



English Masterworks for Orchestra: Holst, Britten, and Vaughan Williams



7:30pm Friday, January 16, 2015
3:00pm Sunday, January 18, 2015

beavertonsymphony.org

Our guest Soloists



Jen Harrison



Les Green

As the daughter of an opera singer and a music store owner it only followed that Jennifer Harrison would grow up to be a musician. Choosing the instrument which she felt possessed the most gorgeous tone, she began a life as a French horn player at the age of 11. As a teen she had the fortune of playing at the Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts under the baton of Leonard Bernstein.

After her college studies at Northwestern University, Jen played with the New Mexico Symphony for one year and thoroughly relished working as a symphonic player. Since moving to Portland she has been freelancing in the Portland area as a classical and even pop rock horn player. She is currently a member of the Portland Opera Orchestra, the Portland Chamber Orchestra, and the Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra.

During the month of December she performs with the Portland Brass Quintet in the annual Christmas Revels musical featuring songs and dances from centuries past. In the summertime Jen has been involved with the Sunriver Music Festival, the Bach Festival and the Astoria Music Festival. Jen also performs on occasion with the Oregon Symphony, the Oregon Ballet Theatre and the Eugene Symphony.

Jen's most unique musical endeavor is her creation of the Northwest Horn Orchestra, founded in 2007. This ensemble is the perfect fusion of her loves of both classical and pop genres spiced up with non-traditional theatrics. NWHO commissions new compositions yearly and boasts a large library of original horn ensemble arrangements.

When she is not playing the horn, she can be found hiking the trails of the Pacific Northwest, spending time in her garden, or enjoying life with her wonderful husband, Mike Murphy, and their beloved feline friend, Feldspar.

Leslie W. Green, Tenor, is in high demand as a soloist in the Northwest. Highly praised for his seemingly effortless, expressive singing, Mr. Green performs a wide variety of literature ranging from Bach arias to contemporary art songs.

Green has appeared throughout the Northwest with many of the finest ensembles and events including Oregon Repertory Singers, Portland Symphonic Choir, Annas Bay Music Festival, Mount Angel Abbey, Willamette Master Chorus, Eclectic Orange Festival in Orange County California, Rose City Chamber Orchestra, Cascade Music Festival, Northwest Mahler Festival, Salem Chamber Orchestra, Festival Chorale Oregon, Columbia Chorale and numerous Church concerts and music series.

Mr. Green's recent engagements have included singing on the Utrecht Early Music Festival in Holland with Cappella Romana and subsequent tours to Boston, New York and Ottawa. Green also sang in the world premiere of Maximillian Steinberg's "Passion Week" with Cappella Romana. He has also had several highly praised performances of Handel's "Messiah", an enthusiastically received performance of Schubert's landmark song cycle "Winterreise", a "brilliant" recital of Beethoven and Schumann with the incomparable Jean-David Coen at the piano, and the role of Victory in Hildegard von Bingen's "Ordo Virtutum".

He sang the lead role of the Stage Manager in the Northwest Premiere of Ned Rorem's Opera "Our Town" at Willamette University, Haydn's "Creation" with Bravo! Vancouver and Willamette Master Chorus, and Benjamin Britten's "Les Illuminations" and "Serenade" with Salem Chamber Orchestra. He has done concert tours with Cappella Romana including trips to London, New York, Washington D.C., Los Angeles and an appearance on the prestigious Music before 1800 series in New York, as Alfredo in La Traviata and Don Jose in Carmen both productions with Opera Theater of Oregon, as the Evangelist in Heinrich Schutz's St. John Passion with Portland Vocal Consort, and the Premiere of Robert Kyr's "A Time for Life" with Cappella Romana. Green continues to be the primary tenor soloist for the Bach Cantata series at St. James Lutheran Church in Portland.

Green originally hails from the Midwest where he received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Ball State University. He resides in Vancouver Washington with his wife and daughter. He maintains a private voice studio and teaches studio voice and vocal pedagogy at Willamette University, studio voice at Pacific University, studio voice with Concordia University Portland, and is sought after for master classes and adjudications.

Beaverton Symphony Orchestra

Travis Hatton, Music Director

Gustav Holst
(1874-1934)

A Somerset Rhapsody, Op. 21, No. 2 (1906-7)

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, Op. 31 (1943)

(made possible by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.)

Les Green, tenor

Jen Harrison, French horn

Prologue (horn solo)

Pastoral (*The Evening Quatrains* by Charles Cotton)

Nocturne (*Blow, bugle, Blow* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

Elegy (*The Sick Rose* by William Blake)

Dirge (*the Lyke-Wake Dirge*, anonymous fifteen century)

Hymn (*Hymn to Diana* by Ben Jonson)

Sonnet (*To Sleep* by John Keats)

Epilogue (horn solo)

Intermission

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)

Symphony No. 5 in D Major (1938-43)

Preludio

Scherzo

Romanza

Passacaglia

Program Notes by *Hugh Ferguson*

The English Musical Renaissance

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, there was rising concern among England's serious musicians that they had an identity problem. There was Russian music, and Hungarian music, and of course German music — but English music?

A move got underway to address this perceived deficit, a move bolstered by the establishment, in 1882, of the Royal College of Music, whose website today claims that “the RCM has trained some of the most important figures in British and international music life, including composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams and Britten” — the three composers featured in today's concert.

It came to be known as the English Musical Renaissance, when English composers began writing in a “distinctly national idiom.” It gathered momentum in the early 1900's and was still a powerful influence on English composers half a century later.

Holst and Vaughan Williams were both enrolled in the Royal College of Music soon after it opened. They became lifelong friends and often consulted each other on their compositions. Britten was thirty years their junior. Holst's *Somerset Rhapsody* premiered in 1910; Britten's *Serenade* and Vaughan Williams' symphony both premiered in 1943.

Gustav Holst: “A Somerset Rhapsody.”

Notwithstanding his name, Gustav von Holst was a second-generation Englishman. (He dropped the “von” during World War I.) He himself was born in 1874 in Cheltenham, southwest England. His father, an established piano teacher, gave him piano lessons from his earliest years.

A delicate child, short-sighted and asthmatic, Gustav nevertheless practiced the piano every day under his father's stern supervision. But he began to be troubled with neuritis in his right arm and hand, which eventually limited the time he could practice.

While still in grammar school, he began experimenting with composition. His father gave him little encouragement, but he learned what he could from reading Berlioz's treatise on instrumentation. Eventually, when he realized that it would be impossible for Gustav to become a solo pianist, his father allowed him to have two months in Oxford learning counterpoint, before sending him to London to study composition under Charles Stanford at the recently opened Royal College of Music (RCM).

Stanford reportedly found him “hardworking but not at all brilliant.” Holst was turned down for an RCM scholarship twice, but the third time, in 1895, he was awarded one, just as money from home was becoming scarce. By now his neuritis had forced him to give up the piano in favor of the trombone, with which he soon began earning money, at resorts during summer vacations, and eventually in orchestras.

It was also in 1895 that Holst first met Ralph Vaughan Williams. They soon formed the habit of playing their compositions to each other while they were still working on them.

For two years after graduating in 1898, Holst made his living as a trombonist, composing on the side. But performance demands left too little time for composing, so he quit performing

and began composing full-time. He married in 1901, and his wife brought in some money as a seamstress and music copyist, but it wasn't enough. His compositions weren't selling. So when he was offered a teaching position (it's said that Vaughan Williams was instrumental in bringing it about) he accepted it. For the rest of his life, he would divide his time between teaching and composing, often working himself to exhaustion in the process.

Around this time, there was rising interest in English folk song. Vaughan Williams was an early enthusiast, convert to this cause, going round the English countryside collecting and noting down folk songs that he heard in pubs and fairs. Holst, who for many years had been enamored of Wagner's music, found the simplicity and economy of folksong very appealing, and it influenced his compositions profoundly. Though not as passionate a convert as his friend, he incorporated a number of folk melodies in his own compositions and made several arrangements of folk songs collected by others.

"A Somerset Rhapsody" was written at the suggestion of the folk-song collector Cecil Sharp and made use of three tunes from one of Sharp's collections. Holst began work on the piece in 1906. Its premiere at the Queen's Hall in 1910 was, Holst believed, "my first real success".

The three tunes, all from rural Somerset county not far from where Holst was born and raised, are "The Sheep-Shearing Song", introduced by oboe and then taken up by violins, "High Germany", a march that breaks the pastoral mood, and "The Lover's Farewell". The climax occurs at mid-point when woodwind and brass take up "High Germany," followed by a recapitulation of "The Lovers' Farewell" and the concluding return of the "Sheep-Shearing Song". Holst told a friend that he had arranged the tunes to form a kind of narrative: into a quiet country scene comes the sound of approaching soldiers; a youth who is courting a girl is persuaded to enlist and go to war; the soldiers march into the distance and the pastoral quietness returns; the girl is left alone.

Holst would continue composing, and teaching, until his premature death at 59 after surgery for a bleeding ulcer. His health was always precarious, but it seldom slowed his output. His work brought him popularity during the years 1918-1920, but the increasing asceticism of the compositions following those years left many of his admirers behind. It didn't seem to bother him.

Benjamin Britten: "Serenade for Horn, Tenor, and Strings"

In the year 1943, thirty-year-old Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), a conscientious objector just returned from self-imposed exile in the United States, was contributing to the war effort by turning out scores for BBC broadcasts. At a late-night session with the Royal Air Force Orchestra, the principal horn player, 21-year-old Dennis Brain, approached the composer and asked him to write a new piece for the horn.

The result was *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*.

Although not yet at the height of his fame, Britten was well on his way, recognized on both sides of the Atlantic. Just before leaving the United States (where he and his lifetime partner, Peter Pears, had been welcomed in circles ranging from Carson McCullers to Gypsy Rose Lee) Serge Koussevitzky had commissioned him to write an opera, at which he was now at

work. It would be known as *Peter Grimes*. Within two years it would premier at the Sadler's Wells Theater in London.

The theater was reopening after five years — having been closed by Nazi bombing in 1940. Crowds started lining up twenty-four hours ahead of time, and before the curtain rose, all the tickets for all the future scheduled performances had been sold. A five-minute ovation followed the performance.

Peter Grimes brought Britten international fame and a dominant position among English composers. In a short period it was heard more than a hundred times in most of the countries of Europe and translated into eight languages. In 1946 Leonard Bernstein directed its first American performance, at Tanglewood, in Lenox, Massachusetts. In 1948 it was produced by New York's Metropolitan Opera Association.

Until his death from a heart attack thirty years later, Britten's success continued unabated. "Britten has only to sneeze," it was said, "and it's immediately published, performed, and recorded."

Born in Lowestoft, on the North Sea coast of England, Britten, age two, reportedly would whimper, "Pay pano," to be taken to the piano. His mother, an amateur pianist, gave him his first lessons. At seven, he would take scores of operas and symphonies to bed to read. By nine, he had composed an oratorio and a string quartet. By age sixteen he had produced a symphony, six quartets, ten piano sonatas, and many smaller works.

In 1926, he began studying composition under Frank Bridge (1879-1941), an eminent English composer. Four years later, a scholarship brought him to the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with John Ireland. His compositions won prompt acceptance; several of them were performed before he was twenty.

He went to work in 1935 at the film unit of the Post Office, where he wrote background music for sixteen documentary films. He also scored the music for several motion pictures.

He was still composing independently as well, and in 1937 he realized his first major success with the *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge*, for orchestra, whose premiere performance was given at the Salzburg Festival in Austria. Aaron Copland called it "a knockout."

War was in the wind. A sincere pacifist since early childhood, Britten hoped to literally distance himself from the coming conflict. He and his partner Peter Pears booked passage to the U.S.

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, which had its first performance in London on October 15, 1943 with Peter Pears, tenor, and Dennis Brain horn, is not a "serenade" in the tradition of nocturnal outdoor entertainment music, but is rather a song cycle: a selection of English poems, set to music, on the themes of evening, night and the approach of sleep.

The music critic Edward Sackville-West, to whom Britten dedicated the *Serenade*, gave the following summary:

"The subject is Night and its prestigia [tricks], the lengthening shadow, the distant haze at sunset, the Baroque panoply of the starry sky, the heavy angels of sleep; but also the cloak of

evil—the worm in the heart of the rose, the sense of sin in the heart of man.”

Of the eight brief movements in the twenty-five minute piece, two — the first and last — are for solo horn. The first thing that will probably strike the ear of the listener in these movements is that the notes of the horn sound either sharp or flat. This is because Britten called for the soloist to play only the natural harmonics, eschewing the use of the valves that render the tempered scales that we are accustomed to hearing.

The six poems set to music are by Charles Cotton, Tennyson, Blake, an anonymous fifteenth-century poet, Ben Jonson, and Keats.

The horn obbligato accompanies the tenor in the first five; during the sixth, the horn player is tacit and moves off-stage, and from there plays the epilogue, which is a repeat of the first movement.

Ralph Vaughan Williams: Symphony No. 5 in D Major

In 1943, the same year that the thirty-year-old Benjamin Britten produced his *Serenade for Horn, Tenor and Strings*, the seventy-one-year-old Ralph Vaughan Williams conducted the premier of his Fifth Symphony, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in Royal Albert Hall.

A critic from the *New York Times* was there. “Its simplicity and its sincerity may well create a new fashion. ... It may in time be regarded as Vaughan Williams’s best achievement,” he wrote. “This is the work of one who has attained what he had long labored to find — peace and serenity of mind and soul, as well as a perfect balance between thought and medium.”

A big, burly, bearlike man, Vaughan Williams was born (1872) into a family of considerable means. When as a child he showed an interest in music, his mother bought him an organ — which one of the servants had to pump when he practiced. Later, the family income underwrote his leisurely pursuit of what became his uniquely characteristic mode of expression. He attended the Royal College of Music in 1890, but left two years later for Trinity College, Cambridge, from which he won baccalaureate degrees in history and music. But fearing that his performance skills fell short of earning him a successful career in music, he returned to RCM for more work on his organ playing. It was in 1895, during this second sojourn at RCM, that his life-long friendship with Gustav Holst began.

Holst — physically weak, economically challenged, an obsessive and almost reclusive workaholic; and Vaughan Williams — robust, of independent means, and outgoing— were drawn together by their common need to find their individual musical identities.

Soon after leaving RCM, Vaughan Williams got a job as organist in a South Lambeth church, but hated it. When he married Adeline Fisher in 1897, he quit his job so they could enjoy an extended honeymoon in Berlin, where they heard Wagner’s *Ring* — uncut.

In 1904, he was persuaded to undertake the compilation of a new Anglican hymnal. Percy Dearmer, Cecil Sharp and others had collected the texts. Williams was to supply the tunes ... and underwrite the project. Two years and two hundred and fifty pounds (of the composer’s money) later, the *English Hymnal* was complete. The tunes were “sturdily English,” drawn from earlier composers and from folk music or provided by Vaughan Williams and his friends.

(During the next fifty years, five million copies were sold.)

It was during this period that he began the habit of going into the field to collect native music in as pure a state as it could be found. (And when his friend Holst began work on the folksong-based “A Somerset Rhapsody.”) He immersed himself in it, considering it not so much a source of material as a way to free himself from foreign influences. In his words:

“The knowledge of our folk songs did not so much discover for us something new, but uncovered something which had been hidden by foreign matter.”

Harold Schonberg wrote that Vaughan Williams “had seen too many British composers end up as captives dragged on a rope behind the chariot of German academism,” and that by allowing themselves to be captives, they diminished their own importance. As Vaughan Williams himself put it: “As long as composers persist in serving up at second hand the externals of the music of other nations, they must not be surprised if audiences prefer the real Brahms, the real Wagner, the real Debussy or the real Stravinsky to their pale reflections.”

Vaughan Williams’ music will never be mistaken for Brahms or Wagner. Most, in fact, will probably agree with David Mason Greene: that he was the first to “speak a language that was unmistakably English.” In fact he “so saturated himself in English national music,” as Sam Morgenstern wrote in his *Composers on Music*, “that his original themes bear the authentic ring of actual folk songs and are at times indistinguishable from them.”

As for his Symphony No. 5, it is, in the opinion of Michael Kennedy, eminent music critic and Vaughan Williams’ biographer, the epitome of “the Englishness of English music.”

It is a serene, romantic, pastoral piece in four movements; quiet, with only a very few passages rising even to a forte. The texture throughout is strongly dominated by the strings.

Text of the Songs

Prologue

(solo horn)

Pastoral

The day's grown old; the fainting sun
Has but a little way to run,
And yet his steeds, with all his skill,
Scarce lug the chariot down the hill.
The shadows now so long do grow,
That brambles like tall cedars show;
Mole hills seem mountains, and the ant
Appears a monstrous elephant.
A very little, little flock
Shades thrice the ground that it would stock;
Whilst the small stripling following them
Appears a mighty Polypheme.
And now on benches all are sat,
In the cool air to sit and chat,
Till Phoebus, dipping in the west,
Shall lead the world the way to rest.

Charles Cotton (1630–1687)

Nocturne

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory:
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
flying,
Bugle blow; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.
O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, answer, dying,
dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

Elegy

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm,
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

William Blake (1757–1827)

Dirge

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleet and candle- lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule.
When thou from hence away art past,
Every nighte and alle,
To Whinny- muir thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule.
If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every nighte and alle,
Sit thee down and put them on;
And Christe receive thy saule.
If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane
Every nighte and alle,
The whinnes sall prick thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou may'st pass,
Every nighte and alle,
To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule.
From Brig o' Dread when thou may'st pass,
Every nighte and alle,
To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule.
If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every nighte and alle,
The fire sall never make thee shrink;
And Christe receive thy saule.
If meat or drink thou ne'er gav'st nane,
Every nighte and alle,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule.
This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleet and candle-lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule.

Lyke Wake Dirge,
anonymous 15th century

Hymn

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.
Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heav'n to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wishèd sight,

Goddess excellently bright.
Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short so-ever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright.

Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

Sonnet

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from
the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes.
Or wait the "Amen" ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities.
Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,
Save me from curious conscience, that still
lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a
mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd casket of my Soul.

John Keats (1795–1821)

Epilogue

(solo horn – off stage)

The Orchestra

Violin I

Rachael Susman, *Concertmaster*
David Abbott
Susan Booth Larson
Kathy Boulton
Anne Haberkern
Pamela Jacobsen
Jonathan Novack
Sarah Novack
Kris Oliveira
Spencer Shao
Sohyun Westin

Violin II

Heather Case, *Principal*
Alberta Barnes
Caroline Fung
Elle Hohn
Tom Lee
Margret Oethinger
Christina Reynolds
Laura Semrau
Nancy Vink

Viola

Bev Gibson, *Principal*
Deborah Baxter
Jane Brown
Ray Bunkofske
Erin Gordenier
Stephanie Gregory
Charlie VanDemarr

Cello

Marcy England, *Principal*
Barb Camp
Kristin Dissinger
Allen Dobbins
Holly Hutchason
David Keyes
Michelle McDowell
Sue McDowell
Ann Neuman

Bass

Veronika Zeisset, *Principal*
Allen Bodin
Carl Ceczy-Haskins
Vytautas Nagisetty

Flute

Ellen Bercovitz
Linda Hartig

Piccolo

Jerry Pritchard

Clarinet

Don Barnes, *Principal*
Milt Monnier

Oboe

Ben Serna-Grey, *Principal*
Gordon Davis

English Horn

Celeste Martinez

Bassoon

Frank Kenny
Nancy Pierce

French Horn

Kippe Spear, *Principal*
Jennifer Anderson
Audrey Garbacik
Kurt Heichelheim

Trumpet

Mayne Mihacsi, *Principal*
Jason Bills

Trombone

Paul Hanau, *Principal*
Joe Agostine
Eric Olson

Tuba

Jay Klippstein

Timpani

Tom Hill

Stage Manager

Stephen Blaufuss

This is the Beaverton Symphony's 30 Anniversary Season

The Beaverton Chamber Symphony was founded in 1984 by Charles Encell, a professional carpenter who also happened to have a Masters degree in Music from PSU and a Ph.D. in Conducting from the University of Washington. He started the orchestra, he recalls, "because there wasn't one out in the wild western communities of Portland at the time and I thought there needed to be one. And because I wanted a place to conduct."

The orchestra played its first public performance at a fundraiser for the Beaverton Arts Commission in November of 1984, and its first public concert in December of that year. At that time the orchestra consisted of around 25 players. Charley conducted the orchestra for its first 25 seasons before retiring in 2008 with his wife (and our former concertmaster) Gwen Isaacs to Victoria, BC, where he continues to play in and conduct various amateur groups.

During the 2008-2009 season, the orchestra, by then having about 50 musicians, auditioned several candidates and chose Travis Hatton as its second conductor and music director. At that time, in recognition of our growth over the years into a full size symphony orchestra, the members voted to change our name to the Beaverton Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra has since grown to about 65 members and eagerly looks forward to its next 30 years.

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In memory of my mother

Nancy Vink

In memory of James E Nolte, MD, FACS

Minerva Nolte

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Beaverton Arts Commission



Travis Hatton, Music Director

Travis Hatton's versatile conducting career spans a broad range of musical organizations around the world. He has led opera and ballet companies throughout Europe and America, and has appeared as a guest conductor with orchestras in Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and in Boston, Tennessee, Indiana, California, Alaska, Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Texas. He holds a Bachelors of Music degree (awarded Magna Cum Laude) in Music Theory and Composition from the University of the Pacific and a Masters of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music.



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