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Stephen K. Steele Conductor
Illinois State University

Matthew Luttrell Conductor

David Dunbar Conductor

Chris Render Conductor

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Illinois State University
School of Music

BRITISH BAND CLASSICS

WIND SYMPHONY

Stephen K. Steele, Matthew Luttrell,
David Dunbar and Chris Render *Conductors*

Center for the Performing Arts
Sunday afternoon
November 17, 2002
3:00 p.m.

The Fifty-seventh program of the 2002 - 2003 Season

Program

Flourish For Wind Band (1939)

Maestoso

Ralph Vaughan Williams

(1872 – 1958)

First Suite (1909)

Chaconne: Allegro Moderato

Intermezzo: Vivace

March: Tempo di Marcia

Gustav Holst

(1874 – 1934)

Edited by Colin Matthews

Matthew Luttrell, *Conductor*

English Folk Song Suite (1924)

March 'Seventeen Come Sunday': Allegro

Intermezzo 'My Bonny Boy': Andantino

March 'Folk Songs from Somerset': Allegro

Ralph Vaughan Williams

(1872 – 1958)

David Dunbar, *Conductor*

Intermission

Second Suite (1911)

March (Morris Dance): Allegro

Song Without Words 'I'll Love My Love': Andante

Song of the Blacksmith: Moderato e maestoso

Fantasia on the 'Dargason': Allegro moderato

Gustav Holst

(1874 – 1934)

Edited by Colin Matthews

Chris Render, *Conductor*

Hammersmith (1930)

Prelude: Poco adagio – Scherzo: Poco vivace

Gustav Holst

(1874 – 1934)

Toccata Marziale (1924)

Allegro maestoso

Ralph Vaughan Williams

(1872 – 1958)

Program Notes

Brief introduction:

The repertoire for military bands at the turn of the twentieth century consisted largely of transcriptions of popular orchestral classics, selections from opera, musical comedy, dances and marches. The first pieces for British military band by a major composer were Percy Grainger's march *The Lads of Wamphray*, and parts of the *Lincolnshire Posey*. Their publication came much later, so Holst's *First Suite* can be regarded as the earliest original work of significance.

The sudden flowering of British wind band classics in the period 1920 – 1924 was due to the enthusiasm of the Commandant of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, Colonel John A. C. Somerville. He instituted many reforms in military music, but his most ambitious plan was to attract the best composers of the day to write for bands.

We do not know why Holst wrote either of the Suites; his interest in the wind band perhaps derived from childhood memories of bands in the parks of Cheltenham or his early professional experiences as a trombonist with Stanislaus Wurm and the White Viennese Band, but it was certainly fostered by living near Kneller Hall. Commissioning works from Vaughan Williams, Holst's close friend and colleague, was a natural choice for Somerville. Later Vaughan Williams' student, Gordon Jacob, was also to be involved.

Gustav Holst was born in Cheltenham in 1874. He began composing while at Cheltenham Grammar School and spent two months at Oxford learning counterpoint before being sent to London to study composition under Stanford at the Royal College of Music. He met Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1895, the two quickly becoming friends and beginning their lifelong habit of playing sketches of their newest compositions to each other.

Holst left college in 1898, playing the trombone in the Carl Rosa Opera Company and later Scottish Opera. He married Isobel Harrison in 1901 and taught at the James Allen's Girls' School in Dulwich for two years before being appointed Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith in 1905, where he continued to teach until the end of his life. Holst's heavy and exhausting teaching schedule meant that time left available for composition was often fragmented.

Between 1920 and 1923 Holst's working life became increasingly demanding: he was teaching at the Royal College of Music and University College, reading, as well as conducting and recording. His popularity as a composer reached its height, as indeed did the level of stress. For the whole of 1924 Holst was ordered by his doctor to cancel all professional engagements and to live in the country, where he was able to continue composing. On his return to London in 1925 he gave up all teaching except at St. Paul's.

Holst was appointed visiting lecturer in composition at Harvard University in January, 1932 but soon after became ill. On his return to England in the summer of that year, Holst's health continued to decline. He died on 25 May, 1934.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born in 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney. Educated at Charterhouse School, then Trinity College, Cambridge, he was later a pupil of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music. He later studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris.

At the turn of the century he was among the very first to travel into the countryside to collect folk-songs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy.

Before the war he had met and then sustained a long and deep friendship with the composer Gustav Holst. For many years Vaughan Williams conducted and led the Leith Hill Music Festival, conducting Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on a regular basis. He also became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London. In a long and productive life, music flowed from his creative pen in profusion. Hardly a musical genre was untouched or failed to be enriched by his work, which included nine symphonies, five operas, film music, ballet and stage music, several song cycles, church music and works for chorus and orchestra.

Flourish For Wind Band is a brief ternary movement that was written as the Overture to a Pageant, held in the Royal Albert Hall and was scored for military band with numerous clarinets, cornets, saxophones, euphoniums and timpani.

The earliest known performance of the *First Suite* was June 23, 1920 at Kneller Hall, played by a band of 165, although the original scoring is for a group of only thirty-eight. This still remains one of the most tightly organized works in the wind repertoire. Holst himself wrote on the title page:

"As each movement is founded on the same phrase, it is requested that the Suite shall be played right through without a break."

The *Chaconne* is a set of fifteen variations, with two imposing climaxes; the *Intermezzo* is a fast-moving ternary scherzo ending with a coda that disappears into nothing. The third movement is a prototype for the classic British march, an energetic swinging theme with a broad, grandiloquent central trio section.

The world premiere of the *English Folk Song Suite* was given at a concert at Kneller Hall on July 4, 1923. According to his wife, Ursula, Vaughan Williams was keen to exploit this new medium and "felt that a chance to play real tunes would be an agreeable and salutary experience for Bandsmen." Two folk songs are used in the first movement, 'Seventeen Come Sunday' and 'Pretty Caroline', with contrasting original material in the Trio. The *Intermezzo* is based on two more folk tunes, the elegiac 'My Bonny Boy' and the skittish 'Green Bushes'. The final *March* includes 'Blow Away the Morning Dew', 'High Germany', 'The Trees So High', and 'John Barleycorn'.

Second Suite, uses English folk songs and folk dance tunes throughout, being written at a time when Holst needed to rest from the strain of original composition. The opening march movement uses three tunes, the first of which is a lively *Morris dance*. The folk song *Swansea Town* is next, played broadly and lyrically by the euphonium, followed by the entire band playing the tune in block harmonies - a typically English sound. *Claudy Banks* is the third tune, brimming with vitality and the vibrant sound of unison clarinets. The first two tunes are repeated to conclude the first movement. The second movement is a setting for the English folk song *I'll Love My Love*. It is a sad story of a young maiden driven into Bedlam by grief over her lover being sent to sea by his parents to prevent their marriage. The Hampshire folk song, *The Song of the Blacksmith*, is the basis of the third movement, which evokes visions of the sparks from red hot metal being beaten with a lively hammer's rhythm on the blacksmith's anvil. The English country dance and folk song, *The Dargason*, dating from the sixteenth century, completes the suite in a manner that continues to cycle and seems to have no end. The Elizabethan love tune *Green Sleeves* is intertwined briefly and withdrawn before the final witty scoring of a piccolo and tuba duet four octaves apart.

Hammersmith is one of Holst's most mature masterpieces. He wrote:

"There is no program and no attempt to depict any person or incident. The only two things I think were in my mind were 1) a district crowded with cockneys which would be overcrowded if it were not for the everlasting good humor of the people concerned, and 2) the background of the river, that was there before the crowd and will be there presumably long afterwards, and which goes on its way largely unnoticed and apparently quite unconcerned."

His theme for the river is a chaconne, a brooding three-bar motive underneath a mysterious counter-melody. That which follows is both desolate and virtuosic, being interrupted momentarily for one of Holst's beloved chamber episodes. The climax is dramatically interrupted by the coda, the chaconne, moving seamlessly under haunting ghosts of earlier themes, disappearing into the distance.

Holst was too ill to attend what was probably the world premiere which was given by the United States Marine Band in 1932. In November 1933, Ralph Hawkes wrote to Holst refusing publication. Six months later the composer died without ever hearing a band play his work. The second performance was not until 1954 with publication in 1956.

Only four minutes long, *Toccata Marziale* is one of the most developed of Vaughan Williams' works for band. It was conceived as the first movement of a Concerto grosso. Of the other projected movements, only the second movement remains in a piano score, later incorporated into the *Violin Concerto*. *Toccata Marziale* is a work of considerable ingenuity. The movement is in a martial $\frac{3}{4}$, but the freedom of phrasing and the contrapuntal intricacies transform the material into extraordinary complexities, foreshadowing the writing in much later works such as the *Sixth Symphony*.

Remaining Fall Band Concerts

Monday, November 18, **Chamber Winds Concert**,
Kemp Recital Hall, 8:00 p. m.

Thursday, November 21, **Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band
and University Band Concert**,
Center for the Performing Arts, 7:30 p.m.
Featuring the music of David Maslanka

Sunday, November 24, **Wind Symphony Chamber Winds Concert**,
Center for the Performing Arts, 3:00 p.m.
Featuring faculty artists
John Koch (Baritone Voice) and Kimberly Risinger (Flute)

Wind Symphony Personnel

Flute, Piccolo

*Kristi Benedick, Arnold, MO
Megan Lomonof, Oak Lawn
Stacey Lusk, Flora
Christa Ruesink, Palos Heights
Leigh Ann Singer, Ottawa
Elivi Varga, Bethesda, MD

Oboe

*Heather Broyles, Bristol, TN
Patrick McGuire, Round Lake Heights

E-Flat Clarinet

Ivory Sebastian, Aurora
Jennifer Bland, Normal

Clarinet

Brian Beddigs, Park Forest
Jennifer Bland, Normal
Jessica Boese, Shorewood
Joseph Conway, Sterling
*Sally Friedrich, Joliet
*Nicole Schneider, Lemont
Ivory Sebastian, Aurora
Stephanie Simpson, Chicago

Bass Clarinet

Christina Isaacs, Bloomington
*Paul Sprecher, Canton
Kristina Toma, Northbrook

Bassoon

Kathryn Bartel, Westmont
*Erin Click, Jackson, MO

Alto Saxophone

Robert Rake, Jr., Springfield
*Tobias Thomas, Tremont

Tenor Saxophone

Travis Thacker, Normal

Baritone Saxophone

Amanda Miceli, Sleepy Hollow

Horn

David Bostik, Lockport
*Sara Giovanelli, Iowa City, IA
John Hansen, Pontiac
Christopher Render, Houston, TX

Trumpet

Kyle Berens, Crystal Lake
Elizabeth Clapper, Bellville, OH
Elisa Curren, Danbury, NH
Ryan Elliott, Saginaw, MI
*Kelly Watkins, Henderson, TX

Trombone

*Michael Bingham, Chicago
Kelly Wolf, Morrison

Bass Trombone

Matt Kelm, Lockport

Euphonium

Michael McDermott, East Moline
*Anthony Hernandez, East Moline

Tuba

Eric Jordan, Joliet
*Chris Vivio, Naperville

String Bass

Grant Souder, Normal

Percussion

Andy Bautista, Skokie
*William Cuthbert, Jr., Elkhart, IN
David Dunbar, El Paso, TX
Bill Roberts, St. Charles
Scott Simon, Belvidere

*denotes section leader