>

There is one further parallel, however, which has not been fully explored: the concept of ecstasy as a central feature of Machen's aesthetic and of Ireland's music. Machen's essay, *Hieroglyphics: A Note upon Ecstasy in Literature*, defines a central tenet:

If ecstasy be present, then I say there is fine literature; if it be absent, then in spite of all the cleverness, all the talents, all the workmanship and observation and dexterity you may show me, then, I think, we have a product (possibly a very interesting one) which is not fine literature.<sup>34</sup>

Whilst Machen's definition is more complex than this, noting that ecstasy might also be representative of 'rapture, beauty, adoration, wonder, awe, mystery, sense of the unknown, desire for the unknown,'<sup>35</sup> yet must be 'the expression of the eternal things that are in man', and 'symbolic of an interior meaning,'<sup>36</sup> he uses this concept to distinguish between 'fine literature' and 'reading matter' – creating a method 'by which art may be known from artifice, and style from intelligent expression.'<sup>37</sup> Hence Machen promotes Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin stories (as they hint at 'the "other-consciousness" of man' and 'suggest, at least, the presence of that shadowy, unknown or half-known Companion who walks beside each one of us all our days'), and celebrates the 'sense of mystery' and 'withdrawal from common life' in *Dickens' The Pickwick Papers*;<sup>38</sup> on the other hand, Thackeray's writings, despite 'observation, artifice and "style"' are 'lacking in ecstasy', as are the works of Jane Austen;<sup>39</sup> Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll* 'just scrapes over the borderline and takes its place, very low down, among books that are literature' owing to its conception (and despite its 'mechanical' plot).<sup>40</sup> A musical ecstasy has often been noted in Ireland's music, usually in relation to evocations of countryside and seascape, or settings of texts – particularly songs such as *Earth's Call*.<sup>41</sup> However, Machen's theory might be applied not just to the pantheistic works or the pagan mysteries of *Mai Dun* or *Legend*, but to a sense of rhetoric in Ireland's more abstract compositions. One of Ireland's best-known works, for example, is the Piano Concerto of 1930. What strikes the listener in certain passages is a heightened emotional content; this comes in part from Ireland's distinctive use of dissonance, but could be viewed more in a rhetorical sense as a series of ecstatic moments within the general concept of the beautiful. Bars 26-31 from the slow movement serve as a characteristic example (ex.1).

Another affinity worthy of exploration concerns the Bradford-born, cosmopolitan composer Frederick Delius (1862-1934). Studies of Delius's literary associations have tended to focus upon foreign writers,<sup>42</sup> given the composer's apparent lack of awareness of British literature; his amanuensis Eric Fenby suggested:



## Ex.1: Ireland, Piano Concerto, 2nd movt., bars 26-31

PIANO CONCERTO IN E MINOR By John Ireland

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During the six years that I knew him I never remember his reading anything in English other than autobiographies, both political and artistic, detective stories, and any yarn, no matter what it was, that told about the sea. So long as it was colourful, and the action moved quickly, he was content. He had no patience with a writer like Conrad, who took his time in the telling of a story. Of English verse he knew surprisingly little, and never once during my stay at Grez did he ever ask us to read a line of it to him. Several times I fancied that it would be an agreeable change from our normal routine of book-reading, but he always turned my suggestion down.<sup>43</sup>

References to Delius's "childhood passion for... Byron's *Childe Harold*,"<sup>44</sup> and the fact that he considered both *Wuthering Heights* and Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* as potential subjects for operatic treatment, however, seem more hopeful. In reassessing Delius's relationship with British literature, a focus on the composer's settings of one particular English poet might have significant potential. Delius's *Songs of Sunset* (1906-7) for mezzo-soprano, baritone, chorus and orchestra, originally titled 'Songs of Twilight and Sadness,' represent a series of eight texts by Ernest Dowson: 'A song of the setting sun,' 'Dum nos fata sinunt,' 'Autumnal,' 'O Mors! Quam amora,' 'Exile,' 'In Spring,' 'Spleen' and 'Vita suma brevis spem nos.' A setting of 'Cynara' ('Non sum qualis eram bonae sur regno Cynarae') was also considered for the set, but abandoned; this was later completed (with Fenby's help) and performed in 1929. Given that *Songs of Sunset* has been said to

represent Delius's "most personal answers to the question of form... [which] ... owe little or nothing to traditional principles of structure, and evolve their own 'spiritual unity' in a way which scarcely lends itself to black-and-white analysis,"<sup>45</sup> a textual focus seems long overdue. Although Dowson's verse in general has been dismissed as "not particularly well suited to musical treatment" as the "long, sinuously convoluted sentences are a hazard to any songwriter,"<sup>46</sup> what is striking in these settings is the way in which Delius adapts the structure of his musical phrases to create a certain flexibility, whilst stressing the rhyme scheme (ex.2):

Ex.2: Delius, *Songs of Sunset*, figure 42

Just as in the example of Ireland and Machen, however, one might explore additional parallels between these two figures.<sup>47</sup> Mirroring writers on Dowson, music critics have pointed to Delius's relatively narrow range as a composer, and have identified a bitter-sweet nostalgia as part of the composer's aesthetic. By exploring the transience of beauty as a central feature of Delius's music, this helps to explain not only Delius's partiality for Dowson's texts, but represents a fruitful approach to Delius's aesthetic as a whole. It helps to explain, for example, one attraction of Walt Whitman's texts for the composer ("And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night. / O past! O happy life! O songs of joy! / In the air, in the woods, over fields, / Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved! / But my mate no more, no more with me! / We two together no more."),<sup>48</sup> and provides a context in which to appreciate Delius's familiar orchestral miniatures, such as *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, *In a Summer Garden*, *A Song of Summer*, and *Summer Night on the River* – all representative of a short-lived moment of musical rapture.<sup>49</sup> This approach might also avoid an unfortunate division in writings on the composer. Whilst the



miniatures are usually associated with the ‘essential’ Delius, the sonatas and concerti tend to be discussed from a formal perspective, often with negative conclusions. We are told that “their structural articulation is a little stiff,” and that they are redolent of “an uneasy period which drew Delius into accepting classical moulds for his compositions,”<sup>50</sup> – all leading to perceptions that these are somehow lesser works:

These relatively formal compositions – concertos, sonatas and quartets – do not seem to me to express the essential genius of Delius in at all the same degree as the works less fettered by formal considerations, especially in his choral-orchestral music. The music is obviously and typically Delian in texture, but yet seems to lack that divine spark of real genius that places the others in a class by themselves.<sup>51</sup>

Despite these works displaying musical materials on a larger canvas, however, they contain the same preoccupation as the miniatures, although this is often expressed in different ways. Whereas the Double Concerto for violin, cello and orchestra (1915) relies upon the final combination of the opening theme with a resigned, drooping, counterpoint, or the frequently unfulfilled quality of the writing in octaves for the soloists, in the slow movement (‘Late Swallows’) of the 1916 string quartet, the transience of beauty is expressed as a pentatonic melodic reference to the Florida plantation within a dream-like episode:

**Example 3: DELIUS STRING QUARTET**

**ASV CD DCA 526, Track 6, 3:39 – 4:41**

courtesy of Sanctuary Classics; website: [www.sanctuaryclassics.com](http://www.sanctuaryclassics.com)

Given that the poem ‘Cynara’ in particular has been described as “the defining masterpiece of the period... full of the iconography of decadence... full of the scent of love and wine and innocence and sin... the archetypal decadent poem,”<sup>52</sup> Delius’s settings of Dowson (in tandem with an interest in Arthur Symons)<sup>53</sup> might also help to explore a British musical decadence, providing temporary relief from the more obvious Strauss- and Wagner-based definitions.<sup>54</sup>

One final affinity between composer and poet concerns personal friendship, text setting, texts as catalysts towards composition, and perhaps even a symbolic return to a particular poetic source. Parallels between Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) and Tennyson have been invoked by several writers, whether J.A.Fuller-Maitland’s suggestion that “His [Stanford’s] strong feeling for colour suggests that he is in some sort a musical

parallel to Tennyson,”<sup>55</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams’ assertion that Stanford’s music “is in the best sense of the word Victorian, that is to say it is the musical counterpart of the art of Tennyson, Watts, and Matthew Arnold,”<sup>56</sup> or Ernest Walker’s highlighting of particular subject matter and its treatment:

he [Stanford] seems most attracted by two things – Irish national music and a sort of broadly Tennysonian romanticism... His Tennysonian spirit shows itself in his great partiality for words dealing with nature, especially with the sea, or expressing the romantic side of patriotism; in these and similar veins he is again completely at home, and possesses a singular power of subtle pictorialism that is entirely devoid of the faintest exaggeration and yet is very direct and vivid.<sup>57</sup>

What is striking about Stanford’s compositional output is the frequent presence of Tennyson as a literary source, whether as a text which was set, or as an extra-musical influence. Table I outlines the compositions which were inspired by Tennyson’s works:

**Table I: Stanford’s Tennyson-inspired compositions**

<i>Queen Mary</i>	theatre music	1876
<i>Symphony no.2, Elegaic</i>	symphony	1879-82
<i>The Revenge</i>	choral ballad	1886
<i>Carmen Saeculare</i>	choral ode	1887
<i>The Voyage of Maeldune</i>	cantata	1889
<i>Crossing the Bar</i>	voice and piano	1890
<i>Becket</i>	theatre music	1892
<i>Peace, come away [In Memoriam]</i>	part-song	1892
<i>The Princess</i> (cycle, SATB, pf)	songs	1897
<i>Ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington</i>	choral ode	1907
<i>Ave Atque Vale</i>	choral overture	1908
<i>6 Songs of Faith</i> [Tennyson/Whitman]	voice and piano	1908
<i>Four Songs</i> Op.112	voice and piano	1908
<i>Merlin and the Gleam</i>	cantata	1919

There is a clear pattern which emerges: a constant return to Tennyson as a source, with gaps (1882-6, 1897-1907, 1908-19) punctuated by flurries of activity which encompass a range of genres: theatre music, choral music, song and symphony. Tennyson’s choice of Stanford to provide incidental music for *Queen Mary* was the opportunity that the young composer needed to start his career, and he remained eternally grateful:

He had chosen me, an unknown and untried composer, to write the incidental music to his tragedy of Queen Mary for its production at the Lyceum Theatre, then under the management of Mrs. Bateman. Many difficulties were put in the way of

the performance of the music, into the causes for which I had neither the wish nor the means to penetrate. Finally, however, the management gave as an explanation that the music could not be performed, as the number of orchestral players required for its proper presentment would necessitate the sacrifice of two rows of stalls. To my young and disappointed soul came the news of a generous action which would have been a source of pride to many a composer of assured position and fame. The poet had offered, unknown to me, to bear the expense of the sacrificed seats for many nights, in order to allow my small share of the work to be heard. The offer was refused, but the generous action remains, one amongst the thousands of such quiet and stealthy kindnesses which came as second nature to him, and were probably as speedily forgotten by himself as they were lastingly remembered by their recipients.<sup>58</sup>

The Stanford-Tennyson relationship can be approached from a number of perspectives. One possible area to explore is how Tennyson as a reciter of poetry may have influenced Stanford's musical settings. Stanford was struck by Tennyson's reciting style, which he described in the *Cambridge Review*:

His manner of reading poetry has often been described. It was a chant rather than a declamation. A voice of deep and penetrating power, varied only by alteration of note and intensity of quality. The notes were few, and he rarely read on more than two, except at the cadence of a passage, when the voice would slightly fall. He often accompanied his reading by gentle rippling gestures with his fingers. As a rule he adhered more to the quantity of a line than the ordinary reciter, for he had the rare gift of making the accent felt without perceptibly altering the prosody.<sup>59</sup>

In one of Stanford's most popular works, the choral ballad *The Revenge* (1886), it was Tennyson's metrical sense which caused the composer to rethink his approach to declamation:

Without being a musician, he [Tennyson] had a great appreciation of the fitness of music to its subject, and was an unflinching judge of musical declamation. As he expressed it himself, he disliked music which went up when it ought to go down, and went down when it ought to go up. I never knew him wrong in his suggestions on this point. The most vivid instance I can recall was about a line in the "Revenge" – "Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew." When I played to him my setting the word "devil" was set to a higher note in the question than it was in the answer; and the penultimate "they" was unaccented. He at once corrected me, saying that the second word "devil" must be higher and stronger than the first, and the "they" must be marked. He was perfectly right, and I altered it accordingly. It was apparently a small point, but it was this insisting on perfection of detail which made him the most valuable teacher of accurate declamation that it was possible for a composer to learn from.<sup>60</sup>

Stanford's final version is as follows:

Ex.4: Stanford, *The Revenge*, 11 bars before figure Z

Was he dev - il or man? He was dev - il for aught they knew,

To appreciate the remaining Tennyson-inspired compositions, however, we can return to Vaughan Williams' suggestion, above, that Stanford represented 'the musical counterpart of the art of Tennyson, Watts, and Matthew Arnold'. It is this pluralism which is the key to Stanford's musical relationship with Tennyson. Whilst one could argue that other British composers tended to explore one aspect of the poet's art (in Sterndale Bennett's case, ceremonial, in Parry's case, the temptations of art), Stanford was able to explore a variety of elements – the dramatic (*Queen Mary, Becket*), the elegiac (Symphony no.2, the Wellington Ode, *Ave atque vale*), the heroic (*The Revenge*), the imperialist (*Carmen saeculare*), and the mythological (*The Voyage of Maeldune*). A focus on each of these works, combining musical and literary contexts, would highlight their significance, and perhaps lead to their more frequent performance. Most significant, however, is Stanford's choice of *Merlin and the Gleam* towards the end of his career. One writer has recently criticised an apparent return by Stanford to an earlier musical style in this work:

His [Stanford's] style is exactly the same as that of his earliest settings of Tennyson written in the 1880s; even the choice of Tennyson strikes one as being regressive and of all of Stanford's post-war works it is this one which demonstrates his Victorian outlook most clearly.<sup>61</sup>

Rather than a waning of Stanford's creative powers, however, both the choice of poem and the manner of the musical setting could represent an astute and subtle response to Tennyson's poetic message. One might suggest that Stanford's return to an earlier musical style simply mirrored Tennyson's revisiting of poetic imagery from previous works, in this "celebration of a lifelong worship of the creative imagination."<sup>62</sup>

## (2) Text setting

Just as affinities between composers and writers might create a useful context for thematic concert events, so a focus on different settings of the same poetic text illustrates a range of

interpretative possibilities, and highlights a variety of compositional approaches. One significant figure connected with a perceived second golden age of English song around the turn of the twentieth century is A.E. Housman. Within the plethora of musical settings of Housman's poetry, composers either chose single texts, or created small textual groupings; the critic Ernest Newman invoked Germanic song cycles to bemoan the fact that no-one had taken up the challenge of setting 'A Shropshire Lad' complete:

Had we a [Hugo] Wolf among us, it would not have been a mere poem here and there from the collection that he would have set... he would have set virtually the whole of the sixty-three poems, doing for Mr Housman what Wolf did for Mörike, for Goethe, for Eichendorff, and others.<sup>63</sup>

In exploring ways of performing these songs, the recitation of the texts prior to the musical setting can be effective, as this helps to focus upon the nature of the poetry. Similarly, programming different settings of the same Housman text for the sake of comparison can be revealing, as the example of 'Is my team ploughing' illustrates.

'Is my team ploughing,  
That I was used to drive  
And hear the harness jingle  
When I was man alive?'

Ay, the horses trample,  
The harness jingles now;  
No change though you lie under  
The land you used to plough.

'Is football playing  
Along the river shore,  
With lads to chase the leather,  
Now I stand up no more?'

Ay, the ball is flying,  
The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.

'Is my girl happy  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?'

Ay, she lies down lightly,  
She lies not down to weep:  
Your girl is well-contented.  
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

'Is my friend hearty,  
Now I am thin and pine,  
And has he found to sleep in  
A better bed than mine?'

Yes, lad, I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,  
Never ask me whose.

[A.E.Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*, XXVII]

Housman's text outlines a series of questions from beyond the grave, as the dead soldier quizzes his friend about the world he has left behind – successively, his horses, his sporting interests, the girl he left behind, and the friend himself. The friend suggests that the penultimate question ("Is my girl happy?") should be the last – with the exhortation "Be still my lad and sleep" – but the soldier persists, and we are left with the subtle

implication that it is the friend who is “cheering” the dead soldier’s sweetheart. The simplicity of the text, its dark humour, and the subtle twist at the end, are striking, and it is no surprise that several composers completed musical settings of the poem. The setting by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), as part of *On Wenlock Edge* (1909) for tenor, string quartet and piano is a dramatic affair. Vaughan Williams deliberately left out stanzas three and four, later commenting:

the composer has a perfect right artistically to set any portion of a poem he chooses provided he does not actually alter the sense... I also feel that a poet should be grateful to anyone who fails to perpetuate such lines as:

The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.<sup>64</sup>

Housman was critical of this approach:

I am told that composers in some cases have mutilated my poems – that Vaughan Williams cut two verses out of “Is my team ploughing.” I wonder how he would like me to cut two bars out of his music . . .<sup>65</sup>

In Vaughan Williams’ setting, the ghost’s questions are characterised by simple vocal lines inspired by the contours of folk song, and are prefaced by organum-like material in the strings; the transition to the answer introduces repeated chords and chromatic movement, providing a dramatic contrast between the two voices in the text. The significance of the final question is illustrated by a higher vocal line, and a modulation from D minor to F minor;<sup>66</sup> in the answer, the repetition of ‘Yes, lad’, and particularly the dramatic climax on ‘dead man’s sweetheart’ (ex.5) leaves the listener in no doubt as to the implications of the text. One might argue, however, that the powerful nature of the setting is at the expense of the poem’s subtlety:

Dr Vaughan Williams’ setting flies in the face of all that is most delicate, most artistic, most human in the poem. What is the use of the poet softening the final blow as he does if Dr Vaughan Williams is to deal it afresh at the dead man with a sledge-hammer? What is the use of the friend saying ‘Never ask me whose’ in a *pianissimo* when he has just hurled the ‘I cheer a dead man’s sweetheart’ at the ghost’s head with a noise and agitation that would let the most stupid ghost that ever returned to earth into the secret.<sup>67</sup>

Ivor Gurney (1890-1937) was a poet as well as a composer, and his awareness of the implications of Housman’s text is reflected in his approach, one of the eight songs of *The Western Playland* (1921), again for voice (this time a baritone), string quartet and piano. The jaunty opening of the modified strophic setting is deceptive, as the successively



Ex.5: Vaughan Williams, *Is my team ploughing*, bars 48-51

Tenor  
 I lie as lads would choose; I cheer

Violin I  
*colla voce*

Violin II  
*colla voce*

Viola  
*colla voce*

Violoncello  
*colla voce*

Piano  
*colla voce*

*allargando* **Tempo Io.**

T.  
 dead man's sweet heart,

Vln. I  
*ff colla voce*

Vln. II  
*ff colla voce*

Vla.  
*ff colla voce*

Vc.  
*ff colla voce*

Pno.  
*ff colla voce* **Tempo Io.**

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longer gaps between question and answer in the first four stanzas (Gurney sets the poem complete) suggest the increasing difficulty of the answers. The significance of the

question, “Is my girl happy?” is highlighted by its being at half speed, and the song breaks down entirely at ‘And has she tired of weeping’, leading to a recitative-like section (ex.6).

Ex.6: Gurney, *Is my team ploughing*, bar 37

The image shows a musical score for bar 37 of George Gurney's 'Is my team ploughing'. It is a two-staff score for Baritone and Piano. The Baritone part is marked 'lunga' and features a recitative-like melody with lyrics: 'and has she tired of weeping as she lies down at eve'. The Piano part provides harmonic accompaniment with chords and some melodic lines.

Reproduced from *The Western Playland* by permission of Stainer & Bell Ltd., London, England.

The warning “Your girl is well-contented... sleep” is pointed by being unaccompanied, before the music cranks itself back up to create a modified version of the opening material in the final two stanzas. The slight elongation of the final question, the greater harmonic complexity, and the long gap between question and answer suggest the problematic nature of the response, and in contrast to Vaughan Williams, a single augmented chord on the piano suggests the significance of ‘Never ask me whose’; it is left to a short coda to ruminate upon proceedings. *Is my team ploughing?* by George Butterworth (1885-1916) is beautiful in its simplicity — each question and each answer is set identically, and there is a clear distinction between their two roles: unstable chords at a quiet dynamic, slow tempo and relatively high range for the question, and stable chords at a louder dynamic, quicker tempo and lower range for the answer, rounded off by a brief postlude (ex.7). Butterworth’s setting therefore mirrors the subtlety of Housman’s text.<sup>68</sup>

Focus upon different musical settings of the same text can take on a greater significance where there is a disagreement over the text’s meaning, as the setting could then represent an additional ‘reading’ which could highlight the nature of any literary debate. One example that I have explored elsewhere is the setting of the Choric Song from Tennyson’s ‘The Lotos Eaters’ by Parry (as the cantata *The Lotos Eaters* of 1893) and Elgar (as the 1907 part-song, *There is sweet music*).<sup>69</sup> Several suggestions have been made in relation to the possible message of Tennyson’s poem; writers have interpreted the text as a condemnation of the life of ease, suggested that such an explicit meaning is undercut by the sensual content of the verse – effectively leading to the promotion of the drugged

Ex.7: Butterworth, *Is my team ploughing?*, ending

The musical score is for the ending of 'Is my team ploughing?' by Butterworth. It is in 3/4 time, B-flat major, and consists of two systems. The first system shows the voice line with lyrics 'I cheer a dead man's sweet - heart, Ne - ver ask me whose.' and piano accompaniment. The second system shows the voice line with a whole rest and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *ff*, *Lento*, *p*, and *espress.* The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

state of Lotosland, or have identified a sense of conflict between didacticism and aestheticism.<sup>70</sup> The readings by Parry and Elgar adopt slightly different compositional approaches, reformulating Tennyson's musical imagery. Given Parry's associations with the concept of morality in art, his distressing experiences over the descent of his brother Clinton into dipsomania, and the fact that a cantata setting (for soprano, chorus and orchestra) was a suitable vehicle to impart an implicit moral message, one might expect Parry to interpret the text along didactic lines. However, the sensuous nature of the orchestral accompaniment, the rich textures associated with Lotosland, and the exploration of third-related keys, all contribute to a seductive palette highlighting the attractive qualities of life on the island. Most striking, however, is the role of the soprano soloist, who adopts a siren-like persona (effectively making the siren elements in the poem more overt), coaxing the mariners to abandon their former lives through declamation, soporific repetition and the beauty of pure sound.

### Example 8: PARRY LOTOS EATERS

CHANDOS CHAN 8990, Track 15, 0:00 to 0:47

Courtesy of Chandos Records; website: [www.chandos-records.com](http://www.chandos-records.com)

The repetition of Tennyson's final line, "We will not wander more" (one of the few passages where soloist and chorus combine) reinforces the sense of a decision to remain.

There is therefore a dichotomy between preconceptions concerning Parry's role as a composer, and the resulting setting.<sup>71</sup>

Whilst Parry sets the text complete (prefaced by a recitation of the introductory text, "Courage... we will no longer roam"),<sup>72</sup> mirroring the sense of debate in Tennyson's poem, Elgar's part-song focuses upon the first stanza of the poem ("There is sweet music... poppy hangs in sleep"), focusing upon the intoxicating effects of the sweet music. The partial recapitulations of text, rhythmic dislocation, vocal division, and the juxtaposition of keys all serve to highlight the drugged state of the mariners. Particularly effective is the end of the part-song, with its hypnotic repetitions, alternating between chords of G major (associated with the male voices) and A flat major (associated with the female voices).

**Example 9: ELGAR "There is sweet music"**

**CHANDOS CHAN 9269, Track 9, 4:05 - end (5:03)**

Courtesy of Chandos records; website: [www.chandos-records.com](http://www.chandos-records.com)

By discussing these musical readings within the context of a literary debate, Tennyson's use of musical imagery can be given sharper focus, and the range of interpretative possibilities of the text can also be explored.

**(3) Collaborations**

Any collaboration between composer and poet represents an opportunity to focus upon the relationship between music and literature, particularly as there is often an interesting balance of power between the two arts. Despite surface similarities between Robert Bridges and Hubert Parry, their collaboration over the cantatas *Invocation to Music* (1895) and *A Song of Darkness and Light* (1898) reveals some basic differences in their approach to the text-music relationship.<sup>73</sup> Whilst Parry was keen to explore a declamatory style, Bridges felt that such an approach replaced the sense of mysterious with the definite, which represented a fundamental loss:

Please do not think that I can possibly resent any objections of yours. I do not pretend to understand what modern music is aiming at... One mistake which I made, i.e. to make words sometimes as mysterious as the best music is, I did not see would be a mistake. It is evident that you want something always definite. This is I confess to me a resignation of the highest charm which I feel in music. As soon as its expression seems defined it loses to me most of its meaning. My ideal is

beautiful melody harmony & orchestral effects with beautiful words, the meaning of which is half revealed by the music, but which, though they are full of suggestion, satisfy the intelligence with pictured ideas rather than definite expression.<sup>74</sup>

Although Bridges' correspondence with Parry was consistently polite, and at pains to suggest a flexibility in their working relationship, the poet's letters to friends revealed his frustration at the removal of lines and reorganisation of the poetic text:

I have written an ode to Music which Parry has set to music, at least he has set part of the sketch and an altered version of the finished parts. I don't know what the music is like. – I naturally don't take much interest in it, because I had hoped to do a good thing, and have done merely a broken backed affair, through no fault of mine... Parry has spoilt it as a poem.<sup>75</sup>

Bridges' decision to publish his own version of the *Invocation to Music* poem (which restored a number of passages removed during the collaboration on the cantata) only one year after the cantata was performed and published, prefaced by an essay on 'The Musical Setting of Poetry', must have represented something of a catharsis.<sup>76</sup> It is significant that in their next collaboration, *A Song of Darkness and Light*, the vocal score contained several lines in parentheses; these were not actually set by Parry, but were retained simply for poetic considerations. The balance of the Bridges-Parry relationship was revised even further in the *Eton Memorial Ode* (1908), where, although Parry was unhappy with parts of the text, Bridges refused to make any alterations:

I have written the Ode for the opening of the Eton Memorial Hall. I hope you will like it. Parry, who set it to music, does not, but I have composed twice for him before, and each time sacrificed my poem to musical conveniences, and yet his music has not I am told, and think myself, justified the sacrifice. So this time I took the advice of my friends (musical friends) and made my thing hang together, leaving him to do what he will.<sup>77</sup>

Given the difficulties in this working relationship, it is interesting to note that the poet had similar experiences in his collaboration with Stanford over the cantata *Eden* (1891). Here, Bridges felt that he had not been given enough time to complete the poem, and again, some of his suggestions prior to the publication of the cantata were apparently not incorporated.

You refer to "Eden": I would have made it better if I had more time. The music is not for me to criticize. It is not simple enough for my taste.<sup>78</sup>



Bridges' musical tastes were primarily restricted to the music of the Renaissance and the early Baroque, despite some appreciation of works by Beethoven.<sup>79</sup> However, there was one modern composer whose settings of Bridges' poetry were approved of, primarily because of their rhythmic flexibility. After a performance by Gustav Holst of his Seven Part-Songs for female voice and strings, Op.44, Bridges wrote to the composer:

You asked me once or twice about the music, whether I liked it: if I did not say much it was because I felt it impertinent in me to pretend to judge of your work, and I thought that the pleasure, which I could tell you the professionals were feeling was a better compliment than mine would be, because they are accustomed to modern writing, whereas I am old fashioned... I liked all the 'Songs', especially *When first we met* and *Sorrow and Joy*. The only piece that I did not take to was 'Assemble all ye maidens' and that could be accounted for by the great dislike I have for the *poem*... Your way of treating words is so novel, and so unlike anything I could have imagined, that I think I got on astonishingly well in appreciating your invention so far as I did. For I really liked them very much: and want to hear them again.<sup>80</sup>

It is not surprising that Bridges picked out those two particular part-songs. *When first we met* is something of a modern-day madrigal, with strict imitative entries (the third voice enters in augmentation), and dislocated rhythms. Similarly, it is the 7/4 metre of *Sorrow and Joy* which gives it the flexibility of text-setting that Bridges perhaps felt was missing in Parry's more definite structures (see example 10). Despite Bridges' avowed antipathy towards modern music in general, therefore, in terms of the musical setting of text, its scope for experimentation was ultimately more to his taste.

Ex.10: Holst, *Sorrow and Joy*, opening



3  
 S. Aye for our hearts are fight - ing: The  
 S. two sis - ters coy, Aye for our hearts are  
 A. Aye for our hearts,  
 Pno.

SORROW AND JOY from SEVEN PART-SONGS OP.44  
 Music by Gustav Holst and Words by Robert Bridges  
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#### (4) Genre

An awareness of literary definitions of genre in discussions of music might also represent a useful interpretative tool. A consideration of the elegaic, for example, would benefit from this approach – particularly as this sensibility is often identified as a central preoccupation of British music in the late nineteenth century, but is not discussed in any great detail. In the first edition of Grove’s *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, John Hullah defined three types of elegy – the “vocal solo, duet, trio, quartet, etc., with or without accompaniment,” the “instrumental solo for the violin, pianoforte, or other instrument,” and “the concerted piece for stringed, or other instruments.”<sup>81</sup> Significantly, illustrations of these variants were offered along national lines: Germanic models for the former (Beethoven’s *Elegischer Gesang* Op.118, Handel’s *Saul*), French models for the second (Dusseck’s *Elégie harmonique* for piano and Ernst’s *Elégie* for violin and piano), and a British model for the latter: “Of the third class a better instance can hardly be cited than Mr Arthur Sullivan’s overture ‘In Memoriam,’ which is in truth an elegy on the composer’s father.”<sup>82</sup> Given these British associations suggested by Hullah, the orchestral elegy, as a large-scale, public expression of grief, would represent a suitable topic for further study.

Recent literary reassessments of the poetic elegy have adopted a number of approaches, focusing upon the relationship between the mourner and the dead, and the nature of loss, in addition to exploring the various elegiac conventions.<sup>83</sup> All these elements might be adopted in any focus upon the musical elegy, and might also provide a ‘way in’ to some ‘problematic’ compositions. One example is Parry’s *Elegy for Brahms*.<sup>84</sup> Although written in 1897 (the year of Brahms’ death), this work was not performed until 1918, at Parry’s funeral, giving the work a status of a double elegy, as it were. As a composition, it represents the sense of Parry’s personal loss in relation to a public figure who was an important influence upon British music in the late nineteenth century. In the spirit of literary studies, a contextual frame for this work might explore the Parry-Brahms relationship further, whether in terms of biography (as a young composer, Parry aspired to study with Brahms), or with detailed reference to Parry’s published writings. One example from the latter illustrates Parry’s admiration for Brahms’ compositional approach:

There is no second-rate suavity about his work nor compromise with fashionable taste, but an obvious determination to say only such things as are true and earnest... The example of a noble man tends to make others noble, and the picture of a noble mind, such as is presented in his work, helps to raise others towards his level; and the influence which his music already exerts upon younger musicians is of the very highest value to art.<sup>85</sup>

As in the poetic elegy, where the text itself suggests the relationship between the mourner and the dead, so it is the musical text where the Parry-Brahms relationship may be traced further. Bernard Bernoliel suspects that Parry may have “created his own programme in which the psychological argument prompted the technical solutions.”<sup>86</sup> One might certainly explore the contrasts of musical material in rhetorical terms, perhaps comparing poetic models from the literary canon (with which Parry would have been familiar), thus defining an elegiac resonance within the composer’s rather sectional approach. As part of this hidden programme, Bernoliel suggests that the musical material contains deliberate reminiscences of Brahms’ music, citing references to the C major theme of Brahms’ First Symphony (now in a minor version) in the Development section.<sup>87</sup> More striking, however, is the continuation of Brahms’ theme which is alluded to at the end of the piece; as a sudden textural interpolation within a general sense of apotheosis, its presence is significant – compare examples 11(a) and 11(b).

Ex.11(a): Brahms Symphony no.1, finale, bars 62-9

Violin *poco f*

Vln. x

Ex.11(b): Parry, *Elegy for Brahms*, fig.30

Orch. 30

Cl, Bn, Vc *pp*

x'

[etc.]

Bernoiel also suggests that “the lilting second subject in E minor is surely reminiscent of the second subject in Brahms’ A minor string quartet.”<sup>88</sup> Alternatively, this passage could be seen as a reminiscence of the *Allegretto grazioso* third movement of the Second Symphony; examples 12 (a) and (b) highlight references to the contour of bass figure ‘y’:

Ex.12(a): Brahms Symphony no.2, 3rd movt., opening

Allegretto grazioso (Quasi Andantino)

Orch. Ob.

Cl., Bn. *p*

Cello pizz.

y

[etc.]

Ex.12(b): Parry, *Elegy for Brahms*, 2nd theme outgrowth

The fact that Parry included a musical quotation from this movement in his discussion of the Symphony in Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (one of only a handful of quotations in the article as a whole) might suggest its heightened status.<sup>89</sup> Not only does this example suggest the benefits of a literary perspective in terms of musical genre, it would provide a welcome addition to studies of Brahmsian influence in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>90</sup>

##### (5) Narrative and meaning

Literary connections can also aid the understanding of musical narrative, even though many of these connections were often obscured by the composers themselves. This might help an appreciation of certain compositions by Vaughan Williams, for example, despite the following statement by the composer in 1920:

If my music doesn't make itself understood as music, without any tributary explanation, then it's a failure as music, and there's nothing more to be said. It matters, of course, enormously to the composer what he was thinking about when he was writing a particular work, but to no-one else in the world does it matter one jot.<sup>91</sup>

Whilst the suggestion that his works should be appreciated in an abstract sense is, on one level, a brave one, it has led to a number of difficulties in the reception of Vaughan Williams' compositions, as writers have attempted to create extra-musical connections.

The *Pastoral* Symphony, for example, has been variously described as “V.W. rolling over and over in a ploughed field on a wet day,” or “like a cow looking over a gate”;<sup>92</sup> it was not until 1938 that the composer revealed, in private correspondence, that the inspiration for the symphony was the wartime landscape of France.<sup>93</sup> The majority of commentators on *A London Symphony* (1914, rev.1920), for example, have discussed the status of extra-musical elements in the work (the chimes of Big Ben, the cries of the street sellers, the jingle of the hansom cabs, with additional perceptions of the roar of the London traffic, express trains thundering through the station, and the portrait of a harmonica player outside the terminus), either highlighting their importance, or suggesting that the work should be viewed more as a ‘Symphony by a Londoner.’<sup>94</sup> It was only in 1957, however, that Vaughan Williams suggested a literary link – “for actual coda see end of Wells’ *Tono-Bungay*.”<sup>95</sup> This is significant: it explains the nature of the epilogue at the end of the work (preceded by the three-quarter chime, suggesting time has moved on from the quarter-hour chime in the introduction), with its water imagery,<sup>96</sup> and the sense of a fading vision, reflecting one particular passage from Wells:

Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass – pass. The river passes – London passes, England passes...<sup>97</sup>

Anthony Arblaster and Alain Frogley have explored further parallels between novel and symphony.<sup>98</sup> In musical terms, Wells’ ‘Condition of England’ novel<sup>99</sup> with its air of pessimism and sense of decay could provide an explanation for many of the darker moments in the symphony – the bitonality of the opening *Allegro*, the anguished cry at the beginning of the finale, and the extended trio in the original version of the third movement.<sup>100</sup> These links also help to refocus the selective associations of Vaughan Williams with the countryside, and, as Frogley has suggested, the tendency to ignore the composer’s socialist leanings.<sup>101</sup>

The second Vaughan Williams work where literary links are beneficial is the Ninth Symphony (1958). Although early critics attempted to view this composition as an abstract work, the nature of the musical material led to some bafflement, particularly in the middle movements. Colin Mason cited “frivolous interruptions,” and Oliver Neighbour suggested that the “trios of the middle two movements are raised above their heavy-handed surroundings by a strange melancholy.”<sup>102</sup> However, as Frogley has shown,<sup>103</sup> once the sketch material for the symphony is taken into account, it soon

becomes clear that there are strong links between the symphony and Thomas Hardy's novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, particularly in the second movement. Frogley notes that the opening flugelhorn solo of the movement is titled 'Stonhenge' in the sketches, representative of the wind blowing through the stones; similarly, the theme at figure 7 is titled 'Tess' in the sketches, explaining its "strange melancholy."<sup>104</sup> The most striking feature of the movement, however, concerns the eight bell strokes towards the end of the movement; after the eighth stroke (separated from its predecessors to give added significance) at figure 19, the Tess theme returns in a muted, truncated version.<sup>105</sup> The fact that in Hardy's novel Tess is executed at 8 o'clock in the morning cannot be a coincidence. These literary connections are important. On one level, they help to explain the nature of Vaughan Williams' material, and the sequence of events within the musical narrative, thus providing useful points of contact for audiences, conductors and performers alike. They also affect the status of the work – after all, a Ninth Symphony traditionally has a certain significance; the association of this symphony with a canonic piece of English literature is therefore ultimately beneficial.

Hidden literary connections can also be found in the music of Elgar. The Second Symphony has already been mentioned in relation to Shelley, but elements from Tennyson's poem *Maud* might also help to explain particular passages. Elgar himself invoked the images of wheels and hooves passing overhead in the second episode of the Rondo ("Dead, long dead / Long dead! / And my heart is a handful of dust, / And the wheels go over my head"),<sup>106</sup> creating an "incessant maddening hammering," an evocation of his visits to Powick lunatic asylum in Worcestershire in the 1870s and 1880s as conductor of the attendants' band. Brian Trowell notes how Elgar's additional associations of figure 27 in the first movement with the imagery of a love scene in a haunted garden ("a love scene in a garden at night where the ghost of some memories comes through it; – it makes me shiver," and "a sort of malign influence wandering thro' a summer night in the garden") also have links with *Maud*, and explores the themes of suicide and madness in the symphony's other literary references – Shakespeare's Sonnet 66 ("Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry") and Shelley's "Julian and Maddelo: a conversation."<sup>107</sup> One final Elgar example concerns the Piano Quintet Op.84; this has been viewed by critics as problematic, both in terms of the nature of the musical material, and the series of narrative events. It was the critic Ernest Newman who suggested that there was a 'quasi-programme' behind the work - one that he felt should not be disclosed, as "less intelligent performers would be certain to read too much programme into the music and over-



dramatise it.”<sup>108</sup> A possible candidate for this quasi-programme is Edward Bulwer Lytton’s occult novel *A Strange Story*.<sup>109</sup> There are several parallels between the novel and the Quintet – the use of chant, the sense of ‘other’ contrasted with the conventional salon atmosphere, the recall of past events, and the final sense of apotheosis. The most striking musical scene in the novel, however, concerns a social function at Mrs Poyntz’ house, focusing upon the powers of the villain Margrave:

Miss Brabazon having come to the close of a complicated and dreary sonata, I heard Margrave abruptly ask her if she could play the Tarantella, that famous Neapolitan air which is founded on the legendary belief that the bite of the tarantula excites an irresistible desire to dance. On that highbred spinster’s confession that she was ignorant of the air, and had not even heard of the legend, Margrave said, ‘let me play it to you, with variations of my own’... Margrave’s fingers rushed over the keys, and there was a general start, the prelude was so unlike any known combination of harmonic sounds ... And the torture of the instrument now commenced in good earnest: it shrieked, it groaned, wilder and noisier. Beethoven’s Storm, roused by the fell touch of a German pianist, were mild in comparison; and the mighty voice, dominating the anguish of the cracking keys, had the full diapason of a chorus. Certainly I am no judge of music, but to my ear the discord was terrific – to the ears of better-informed amateurs it seemed ravishing. All were spell-bound... To this breathless delight, however, soon succeeded a general desire for movement. To my amazement, I beheld these formal matrons and sober fathers of families forming themselves into a dance, turbulent as a children’s ball at Christmas. And when, suddenly desisting from his music, Margrave started up, caught the skeleton hand of Miss Brabazon, and whirled her into the centre of the dance, I could have fancied myself at a witches’ sabbat.<sup>110</sup>

In the Development section of the first movement of Elgar’s Quintet, we have a similar series of events: the formal ‘squareness’ of a fugato (reflecting Miss Brabazon’s “complicated and dreary sonata”), richly-textured rhetorical interventions on the piano, marked *poco allargando*, *largamente* and *molto largamente* (the “full diapason of a chorus”), clangorous writing nine bars before figure 14 (“terrific discord”), and, most significantly, a series of interrupted tarantella fragments in the strings which coalesce into an overt tarantella theme at figure 14.<sup>111</sup>

**Example 13: ELGAR PIANO QUINTET 1<sup>st</sup> movement**  
**KOCH DISCOVER INTERNATIONAL DICD 920485, Track 1,**  
**5:47-7:40**

An interdisciplinary approach to British music and literature is therefore potentially beneficial to the study of both arts. As a direct challenge to perceptions of British music around the turn of the twentieth century as somehow lacking a literary

perspective, this mode of enquiry could provide a ‘way in’ to reassessing the status of composers and re-evaluating musical works which have often been dismissed as problematic. An awareness of biographical parallels between composers and writers could help literary and musical audiences to appreciate particular works, and a focus upon aesthetic issues could provide fascinating comparative studies of the treatment and adaptation of related issues in two different art forms. Similarly, musical settings of text gain an added significance by being viewed as critical interpretations of those texts, particularly where they contribute to literary debates over meaning and structure. Focus upon collaborative projects would help to highlight both local and general relationships between music and poetry, and definitions of literary genres could be reworked in studies of their musical counterparts; literary sources and narrative techniques could also be invoked as a potential explanation for the internal ordering and nature of musical images and events in selected compositions – whether as hidden programmes, influential texts, or structural models. By exploring the innate flexibility that interdisciplinary studies possess, adapting a range of methods and approaches from each individual discipline, these shared concerns represent a real opportunity to reassess cultural connections within the Victorian and Edwardian era.

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<sup>1</sup> A useful and recent bibliography on this subject can be found in Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff (eds), *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 272-286; see also Phyllis Weliver’s philosophical and analytical account of this whole area in Weliver (ed.), *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), ‘Introduction’, 1-24.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Patrick Piggot, *The Innocent Diversion: A Study of Music in the Life and Writings of Jane Austen* (London: Douglas Cleverdon, 1979); Beryl Gray, *George Eliot and Music* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Alisa Clapp, ‘The City, the Country, and Communities of Singing Women: Music in the Novels of Elizabeth Gaskell’, in Debra N. Mancoff and D.J.Trela (eds.), *Victorian Urban Settings: Essays on the Nineteenth-Century City and its Contexts* (New York: Garland, 1996), 114-32; Allan Atlas, ‘Wilkie Collins on Music and Musicians’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 124 (1999), 255-70; Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (London: Palgrave, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of music, science and gender in the leisured home* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000). Other wide-ranging studies of musical imagery in literature include Emily Auerbach, *Maestros, Dilettantes, and Philistines: The Musician in the Victorian Novel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), and Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, *Angelic Airs, Subversive Songs: Music as Cultural Discourse in the Victorian Novel* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2002); see also the groups of essays in Fuller and Losseff (eds), *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, and Weliver (ed.), *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*.

<sup>4</sup> See Nicky Losseff, 'The voice, the breath and the soul: Song and poverty in *Thyrza*, *Mary Barton*, *Alton Locke* and *A Child of the Jago*', and Alisa Clapp-Intyre, 'Indecent musical displays: Feminizing the pastoral in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*', in Fuller and Losseff (eds.), *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, 3-25 and 129-49, respectively. See also Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction*, 184-205, who contrasts Maggie's 'angelic' response to music as a child, with the 'forbidden passion' that it 'inspires . . . in her as a woman' (184).

<sup>5</sup> See Jonathan Taylor, 'The music master and "the Jew" in Victorian writing: Thomas Carlyle, Richard Wagner, George Eliot and George Du Maurier', Joe Law, 'The "perniciously homosexual art": Music and homoerotic desire in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and other *fin-de-siècle* fiction', and Irene Morra, ' "Singing like a musical box": Musical detection and novelistic tradition', in Fuller and Losseff, *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, 225-44, 173-96, and 151-70, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> See Morra, "Singing like a musical box", 164-8.

<sup>7</sup> See Losseff, 'Absent Melody and *The Woman in White*', *Music and Letters* 81:4 (2000), 532-50; for further discussion of the significance of the musical references in this novel, see Laura Vorachek, 'Female Performances: Melodramatic music conventions and *The Woman in White*', in *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, 105-127, and Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction*, 98-111.

<sup>8</sup> Losseff, *ibid.*, 540.

<sup>9</sup> Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1993), 125.

<sup>10</sup> Losseff, *ibid.*, 550.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction*, 245-84 and 'Music, crowd control and the female performer in *Trilby*' in Fuller and Losseff (eds.), *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, 57-80, and Jonathan Taylor, 'The music master and "the Jew" in Victorian writing', 227-32.

<sup>12</sup> George du Maurier, *Trilby* (Leipzig: Bernard Tauchnitz, 1894), 78.

<sup>13</sup> See Michael Allis, 'Samuel Butler and Handel: a study in obsession', *Händel-Jahrbuch* 44 (1998), 225-71.

<sup>14</sup> Jodi Lustig, 'The piano's progress: The piano in play in the Victorian novel', in *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, 83-104; see also Mary Burgan, 'Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth-Century Fiction', in Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *The Lost Chord: Essays on Victorian Music* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 42-67, and "'The Instrument of the Century" The Piano as an Icon of Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century', *George Eliot-George Henry Lewes Studies* 38-9 (2000), 26-43.

<sup>15</sup> See Laura Vorachek, 'Female performances', 123, and Losseff, 'The voice, the breath and the soul', 10-16; also Allan Atlas, 'George Gissing's Concertina', *Journal of Musicology* 17 (1999), 304-18.

<sup>16</sup> See Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* (New Jersey: Castle, 1982), 34.

<sup>17</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Company, 1897), 95: 'In the evening we strolled in the Casino Terrace, and heard some good music by Spohr and Mackenzie, and went to bed early.'

<sup>18</sup> Du Maurier, *Trilby*, 21. The music to which this refers (and which is contrasted with Billee's intense reaction to the Chopin impromptu in *A flat*) is described as: 'melodies with variations, "Annie Laurie", "The Last Rose of Summer", "The Bluebells of Scotland"; innocent little motherly and sisterly tinklings, invented to set the company at their ease on festive evenings, and make all-round conversation possible for shy people, who fear the unaccompanied sound of their own voices, and whose genial chatter always leaves off directly the music ceases.'

<sup>19</sup> G.H.Lewes, *Rose, Blanche, and Violet* 3 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1848), iii.51: "'Good news, pet," said Cecil, dancing into the room one afternoon. "Moscheles, whom I meet sometimes, you know, at Hester Manson's, has looked over my opera, and likes it very much; he has even proposed that we should have a sort of private rehearsal of it at his house next week, and has undertaken to secure the singers, and [Alfred] Bunn is to be there to hear it." ' The Bohemian pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) settled in London in 1825, and remained there until 1846; he taught at the Royal Academy of Music and was conductor of the Philharmonic Society.

<sup>20</sup> See Paul Delaney, 'Halliday's Progress: Letters of Philip Heseltine', *D.H.Lawrence Review* 13 (1980), 119-33, Barry Smith (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Peter Warlock* 4 vols. (London: Boydell and Brewer, 2005), i.1-2, and Ian Copely, 'Warlock in Novels', *Musical Times* 105 (October 1964), 739-40.

<sup>21</sup> See Weliver, 'Shaw's Fiction and the Emerging English Musical Renaissance', in *The Musical Crowd in English Fiction*, (London: Palgrave, forthcoming), Chapter 6. This represents a development of Weliver's paper, read at a *Music and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Britain* colloquia at the Royal Academy of Music on 19 November 2004, entitled 'The "paradise of pedants": the English Musical Renaissance and

progressive composers in fin-de-siècle fiction'; here, performances of music by Brahms, Wagner, Parry and Stanford helped to highlight aspects of the musical debate in Shaw's novel.

<sup>22</sup> The Piano Concerto was revised in 1895. Another parallel between Jack and Parry is that they share a Kensington address as their London home; Jack's is Church Street, Kensington, Parry's in this period was Upper Phillimore Place, Kensington.

<sup>23</sup> See Arnold Bax, *Farewell, My Youth* (London: Longmans, Greene & Co., 1943), 27, Eric Fenby, *Delius as I knew him* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1937), 24, and Eric Blom, *Music in England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942), 164.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* new edn. (Oxford: OUP, 1987), 53, suggests that where the cantata *The Black Knight* was concerned, it was 'a waste of several years of an orchestral genius's life for him to set these rubbishy lines of Longfellow', and, 73, that the libretto of *King Olaf* 'is so fatuous and risible that it requires a major effort of willpower to concentrate on the music'; similarly, Trevor Hold, in *Parry to Finzi; Twenty English Song-Composers* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 60, concludes that 'Despite the fact that Elgar was highly literate and widely read, when it came to choosing texts to set to music, his poetic tastes were far from discriminating'. An important early source of criticism of Elgar's literary awareness was Edward Dent's entry on Elgar in Guido Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (1924), translated into English in 1931; Dent's text noted that Elgar 'possessed little of the literary culture of Parry or Stanford,' but Brian Trowell has recently suggested that Dent's remarks may have suffered from mis-translation, and perhaps should have read, 'possessed little of the [formal] literary education of Parry or Stanford' – a less contentious claim. See Trowell, 'Elgar's Use of Literature' in Raymond Monk (ed.), *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), 182-326, which represents a magisterial account of literary connections in Elgar's music.

<sup>25</sup> See Geoffrey Bush, 'Songs', in Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *The Romantic Age 1800-1914, The Athlone History of Music in Britain*, Chpt 12, 280: 'Mackenzie's undoing was his seemingly complete lack of literary discrimination. Even when setting reputable poets, he was drawn irresistibly to their worst productions: two versions of Tennyson's "What does little birdie say"; see also Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), 62.

<sup>26</sup> Two movements from this project, *Processional* and *Jaga-Naut*, were published as *Two Orchestral Scenes* in 1912. Bantock's first symphonic poem, *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1899), was also based on Southey's poetry.

<sup>27</sup> A brief comment upon their relationship can be found in Jocelyn Brooke, *The Birth of a Legend; A Reminiscence of Arthur Machen and John Ireland* (London: Bertram Rota, 1964); for a more detailed and significant account, see Fiona Richards, *The Music of John Ireland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> This final movement is titled *The Scarlet Ceremonies*, from a short story within *The House of Souls* called 'The White People'.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Machen, *The London Adventure or The Art of Wandering* (London: Martin Secker, 1924), 49.

<sup>30</sup> Richards, *The Music of John Ireland*, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Machen, *The Hill of Dreams* (London: E. Grant Richards, 1907), 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>33</sup> Richards, *ibid.*, 99.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Machen: *Hieroglyphics: A Note upon Ecstasy in Literature* new edn. (London: The Unicorn Press, 1960), 21. The original edition was published by Grant Richards in 1902.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 72, 89.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 55-60.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-2.

<sup>41</sup> See Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song: Critical Studies of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), 165 and Richards, *ibid.*, 109.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Barrie Iliffe, 'Eventyr and the fairy tale in Delius', and John Bergsagel, 'Delius and Danish Literature', in Lionel Carley (ed.), *Frederick Delius: Music, Art and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 273-89, and 290-310, respectively.

<sup>43</sup> Fenby, *Delius as I knew him*, 204-5.

<sup>44</sup> Wilfred Mellers, *Romanticism and the Twentieth Century* rev. edn. (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 923.

<sup>45</sup> Christopher Palmer, *Delius: Portrait of a Cosmopolitan* (London: Duckworth, 1976), 52.

<sup>46</sup> Hold, *Parry to Finzi*, 151.



<sup>47</sup> One might also explore a wider Dowsonian frame of reference to include Granville Bantock's overture *The Pierrot of the Minute* (1908), or Roger Quilter's four *Songs of Sorrow*; comparison of the latter's treatment of 'Vita suma brevis spem nos' (titled by Quilter as *Passing dreams*) with the Delius setting mentioned above is revealing.

<sup>48</sup> This text is taken from Whitman's *Sea Drift*, set by Delius for baritone, chorus and orchestra in 1903-4.

<sup>49</sup> Ironically, several of Delius's well-known miniatures are taken from operatic works which are rarely performed, whether the *Prelude to Irmelin*, *La Calinda* from *Koanga*, or *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* from *A Village Romeo and Juliet*.

<sup>50</sup> Anthony Payne, 'Delius, Frederick, 2: Works', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 29 vols. (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), vii.165, and Alan Jefferson, *Delius* (London: J.M.Dent & Sons, 1972), 107.

<sup>51</sup> Norman T. Hunt, *A concert goer's introduction to the life and music of Frederick Delius* (Brighton: The Southern Publishing Company, n.d. [1945]), 39-40.

<sup>52</sup> Jad Adams, *Madder Music, Stronger Wine; The Life of Ernest Dowson, Poet and Decadent* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 47.

<sup>53</sup> Delius's settings of Symons include *On Craig Dhu* (1907) and *Wanderer's Song* (1908), both for unaccompanied chorus, and both written soon after the *Songs of Sunset*.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, D.C. Large and W. Weber (eds), *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (New York: Ithica, 1984), Lawrence Kramer, 'Fin-de-siècle Fantasies: *Elektra*, Degeneration and Sexual Science', *Cambridge Opera Journal* v (1993), 141-65, and Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), and "'The Music Spoke for Us": Music and Sexuality in fin-de-siècle Poetry', in Weliver (ed.), *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, 213-29. For one recent account of an example of British musical decadence, see Yopie Prins, 'Sappho Recomposed: A Song Cycle by Granville and Helena Bantock', in Weliver (ed.), *ibid.*, 230-58.

<sup>55</sup> J A Fuller-Maitland, *English Music in the XIXth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1902), 207.

<sup>56</sup> 'Charles Villiers Stanford, by Some of his pupils', *Music and Letters* 5:3 (July 1924), 195.

<sup>57</sup> Ernest Walker, *A History of Music in England* 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 335-6.

<sup>58</sup> *Cambridge Review*, 31 October 1892, 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* This impression similar to that of Hubert Parry, who visited Tennyson in 1892; Parry described Tennyson's recitation of *The Lotos-Eaters* in a diary entry of 2 January, 1892: 'It soon struck me it was not at all a prepared or careful performance as he frequently ignored stops and ran phrases in[to] one another with little apparent sense; but he evidently greatly enjoyed it himself. The manner of reading is most strange – I should think something after the manner of the ancient professional reciter of epics and songs among barbarous people. He poised his voice rather high for average intoning, and raised and dropped it for special words. Moreover he was much given to a commonplace lilt; a sing-song method of enforcing the accents which rather jarred with my sense of the rhythmic variety of the written verse. If I had heard him read before I read his works I never should have thought him capable of such exquisite effects of subtle variety or the treatment of his metres. But it was a most interesting experience'. Hallam Tennyson, in *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1897), ii.393, noted in relation to this 'performance', that 'For the first time my father's voice, usually so strong, failed while reading this poem.'

<sup>60</sup> *The Cambridge Review*, 31 October 1892, 6-7.

<sup>61</sup> Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 320.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Bernard Martin, *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 570.

<sup>63</sup> Ernest Newman, 'Concerning "A Shropshire Lad" and other matters', *Musical Times* 59 (1918), 373.

<sup>64</sup> See Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: OUP 1964), 439.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Housman to Grant Richards, 20 December 1920, reproduced in *ibid.*, 439.

<sup>66</sup> Consequently, Newman, 'Concerning "A Shropshire Lad" and other matters', 397-8, notes, 'When the ghost asks: "Is my friend hearty . . ." Dr Vaughan Williams, incredible as it may seem, makes him do so in an agitated way that can only suggest that *the ghost* already knows of the marriage.'

<sup>67</sup> Newman, *ibid.*, 397. Newman's remarks were part of a debate with Edwin Evans over the suitability of Vaughan Williams' settings. Evans, in 'English Song and On Wenlock Edge', *Musical Times* 59 (1918), 247-9, was more positive: 'the sharp differentiation between the two characters of the dialogue is in itself dramatic rather than lyrical, but it is difficult to see how that could be avoided . . . both parts are treated lyrically, though that allotted to the mortal voice is less irreproachable in this respect than that given to the departed spirit. This arises from the differentiation itself, which was bound to make the former move rhetorically on a lower plane by comparison.' Newman, however, concluded, *ibid.*, 398, that Vaughan Williams was 'too inclined to turn lyricism into melodrama or pictorialism'.

<sup>68</sup> An exaggerated characterisation of the ghostly voice of the questioner in a recent recording by Bryn Terfel (Deutsche Grammophon 445 946-2) somewhat negates the subtlety of Butterworth's setting.

<sup>69</sup> Michael Allis, 'Musical reactions to Tennyson: reformulating musical imagery in *The Lotos Eaters*', in Weliver (ed.), *The Figure of Music in 19<sup>th</sup>-century British Poetry*, 177-211. Given that Elgar was familiar with Parry's setting, the comparison is particularly apposite.

<sup>70</sup> For alternative readings of the poem, see, for example: Stopford A. Brooke, *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life* (London: Ibister, 1894), 123; A. Dwight Culler, *The Poetry of Tennyson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 54; Leonée Ormond, *Alfred Tennyson: A Literary Life* (London: Macmillan, 1993), 46; John D. Jump (ed.), *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 78; Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Macmillan, 1989), 104; Robert Bernard Martin, *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart*, 164; K.C. Kanda, *The Two Worlds of Tennyson: A Reconsideration of Tennyson's Major Poems* (Delhi: Doaba House, 1985) 49-52; J.B. Steane, *Tennyson* (London: Evans Brothers, 1966), 46; Santosh Nath, *Treatment of Greek Mythology in the Poems of Tennyson* (Aligarh: Printwell, 1992), 9-34; Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, poetics and politics* (London: Routledge, 1993) 94.

<sup>71</sup> Parallels can be drawn between the early musical reception of Parry's cantata, and the early critical response to Tennyson's poem, both of which implied that a greater sense of moral message would have been preferable.

<sup>72</sup> It is a pity that the only recorded performance of Parry's *The Lotos Eaters* (Chandos, CHAN 8990) does not include the preliminary recitation.

<sup>73</sup> See Michael Allis, 'Words and Music: Bridges, Parry and the *Invocation*', in Jeremy Dibble and Bennet Zon (eds), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies* vol.2 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), Chapter 20, 295-318.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Bridges to Parry, 22 April 1895, Reading University. See also a letter at Shulbrede Priory in Surrey, dated 10 June 1898, which concerned the same issue in *A Song of Darkness and Light*: 'I am afraid I give you much trouble. I think a good deal of it may be due to your going too much for words or expressions, the whole of no.1 is all the same – the music shd. have a broad movement of its own upon which the words merely float - not have attention called to them – so much modern music seems to me to be a series of harmonic fusses made about occasional words – without real meaning or aesthetic unity of its own.'

<sup>75</sup> Letter from Bridges to Richard Watson Dixon, dated 8 July 1895, in Donald Stanford (ed.), *The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges with the Correspondence of Robert Bridges and Lionel Muirhead* 2 vols. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983-4), i.293.

<sup>76</sup> See Robert Bridges, *Ode for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell, with other poems and a Preface on The Musical Setting of Poetry* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1896).

<sup>77</sup> Letter from Bridges to Lionel Muirhead, dated 9 May 1908, in Stanford (ed.), *The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges*, ii.551.

<sup>78</sup> Letter to G. Lowes Dickinson, 19 January 1892, in Stanford, *ibid.*, i.226-7. See also a letter from Bridges to Charles Villiers Stanford, 18 April 1891, reproduced in Harry Plunkett Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1935), 249-50.

<sup>79</sup> See Stanford, *ibid.*, ii.575.

<sup>80</sup> Letter from Bridges to Holst, 4 July [1927], in *ibid.*, ii.880.

<sup>81</sup> John Hullah, 'Elegy', in George Grove (ed.), *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 4 vols. (London: Macmillan & co., 1879-89), i.485.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, Melissa F Zeiger, *Beyond Consolation: Death, Sexuality, and the Changing Shapes of Elegy* (Ithica & London: Cornell UP, 1997); Peter M Sacks: *The English Elegy; Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985); Eric Smith: *By Mourning Tongues: Studies in English Elegy* (Ipswich: Boydell Press, 1977).

<sup>84</sup> The manuscript of this unpublished work is housed at the Royal College of Music, GB-Lcm Add.4174.

<sup>85</sup> Parry, *Studies of Great Composers* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1887), 361-5.

<sup>86</sup> Bernard Bernoliel, *Parry before Jerusalem; Studies of his Life and Music with Excerpts from his Published Writings* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 57.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Parry, 'Symphony', in Grove (ed.), *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, iv.42.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Walter Frisch, 'The Brahms Fog: On Analyzing Brahmsian Influences at the Fin de Siècle', in Frisch (ed.), *Brahms and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 81-99.

<sup>91</sup> Katherine E. Eggar, 'Ralph Vaughan Williams: some Reflections on his Work', *The Music Student* xii (1919-20), 515.



<sup>92</sup> Attributed to Sir Hugh Allen and Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock), respectively; quoted in Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 156.

<sup>93</sup> Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.; a Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: OUP, 1964), 121.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Hubert Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: George G.Harrap & Co., 1950), 131-3, Simona Pakenham, *Ralph Vaughan Williams; A Discovery of his Music* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1957), 53-6, and A.E.F.Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), 189-208.

<sup>95</sup> See Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 139.

<sup>96</sup> As Alain Frogley notes, 'H.G.Wells and Vaughan Williams's A London Symphony: Politics and culture in fin-de-siècle England', in Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (eds), *Sundry sorts of music books; Essays on The British Library Collections Presented to O.W.Neighbour on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday* (London: The British Library, 1993), 303, however, 'there is no hint of the colourful, sometimes violent, contrasts in the unfolding city-scape that animate Wells's narrative. It may be that the passage reflects only the final paragraph of the journey, where the destroyer has passed out onto the open sea'.

<sup>97</sup> H.G.Wells, *Tono-Bungay* (London: 1933), 253. Those wishing to experience the musical effect of this passage could explore recordings such as Adrian Boult with the London Philharmonic Orchestra on EMI Classics (CDM 7 64017 2), track 5, from 8.06 onwards, or Richard Hickox and the London Symphony Orchestra on Chandos (CHAN 9902), track 5, from 11.42 onwards.

<sup>98</sup> See Frogley, *ibid.*, and Anthony Arblaster, '“A London Symphony” and “Tono-Bungay”', *Tempo* 163 (1987), 21-5.

<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of Wells' novel in these terms, see David Lodge, 'Tono-Bungay and the Condition of England', in *The Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 214-42.

<sup>100</sup> The only recording of the original version of the symphony is the Chandos disc referred to above.

<sup>101</sup> Alain Frogley, 'Constructing Englishness in music: national character and the reception of Ralph Vaughan Williams', in Frogley (ed.), *Vaughan Williams Studies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 1-22.

<sup>102</sup> See *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 April 1958, and 'Ralph Vaughan Williams', *The Score*, November 1958, 2.

<sup>103</sup> Alain Frogley, 'Vaughan Williams and Thomas Hardy: “Tess” and the Slow Movement of the Ninth Symphony', *Music and Letters* 68 (1987), 42-59; more recently, Frogley has incorporated his conclusions within a wider consideration of the programmatic origins of the symphony in *Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 256-94.

<sup>104</sup> For the annotations on the sketch material, see Frogley, *Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony*, 120-21.

<sup>105</sup> There are several recordings of Vaughan Williams' Ninth Symphony; for one effective performance of this passage, however, see Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra on EMI Classics (CDM 7 64021 2), track 6, from 6.16 to the end of the movement (7:45).

<sup>106</sup> *Maud*, Part II, V.1.

<sup>107</sup> See Trowell, 'Elgar's Use of Literature', particularly 256-67.

<sup>108</sup> *Sunday Times*, 11 October 1931, 5.

<sup>109</sup> See Michael Allis, 'Elgar, Lytton, and the Piano Quintet, Op.84', *Music and Letters* 85:2 (May 2004), 198-238.

<sup>110</sup> *Lord Lytton's Novels 27 Vols.* (London: 1877-8), xxii, *A Strange Story*, 134-5.

<sup>111</sup> I am extremely grateful to Roger Pyne and members of the Aura Ensemble for allowing the sound clip of the Quintet to be used in this article.