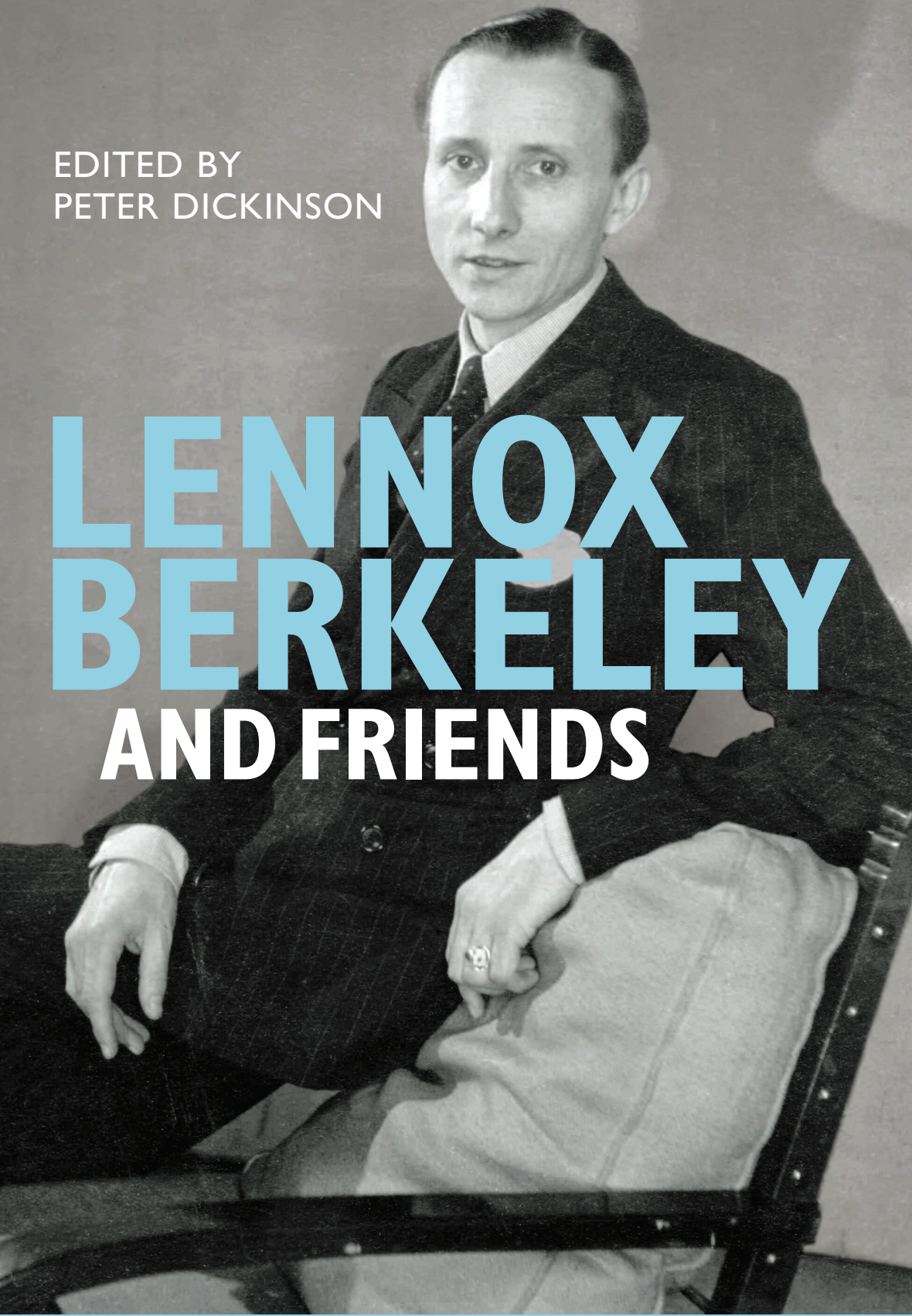

EDITED BY
PETER DICKINSON

LENNOX BERKELEY AND FRIENDS

WRITINGS, LETTERS AND INTERVIEWS

Lennox Berkeley and Friends

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edited by Peter Dickinson

BOYDELL PRESS

First published 2012
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978 1 84383 785 5

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mount Hope Ave, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

Papers used by Boydell & Brewer Ltd are natural,
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Designed and typeset in Garamond Premier Pro by
David Roberts, Pershore, Worcestershire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

This book is dedicated to the memory of
Richard Hickox (1948–2008)
in recognition of his uniquely
authoritative performances and
recordings of Lennox Berkeley's music.

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FRONTISPIECE

Berkeley, 1950s (Janet Stone, © the Estate of Reynolds and Janet Stone)

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The plates appear between pages 116 and 117.

Many photographs courtesy of Tony Scotland, by permission of Lady Berkeley and the Berkeley Estate, and the original photographers where it has been possible to reach them.

Acknowledgements

I should like to make the first of my acknowledgements to Sir Lennox himself. He was always generous and co-operative in being prepared to be interviewed and appreciative of everything done on behalf of his music. It was, quite simply, a privilege to have known him. My connection with the Berkeley family goes back to 1956. I wrote my first articles about his music in 1963; since then I have much enjoyed many associations with the family and have appreciated their encouragement and answers to my queries.

The first edition of *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* appeared in 1988 with Thames Publishing directed by John Bishop. There was just time for me to put a copy of the book into Berkeley's hands before he died the following year, and I think he had some idea of what it was. The whole project was enthusiastically supported by John Bishop from the start, but the rewritten second edition (Boydell, 2003) is now what matters, and the first should be ignored. Nadia Boulanger had generously agreed to write a foreword to my first book, but unfortunately that was not completed until ten years after she died.

Anyone who values the music of Lennox Berkeley cannot fail to have noticed the unique contribution made by the late Richard Hickox in many live performances and recordings over the last two decades. So this book is dedicated to his memory in grateful recognition.

I have acquired an archive of materials about Berkeley over a period of over fifty years, and in doing this I have been indebted to the staff of many organisations. All along I have been grateful for support from Berkeley's loyal publisher, Chester Music – the late Sheila MacCrindle, George Rizza, Christopher Norris and, of current staff, James Rushton, Meg Montieth, Victoria Small and especially Howard Friend, who has seen the *Collected Works for Solo Piano* (2003) and other editions through the press. Katie Connolly at Boosey & Hawkes provided copies of the Berkeley correspondence in their archives. I have been given assistance on several occasions by the staff of the Britten–Pears Library – including the late Rosamund Strode, Jennifer Doctor and most recently Nick Clark and Judith Ratcliffe. I also acknowledge the support of Richard Chesser and the staff at the British Library. Quotation from letters and writings of Benjamin Britten are copyright the Trustees of the Britten–Pears Foundation. Selections from Lennox Berkeley's letters to Britten, letters to Berkeley, and extracts from Berkeley's writings and diaries are reproduced courtesy of the Britten–Pears Library, which holds them, and the Lennox Berkeley Estate.

I am grateful to the BBC for material in what is the fourth of my books drawing on interviews made for radio programmes. Arthur Johnson was the fastidious producer of the Radio 3 documentary 'Lennox Berkeley' broadcast on 31 August 1992 and repeated on 13 September 1994. This gave me the unique series of interviews from which I quoted in *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* but which are now published here complete.

The transcriptions of their own interviews were checked by Julian Bream, Colin Horsley, Sir John Manduell, Lady Berkeley, Michael Berkeley and, on behalf of the subjects no longer living, Jonathan Del Mar, Natasha Maw and Simon Campion (for Malcolm Williamson). Oliver Goulden scrupulously went through my translations.

I am grateful to Jacquie Kavanagh at the BBC Written Archives Centre for permission to print the interviews and to further staff there – Fallon Lee, Samantha Blake and James Codd.

I appreciate permission, through Michael Downing, to print Berkeley's BBC Radio 3 interview with the late Michael Oliver about the Fourth Symphony; Michelle Healey arranged permission from Carcanet Press Ltd for the discussion that appeared in *Poetry Nation 2*; and Peter Phillips has agreed the use of Berkeley's interview with me and other material in *The Musical Times*. There are several acknowledgements needed for Berkeley's own writings. I am grateful to Ben Smith at The Times/NI Syndication for permission to reprint articles Berkeley wrote for *The Times* and the *Sunday Times*, and Chris Payne at Oxford University Press for authorising Berkeley's article on Britten's *Spring Symphony*. It appears that all other permissions were author's copyright and have now come through Lady Berkeley and the Berkeley Estate.

My debt to Tony Scotland, author of the magisterial double biography *Lennox and Freda* (2010), is enormous. He provided material for *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* (2003) and this time read most of the typescript, offered valuable suggestions about presentation and has helped with photographs. He also introduced me to Humphrey Stone and Ian Beck, who kindly provided the frontispiece. Corinne Harrison and the staff at the National Portrait Gallery helped me to reach copyright holders.

I visited the Bibliothèque nationale de France to obtain copies of Berkeley's letters to Boulanger, and arrangements were made for me by Elizabeth Giuliani, Director of Music, Laurence Decobert, Anne Michels and other staff in the music library. Robert Orledge kindly provided routes to some of these facilities

There is further material that has not been included. Berkeley's letters to Britten are represented in the volumes of Britten's *Letters from a Life* and in Scotland's *Lennox and Freda*. In any case this book deliberately throws the spotlight on Berkeley without putting him in the shadow of Britten as his centenary approaches in 2013. There are other letters of personal and family interest which I have seen, some referred to by Scotland, but I have not included those in my selection here.

There are several books that have been important. Obviously, *A Lennox Berkeley Source Book* by Stewart Craggs, with its valuable catalogue of manuscripts by Joan Redding. Back in the 1980s it was she who first drew my attention to Berkeley's reports from Paris in *The Monthly Musical Record* and I have used her careful transcriptions here, later confirmed in every detail by consulting the actual magazine.

Allan C. Jones provided many dates of performances and reviews of Berkeley's music in Paris in the 1920s and 30s; Eric Wetherall gave me further information about the 1927 Harrogate Festival programme; Anthony Burton helped with references – and his CD booklet notes to the Berkeley Edition of recordings on Chandos should be consulted; and Mary Bernard, widow of Anthony Bernard, showed me some programmes. I have drawn on the writings and broadcasts of Roger Nicholls, whose

book *The Harlequin Years* is a valuable source of information. I was given access to manuscripts by many people including the late Sir William Glock (*Introduction and Allegro* for two pianos and orchestra), the late John C. G. Waterhouse (Toccata written for his father J. F. Waterhouse), Michael Thomas (Prelude and Fugue for clavichord), Angelo Gilardino (*Quatre pièces pour guitarre*), Richard Sandland at the Royal Shakespeare Company (incidental music for *A Winter's Tale*), Colin Horsley (Concerto for piano and double string orchestra, including the otherwise missing cadenza in the first movement), and the staff of the BBC Music Library located for many years at Yalding House. I also acknowledge the generous assistance and enthusiasm of the late William Wynne Willson, who provided many preliminary print-outs for my edition of the *Collected Works for Solo Piano* (2003) and other pieces not yet in print. Kathleen Walker, co-founder of the Lennox Berkeley Society, has been stalwart in tracking down Berkeley performances and sharing new information. John France has also made Berkeley information available on his website, including the Paris Reports.

The publication of this book has been made possible thanks to grants towards its production costs. These have come equally from the Charlotte Bonham-Carter Trust, The Vaughan Williams Trust, the Staypar Trust and the Lennox Berkeley Society.

I much appreciate corrections from my sister, Meriel Dickinson, who read the entire text, and from others who have read the book in whole or in part and made suggestions including Bridget Dickinson and Arnold Whittall. Once again I have been fortunate to work with Boydell & Brewer, where Michael Middeke and Megan Milan handled arrangements, and I was especially pleased to have David Roberts again for copy-editing and layout. There are bound to be omissions in this list of credits and permissions and I can only apologise to anyone left out and undertake to take steps to make corrections at the next opportunity.

Peter Dickinson
Aldeburgh 2012

THE LENNOX BERKELEY SOCIETY

Chairman: Petroc Trelawny

The Society was founded in 1999 by Kathleen Walker and Jim Nicol to increase public awareness of Berkeley and his music; to advance the knowledge of his life and work; and to encourage and support live performances and recordings. Recent projects have included grants towards Chandos CDs of songs, performed by tenor James Gilchrist, Anna Tilbrook and Alison Nicholls, and Berkeley's *Flute Concerto*, with Emily Beynon and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Thanks in part to the Society, Berkeley's one-act comic opera *A Dinner Engagement* has been staged around the world, in cities from Rio to Sydney. The Society also helps to fund Berkeley performances by amateurs and professionals at festivals across the UK. There is an annual Journal, and a popular website – www.lennoxberkeley.org.uk – which offers general and specialised information about Berkeley and his music. Publication of this book has been supported by the Society.

Introduction

Peter Dickinson

Sir Lennox Berkeley needs little introduction as one of the most important British composers of the mid-twentieth century. Thanks to the advocacy of the late Richard Hickox, much of his orchestral music is now recorded; so are two of his operas. Hardly a week goes by without his liturgical music gracing the cathedral lists all over the country, and his chamber music has recently found an international public through many performances and recordings.

Lennox Randall Francis Berkeley was born into an aristocratic family at Sunningwell Plain, near Oxford, on 12 May 1903. His father was a naval officer and there were many family connections with France, where Berkeley's parents were living at the time when he was based in Paris.[1]

Berkeley went to school in Oxford and then to Gresham's School, Holt, where he was followed by W. H. Auden and – ten years later – Benjamin Britten. In 1922 he went up to Merton College, Oxford, to read French, Old French and Philology. Whilst there he rowed, took organ lessons and had a few compositions performed. Auden was a contemporary, and Berkeley must have been the earliest composer to set his poetry to music, but these songs are lost. At Oxford Berkeley shared rooms with Vere Pilkington, an outstanding amateur keyboard player who owned a harpsichord and introduced Berkeley to early music.

When Ravel was staying in London in 1925 Berkeley, who knew his hosts, took the opportunity of showing him some of his scores. Ravel said he didn't teach any more but offered to introduce him to Nadia Boulanger, the famous teacher of composition who lived in Paris. That changed Berkeley's life. He gained the professional instruction he could never have found in England and formed a lifelong devotion to his teacher. As a pedagogue Boulanger worked tirelessly and in return demanded everything from her pupils: Berkeley responded with almost total veneration. By 1935 both Berkeley's parents had died and Boulanger remained as a kind of matriarchal figure. As his many letters to her show – Part II below consists of selections from them – she was a cardinal influence for many years.

From 1929 to 1934 Berkeley wrote reports on music in Paris for *The Monthly Musical Record* – published complete in Part I below. Stravinsky was influential, and Berkeley derived much from his friendships with both Ravel and Poulenc. Like Boulanger, Poulenc was a Roman Catholic, and in 1928 Berkeley converted, which appears to have been a gradual decision.

The second major landmark in Berkeley's life and career came in 1936 when he met Britten in Barcelona at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival where both composers were having works played. Berkeley conducted

[1] For full biographical details, see Tony Scotland, *Lennox and Freda* (Norwich, 2010).

his Overture, op. 8, and Britten played his Suite for Violin and Piano, op. 6, with Antonio Brosa.[2]

Berkeley's maturity came slowly, compared with Britten, but by the later 1930s he had achieved a distinctive and individual voice of a completely personal kind. Landmarks at this period include the Serenade for Strings, op. 12 (1939), a classic amongst British works for this medium; the First Symphony, op. 16, the following year; and the Divertimento in B flat, op. 18, in 1943. A third personal encounter of enormous significance was Berkeley's meeting with Freda Bernstein and their marriage in 1946. This lifted Berkeley from the insecurities of the kind of gay world he inhabited into a remarkably happy and stable marriage, a story impressively chronicled in Tony Scotland's double biography *Lennox and Freda* (2010).

Berkeley's music reflects the change. Major achievements of the 1940s include two pairs of works – the *Four Poems of St Teresa of Avila*, op. 27, and the *Stabat mater*, op. 28: the Piano Concerto, op. 29, and the Concerto for Two Pianos, op. 30.

By the early 1950s Berkeley was ready for opera. His grand opera *Nelson*, op. 41, was produced at Sadler's Wells in 1954, and in the same year his one-act comedy *A Dinner Engagement* was premiered. These were followed only two years later by *Ruth*, op. 50. *Nelson* was ambitious and has not been revived onstage, but the other two, especially after the Hickox recordings, have achieved international productions.

In the 1960s, as we shall see, Berkeley's music evolved into the more complex harmonic and contrapuntal idiom of his final period.

On 16 July 1953, as a schoolboy, I purchased a copy of Berkeley's Piano Sonata, op. 20 (completed 1946),[3] at Miller's music shop in Cambridge. Miller's also had branches in Huntingdon, St Ives and Ely, and in those days such shops displayed the latest in sheet music publications. I was soon the proud owner of most of Berkeley's piano music with their light blue covers. What was the almost mesmeric attraction? I had been playing Beethoven and Brahms on the piano for the Performer's Diploma of the Royal Academy and of the Royal College in London and masses of Bach on the organ. I also played Howells, but realised that he offered nothing for the future. Berkeley's music had a refreshingly individual harmonic idiom allied to melody and a pianistic style that has produced some of the finest British piano music. There was nothing quite like it.

The following day – 17 July 1953 – I bought a copy of Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*, which came out on the bill as *Nudas Tonatis*. (See plate 13.) The Hindemith

[2] Antonio Brosa (1894–1979), Catalan violinist. For details of the ISCM Festival and for Brosa's many connections with Britten, see John Evans, ed., *Journeying Boy: the Diaries of the Young Benjamin Britten, 1928–1938* (London, 2009).

[3] Premiered 22 July 1946 at the Wigmore Hall, London, by Clifford Curzon – not 28 July as given in Stewart R. Craggs, *Lennox Berkeley: a Sourcebook* (Aldershot, 2000), or in my edition *Lennox Berkeley: Collected Works for Solo Piano* (London, 2003). For discussion of the Piano Sonata see Peter Dickinson, *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* (London, 1988; revised and enlarged, Woodbridge, 2003), 73–6 (all page references below are to the revised edition), and Lisa Hardy, *The British Piano Sonata* (Woodbridge, 2001), 168–70.

had been recommended to me by Robin Orr,[4] who, like Berkeley, had been a pupil of Nadia Boulanger. Hugh Davis, the Director of Music at The Leys School,[5] had not known what to make of my efforts at composition, so he sent me to Orr, then a lecturer in the Music Faculty at Cambridge. When I went up to Queens' College as organ scholar, I read music. Orr's orchestration lectures were illustrated by Berkeley's Divertimento.

In those years Berkeley was a prominent figure in British music. A friend of mine introduced me to somebody by announcing impressively: 'He knows Lennox Berkeley!' That was after my tutor at Cambridge, Philip Radcliffe[6] at King's, thought it time for me to consult a real composer. So in 1956 I went to show Berkeley some scores. With trepidation I walked up to 8 Warwick Avenue in Little Venice to meet the composer I admired so much. At that time much of the Bishop's Bridge Road was derelict and about to be demolished in preparation for the building of the new Westway, but Little Venice and the canal were much as they are today.

I played Berkeley my *Vitalitas Variations* for piano.[7] Since not many of Berkeley's pupils have recorded his specific criticisms of their work, I can mention that he thought that the final chord of the second variation ought not to be a dominant major ninth chord since this carried tonal expectations that were not going to be fulfilled. I amplified it with added components. I also played him my *Four W. H. Auden Songs*[8] and probably *Five Early Piano Pieces*:[9] the Auden songs particularly show my admiration for Berkeley. However, the tables were turned the following year when Berkeley received an American commission and set three of the same poems in his own Auden songs. It was typical of the generosity of the man that when I played him a recording of my songs twenty years later, and pointed out that he had set some of the same poems, he said that my setting of 'What's in your mind' was better than his.[10]

[4] Robin Orr (1909–2006), Scottish composer, Professor at Glasgow (1956–65) and Cambridge (1965–76).

[5] Peter Dickinson, 'Hugh Scott Davis' [obituary], *Independent*, 15 April 2010.

[6] Philip Radcliffe (1905–86), wrote books on Mendelssohn and Beethoven and spent a lifetime at King's College.

[7] Originally called Piano Variations but renamed for the ballet by Mexican choreographer Gloria Contreras. See CD of my piano music on Naxos 8 572654 (2010).

[8] Recorded on Albany TROY 365 (2000); performed on 15 June 1957 for W. H. Auden at Cambridge.

[9] Recorded on Naxos 8 572287 (2009).

[10] There has been some confusion about the metronome marking for this song, since the original published score had crotchet = 50–54 when it was obvious that it ought to have been minim = 50–54. Meriel Dickinson and I performed these songs for the composer and he confirmed this, even though the manuscript at the British Library has the crotchet marking. A copyist's manuscript used by Mrs Alice Esty in New York has crotchet = 92. However, as recently as the Berkeley Centenary Concert at the Wigmore Hall in 2003 Toby Spence sang this song at half speed. There are two fine recordings: Philip Langridge and Steuart Bedford on Naxos 8 557204 (1998); James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook in an all-Berkeley CD on Chandos CHAN 10528 (2009). However, the Auden cycle, like the

The New York singer and patron Alice Swanson Esty (1904–2000), a pupil of Pierre Bernac, commissioned and performed songs by a number of contemporary composers. According to Sidney Buckland[11] Esty also commissioned Berkeley's *Automne* along with other tributes to Poulenc on the first anniversary of his death and she gave the premieres on 13 January 1964 at Carnegie Recital Hall, New York.

After Cambridge I was based in or near New York for three academic years but made contact with Berkeley again when I had a teaching post in London at the College of St Mark and St John, which he visited on 30 November 1965 when Jill Gomez with Alan Rowlands performed his Auden songs. But before that I had written about Berkeley's music in both *The Musical Times* and *Music and Musicians* to mark his sixtieth birthday in 1963.[12] The *Musical Times* article rather patronisingly but perhaps presciently found that Berkeley

> has made a successful fusion of influences and has developed a definite but unobtrusive musical personality ... His musical inheritance, unpretentiously European, finds its centre of gravity somewhere in the English Channel. His technical assurance and adherence to tonality relate him to Britten, with whom he has collaborated, but the music of the older man is more elusive and hence unlikely to achieve meteoric success.

I went on to consider the Second Symphony, the Horn Trio, the Auden songs and some choral pieces including the Donne setting 'Thou hast made me', all with music examples. My much longer article in *Music and Musicians* was called 'Berkeley on the Keyboard' and covered all the piano works up to that time, again with music examples. It started:

> Berkeley is one of very few British composers to show an interest in writing for the piano, and of the generation following Ireland and Bax none can show greater facility in this medium. His treatment of the instrument in solo music, duet, two-piano, concerto and chamber music is highly effective and personal without possessing the radical originality of major twentieth-century composers, such as Bartók, Schoenberg or Stravinsky Berkeley's work stems from a poetic rather than a dramatic or intellectual source. His best works, such as the *Four Poems of St Teresa*, the Divertimento, or the Piano Sonata, and many others, show an elegant and supremely musical personality in successful and satisfying achievements.

Fifty years later there is not much to quarrel with here. In 1965, in another long article for *Music and Musicians*,[13] I began with the piano works, particularly the Sonata, but then turned to the First Symphony and *Nelson* and looked at some of

Chinese Songs, was written for female voice. My own *Auden Studies* for oboe and piano (1988) uses both settings of the three poems.

[11] 'Berkeley and Poulenc', *Lennox Berkeley Society Journal* (2011), 4–13.

[12] 'The Music of Lennox Berkeley', *Musical Times* 104 (May 1963), 327–30; 'Berkeley on the Keyboard', *Music and Musicians*, April 1963, 10–11, 58.

[13] 'Lennox Berkeley', *Music and Musicians*, August 1965, 20–23, 54.

Berkeley's writings, and pointed out that what he said about Fauré could be applied to his own work too.[14]

Hardly anyone had discussed Berkeley's music in this kind of detail before but there was one interesting exception. In 1951 H. F. Redlich (1903–68), the Vienna-born British musicologist, wrote about Berkeley in *Music Survey*, the periodical edited by Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller.[15] He brought a different perspective from most British writers to the task of evaluating what Berkeley had achieved at this early stage and found that he

> became a clear-cut artistic individuality in the late thirties ... From 1940 onwards Berkeley produced a wealth of instrumental music, starting with the Symphony [no. 1] and with chamber music for various combinations (including the excellent String Trio of 1944). This music has gone a long way to establish him as one of the prominent and most promising British composers. The decade between 1940 and 1950 ... yielded to Berkeley a full harvest of symphonic and concerto music, quite apart from a crop of delightful miniatures such as the Nocturne, for orchestra, the De la Mare Songs, the Preludes and Three Mazurkas for piano ...

Redlich went on to discuss, with music examples, the Piano Concerto and the Two-Piano Concerto, where he even found common ground between the theme of the second-movement variations and Wagner's early Symphony in C, and then admired the *Stabat mater*. Redlich noted the textural contrast between the three-voice canon in the sixth section and the homophony of the eighth, which he compares with the 1881 choral settings of Hugo Wolf.[16] This was high praise from a critic nurtured in the Austro-German tradition, and Redlich concluded that Berkeley 'has certainly earned the right to expect universal sympathy and attention when embarking on the period of his full maturity.'

Frank Howes, the influential chief music critic of *The Times* from 1943 to 1960, wrote sympathetically about Berkeley in his survey *The English Musical Renaissance*.[17] Howes recalled the impact made by Berkeley's First Symphony at the Proms in 1943 where it 'made a great impression by its abstention from any attempt to impress. The economy of scoring and the spare texture were precisely fitted to the logic and lucidity of an argument that was not unduly pressed to a conclusion but was delightfully and stylishly expounded.' Howes went on to admire the Piano Concerto and, of the operas, *A Dinner Engagement*, and concluded that 'it comes as something of a surprise on surveying the output of a composer whose manner of speech is so modest to discover what a substantial corpus of work has come from his pen since he rather belatedly found his style.' Howes ended by finding that Berkeley had more in common with Rawsthorne than Walton or Britten. In

[14] See Berkeley's BBC talk on Fauré, p. 112 below.

[15] H. F. Redlich, 'Lennox Berkeley', *Music Survey* 3 (1951), 245–9. Mitchell and Keller also edited *Benjamin Britten: a Commentary on his Works from a Group of Specialists* (London 1952), to which Berkeley contributed 'The Light Music', 287–94.

[16] *Sechs geistliche Lieder* (Eichendorf).

[17] Frank Howes (1891–1974), *The English Musical Renaissance* (London, 1966), 274–7.

the articles included in Part III of this book Berkeley writes sympathetically about both Rawsthorne and Britten, but more passionately about the latter. Howes had been present at the main Berkeley performances in London for more than thirty years, much as Desmond Shawe-Taylor, one of Berkeley's most sensitive critics, was later.[18]

Other writers have reported on the symphonies, which are an indication of Berkeley's progress, even if not his most characteristic genre. A year after the First Symphony's premiere, Robin Hull recalled that 'Its four movements express with classical purity some of the most original thoughts yet conceived in contemporary style. The music is essentially of our time while maintaining, without a trace of archaism, all the ready accessibility, the genial spirit, and lyrical grace more customary during the eighteenth century.'[19] Ten years later Wilfrid Mellers was surprised that Berkeley should have written a Symphony at all and felt it was 'a turning point in his career'.

> His Symphony is a big work, though neither its duration in time nor its instrumental resource is extravagant. While the influence of the later Stravinsky remains dominant in the elliptical treatment of classical form and in the transparent orchestral texture, the music has acquired much greater melodic force than is observable in the Parisian works. Lyricism is now impressively integrated with the harmony ...[20]

All this is true and, as I have demonstrated in my own studies, arises from the character and sheer memorability of the musical ideas themselves.[21] Berkeley had started work on a symphony as early as 1936; he discussed it with Boulanger; and had plenty of time to polish his material and gain orchestral experience before completing it.

The career of the Second Symphony is less straightforward and the result more questionable. Berkeley came to it after his triumphs during the 1950s. Three operas had been produced; the concertos for one and for two pianos; and outstanding chamber works such as the Horn Trio and the Sextet. Although *Nelson* was not an unqualified success, it was a high-profile event and Berkeley was at the height of his powers with the major works of the 1940s and 50s behind him.[22]

[18] See interview with Shawe-Taylor, p. 276 below.

[19] Robin Hull, 'The Music of Lennox Berkeley', *Listener*, 16 March 1944, 309.

[20] Wilfrid Mellers, 'The Music of Lennox Berkeley', *Listener*, 24 June 1954, 1113. Wilfrid Mellers (1914–2008), prolific writer and composer who in 1964 founded the influential music department at the University of York. See his article on Berkeley in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, 5th edn, ed. E. Blom (London: 1954).

[21] See Peter Dickinson, *The Music of Lennox Berkeley*, 53–60.

[22] For a choice of recordings of works from this decade, see Peter Dickinson, 'Lennox Berkeley in the 1940s', *Gramophone*, January 2012, 88–9. These were: *The Berkeley Edition*, vols. 1, 5 and 6, BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Hickox on Chandos CHAN 9981, CHAN 10265, and CHAN 10408. *Piano Works by Lennox and Michael Berkeley*, Margaret Fingerhut on Chandos CHAN 10247; *Sacred Choral Music*, Choir of St John's College, Cambridge/ Robinson on Naxos 8 557277; *Lennox Berkeley*, Schirmer Ensemble on Naxos 8 557324; and *String Quartets nos. 1–3*, Maggini Quartet on Naxos 8 570415; *Berkeley conducts Berkeley*, London Philharmonic Orchestra on Lyrita SRCD 226; *Piano Concerto and Concerto for Two*

Martin Cooper, the authority on French music, introduced the Second Symphony before the broadcast by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Andrzej Panufnik.[23] Cooper looked at Berkeley's background, finding *Jonah*, op. 3 (1935), lacking in melodic interest and individuality, but admired the concertos with piano and Berkeley's move to vocal music in the Teresa of Avila songs and the *Stabat mater*. He felt that the epic subject of Nelson had been beyond Berkeley's grasp but recognised the 'remarkably successful' string trio and other chamber music as well as vocal works to religious texts. Overall Cooper felt: 'It is characteristic of Berkeley that he demands of his listeners the mind of musical awareness that accepts a hint, an almost disguised reference to what has gone before, in place of unambiguous repetition.' This aspect of Berkeley was identified by Andrew Porter, reviewing the premiere of the Sinfonia Concertante for oboe and chamber orchestra at the Proms fifteen years later.

> As in all Berkeley's works, our attention is held by the play of rhythmic and melodic fancy – a fancy perhaps the more fascinating for being temperate and unextravagant. The character of Berkeley's music is hard to describe; anyone unprepared to listen to a quiet voice saying things subtle but not tortuous, gentle even in assertion, and still courteous at its most confident, may miss the merits altogether.[24]

This is the approach that makes some of Berkeley elusive, especially at a first hearing, and I shall refer again to his distaste for literal repetition. Cooper described the layout of the Second Symphony in factual terms – he was going by the score – whereas by 1963 I had heard the broadcast premiere and greeted the new style in the original version with unqualified enthusiasm: 'the Second Symphony profits enormously from the taut later style and achieves a most convincing symphonic cohesion.'[25] Noel Goodwin, reviewing the premiere felt that 'the symphony proved to be a work of rewarding quality and distinction ... [it] achieved a compelling style of expression for Berkeley's predominantly lyrical impulse.'[26]

The Times reported on the Prom performance on 9 September under the composer: 'It is coherent, purposeful and clearly and attractively scored – yet at a single hearing the actual impulse behind the musical invention seems not to be very strong.'[27]

However, after the Birmingham premiere and the Prom, the Symphony was probably not performed again until a recording was planned, which took place in

Pianos, David Wilde, Garth Becket and Boyd McDonald, New Philharmonia Orchestra/Braithwaite, London Philharmonic Orchestra/Del Mar on Lyrita SRC 250; and *Chamber Works for Wind, Strings and Piano*, Tagore Trio, Sarah Francis, Judith Fitton, Michael Dussek on Regis RRC 1380.

[23] Martin Cooper, 'Lennox Berkeley and his New Symphony', *Listener*, 19 February 1959, 351. Andrzej Panufnik (1914–91), leading Polish composer and conductor who came to the England in 1954 and became a British citizen.

[24] Andrew Porter, 'Berkeley', *Financial Times*, 4 August 1973.

[25] Dickinson, 'The Music of Lennox Berkeley', 327.

[26] 'Berkeley's Second Symphony at Birmingham', *Musical Times* 100 (April 1959), 215.

[27] 'Mr Lennox Berkeley's Second Symphony', *The Times*, 10 September 1959.

August 1976.[28] At that time Berkeley told his diary that he had spent 'much of the last year rewriting' the Symphony, although the third movement was unchanged.[29]

In his sleeve-note for the LP, Berkeley explains:

> My reasons for the revision were chiefly connected with scoring; I was much preoccupied at the time I originally wrote it with keeping the various orchestral colours distinct. Later, I felt I had overdone this and that the work would gain from a freer and more robust treatment. I have introduced no new thematic material in this revised version, though certain passages have been somewhat extended.

However, this work originally had problems. Richard Stoker was a pupil of Berkeley's when he was writing it in 1958 and remembers that he suffered from a period of creative block lasting about three weeks: apparently he even asked Stoker how he would proceed at certain points.[30]

The original Lento introduction opens with low woodwind over a bass drum roll; the second bar has a dissonant triad held in trombones below the harp's reference to the first theme of the allegro; and there are tremolando strings. In the revision the bass drum, trombones and tremolando strings have all gone. The harp is more prominent and the context is now clear D major, the tonal centre of the work – confusingly in the opposite direction from the new style. But, apart from the slow movement, the Symphony was completely rewritten and Berkeley committed a considerable amount of time to trying to get it right. Of the two recorded performances, Braithwaite is often too slow and Hickox, unafraid of faster tempi, as in his live performances of Berkeley, makes far better sense of everything.[31]

A totally unknown work premiered in the same month of February 1959 is the Concerto for Piano and Double String Orchestra. Colin Horsley, who commissioned it and gave the first performances, has described the unfortunate circumstances of the premiere.[32]

In spite of Horsley's indisposition, *The Times* found that 'The composer has hit on felicitous ideas for both solo and the special texture of his orchestra ... it is invariably poetical, the piano writing dextrous, the material well organised into shapely movements.'[33] The composer's manuscript shows the signs of haste

[28] London Philharmonic Orchestra under Nicholas Braithwaite, Lyrita SRCS 94 (1978); long delayed reissue on CD SRCD 249 (2007), where the first and second symphonies are now coupled.

[29] In a letter to me of 29 February 1976 Berkeley said: 'I'm glad to be at home a bit after all our travels and to be able to do some work. My immediate task is the revision of my Second Symphony which is going quite well. I've never been satisfied with it and have hated the idea of leaving it as it was.'

[30] 'Lennox Berkeley: John France interviews Richard Stoker', *Lennox Berkeley Society Newsletter* 18 (Autumn 2005), 9–16.

[31] *Berkeley Edition*, vol. 4, BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Hickox, Chandos CHAN 10167 (2004).

[32] See interview with Horsley, p. 236 below.

[33] 'Poetical Piano Concerto', *The Times*, 11 February 1959.

mentioned by Horsley and the style of the music is not as colourful as the earlier Piano Concerto, giving some signs of what was to come. It is a pastoral piece but with a strong cadenza almost at the end of the first movement. The central Lento opens with some neatly spaced chords and this theme recurs after another cadenza at the end. Alternations between soloist and double strings are neatly handled in the lighter last movement, subtitled 'Capriccio'.

In *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* I discussed at length, with music examples, what this transition meant. In 1948 Berkeley was unsympathetic to serial music, but by 1959 he admitted he had benefited from studying it and had used serial themes.[34] The technique was fashionable. Britten had used a twelve-note theme in *The Turn of the Screw* (1954); some of Berkeley's pupils, such as Richard Rodney Bennett, were deeply committed serialists; and Berkeley felt behind the times. I have pointed out the note-rows in Aria I from the Concertino, op. 49 (1955); Boaz's recognition aria in *Ruth* (1955–6); and in the ground bass employed in the slow movement of the Violin Concerto, op. 56 (1958). There's a brief reference to twelve notes at the start of the Sonatina for Oboe and Piano, op. 61 (1962), but serial derivations are more important in the Third Symphony, op. 74 (1969), and the Third String Quartet, op. 76 (1970).[35] However, Berkeley's more dissonant later style, approaching atonality, coexisted with his freer melodic aspect. For example, the catchy tune of the D major Canzona in the Sinfonia Concertante for oboe and orchestra, op. 84 (1973) – a retrospective oasis of diatonic calm – and, of course, completely tonal material in light works such as the *Palm Court Waltz*, op. 81/2 (1971). This ambivalence is present in Copland from 1950, and even Schoenberg himself, whose later American works included the Suite for Strings in G major (1934) and the *Theme and Variations* for band (1943) in G minor.

The evidence confirms that Berkeley suffered a crisis at the time of the Second Symphony. He realised his new style was not yet stable so he went back to the Symphony after some successful works employing the later style.[36] In an interview with the Canadian composer Murray Schaffer in 1963, Berkeley explained:

> It's natural for a composer to feel a need to enlarge his idiom ... Once you feel you have said everything you have to say in your old style, you want to alter it somehow, expand it, revitalise your thinking ... My style today is less diatonic, I might say harmonically less ordinary than it was before ... I've managed to gain a greater freedom.[37]

What Berkeley had sacrificed was the easy flow of melody over highly characteristic harmonies that had made the period from the later thirties to the later fifties into a golden age. Berkeley's use of tonality intentionally became

[34] See Dickinson, *The Music of Lennox Berkeley*, 161.

[35] See the revelatory recording of all three quartets by the Maggini Quartet on Naxos 8 570415 (2007).

[36] The Second Symphony – and the Third – was taken seriously by Peter Evans in the *Blackwell History of Music in Britain: the Twentieth Century*, ed. Stephen Banfield (Oxford, 1995), 231, and also by Arnold Whittall in 'Berkeley and the Twentieth-Century Symphony', *The Lennox Berkeley Society Journal* (2008), 8–13.

[37] R. Murray Schaffer, *British Composers in Interview* (London, 1963), 85.

less direct; he began to work with dissonant chords; and became obsessed with counterpoint in a way that made it responsible for both texture and harmony. Although some impressive pieces emerged later on, my *Musical Times* article for Berkeley's sixty-fifth birthday in 1968 still contained some special pleading: 'By the time the post-Webern mania had gripped the young, composers of Berkeley's generation appeared ultra-conservative, clinging to traditional means in the face of onslaught; they sometimes seemed unable to develop beyond the earlier work which had established their reputation.'[38]

In the same issue of *The Musical Times* there was a copy of Berkeley's *The Windhover*, op. 72/2 (1968), a SATB setting of Gerard Manley Hopkins's mystical text. Berkeley's vocally demanding ecstatic treatment clearly demonstrated that he had developed far beyond his earlier achievements.

The first four *Chinese Songs*, op. 78 (November 1970 – January 1971) employ the new mildly atonal idiom fluently. Berkeley's diaries show that, from the inspirational angle, everything was going well.[39] With his Auden cycle some twelve years earlier only the fourth one used the new style, but in the *Chinese Songs* the first two end on a chord combining major and minor thirds; the next two use a dissonant chord as a structural point of reference, as in Schoenberg's *Stefan George Lieder*; but the last one, where Berkeley felt the poem 'could have been made for me' is in pure D flat major.[40] By comparison, the three De la Mare poems set in *Another Spring*, op. 93 (February/March 1977) – the third time he set this poet – are a pale reflection of the *Chinese Songs*: the slow final song is again in clear D flat major.

Orchestral pieces in the late period include two atmospheric works – *Antiphon* and *Voices of the Night*, both premiered in 1973, and the final concerto – for guitar, op. 88 (1974), but in the last few years there was a perceptible falling off. The harmonic materials are less distinctive and the gestures, often involving sequences, have become routine in a detached objective fashion. There's a kind of neo-classical austerity about the Quintet for piano and wind, op. 90 (1975), which succeeds through its resourceful and idiomatic instrumentation, and Berkeley has not lost his harmonic acumen, as is shown by the treatments of the A major theme in the fourth movement – a relation of the theme of the last movement of the Violin and Piano Sonatina in the same key over thirty years earlier. By the time of the Flute Sonata, op. 97 (1978), written for James Galway, these tendencies are more pronounced.[41] It was at this point, approaching old age, and the Alzheimer's that came with it, that Berkeley embarked on the revision of the Second Symphony. Will some future generation want to revert to the original version?

Ironically the impersonal quality of these later pieces was turned to advantage in some of the sacred works. There, almost in the tradition of Palestrina, the

[38] Peter Dickinson, 'Berkeley's Music Today', *Musical Times* 109 (November 1968), 1013–14.

[39] For a discussion of this compositional process, see Jonathan Harvey, *Music and Inspiration* (London, 1999).

[40] See Berkeley's diary for 8 December 1970, p. 190 below.

[41] Recorded with the Flute Concerto and Sonatina for flute and piano on *James Galway plays Lennox Berkeley*, RCA Red Seal RS 9011 (1983).

personality of the composer becomes less obtrusive through the use of a rather anonymous style. There is quiet counterpoint in the service of the text and truly spiritual qualities can emerge. Berkeley has confirmed this: 'In writing music to be performed in church as part of the service ... I have found that I wanted to make it somewhat more impersonal, so that it would merge into the liturgy, and not create a violent contrast or cause too much distraction.'[42]

In the now popular *The Lord is my Shepherd*, op. 91/1 (1975; see plate 19 for a page from the autograph score), the G major melody under a moving accompaniment pattern is an ancestor of the central section of *A Festival Anthem*, op. 21/2, thirty years earlier. That melody had been kept alive by Berkeley's arrangement for cello and piano as *Andantino* in 1955 and Jennifer Bate's arrangement for organ in 1982 for her recording, including the Fantasia, op. 92 (1976) and the *Three Pieces*, op. 72/1 (1966).[43] Notice that the lyricism of G major seems to have a special association for Berkeley as in the ninth variation in the second movement of the Two-Piano Concerto and at the words 'esurientes' in the *Magnificat*.

In *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* I was, by implication, dismissive of the Fourth Symphony, op. 94 (1976–8), although the pace of everything is surprisingly well under control. There's sustained energy in the opening Allegro following the Lento introduction and two well placed climaxes. The minor thirds of the theme for the central movement colours some eloquent variations even if others meander.

As a whole the symphony retreats from Berkeley's newer idiom as though he felt the need to go back – this time on an expansive scale – but he could no longer find distinctive melodic and harmonic materials. Further, in his interview with Michael Oliver[44] Berkeley states, as he had done earlier, that the exact repetition of themes in the classical and romantic periods was no longer possible. This was not new in Berkeley. Back in 1947, the second subject in the first movement of the Piano Concerto is a delightful bluesy melody announced by the soloist; the orchestra follows suit; but in the recapitulation, although obediently now in the tonic, the melody has been changed and, after the first four notes, the orchestra has still another version. This makes for the wayward quality in Berkeley that Julian Bream found attractive, but it causes some of the works in his later style to seem virtually athematic.

The causes of Berkeley's stylistic changes in the late 1950s are worth further examination. Copland's employment of serial techniques in works like the Piano Quartet (1950) anticipated Stravinsky's move to serialism after *The Rake's Progress* which lasted the rest of his life. More significant was the example of Britten, with Berkeley considering *The Turn of the Screw* his greatest masterpiece. Other British composers of the older generation had responded. The opening theme of the finale of Walton's Second Symphony (1960) was much discussed as a twelve-note series;[45] Rawsthorne was much more serious in using a note-row in his Third Symphony

[42] See Lennox Berkeley, 'Truth in Music', p. 123 below.

[43] Organ Music by Lennox Berkeley and Peter Dickinson, Hyperion LP A66061 (1983).

[44] See interview with Michael Oliver, p. 176 below.

[45] See Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford, 1989).

(1964);[46] and Berkeley knew Humphrey Searle who, along with Elisabeth Lutyens, was one of the first British twelve-note composers.[47]

The context was the enormous prestige of serial techniques in the so-called serious music world of the 1960s. Even middle-of-the-road composers in Europe and America were affected, not wanting to be outdone by Boulez and Stockhausen, leading a younger generation. Every American university had its serial composers, all anxious to impress each other and able to disregard the wider audience – thanks to their university salaries. In 1952 Boulez had thrown down the gauntlet: 'I assert that any musician who has not experienced – I do not say understood, but in all exactness experienced – the necessity for the dodecaphonic language is USELESS. For his whole work is irrelevant to the needs of his epoch.'[48]

All this was at a time when the professional musical establishment through radio stations and concert promotion was still powerful enough to call the tune. Pop idols like Elvis Presley and even the Beatles were regarded as something else, and the tremendous inroads that would be made by pop music into mainstream culture were still in the future. The intellectual climate made serialism fashionable, although the wider public now has little interest in late Stravinsky and its always tentative appetite for Schoenberg and other twelve-note composers has diminished in the face of assaults from the minimalists. However, as Arnold Whittall has claimed: 'From its earliest years, when the twelve-tone method showed itself able to relate to aspects of neo-classicism on the one hand (Schoenberg's Piano Suite) and late-romanticism on the other (Berg's Violin Concerto) serialism of one kind or another has proved to be a constant presence within the wider dialogue between the progressive and the conservative that has shaped music since 1900 as it extended, exploded and reinstated tonality.'[49]

Where does this leave Berkeley? When I wrote my first articles about his work and later in *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* I was too inclined to take him at his own valuation, in particular that his music was demonstrably inferior to that of Britten. Berkeley had, after all, told Britten in a letter[50] that he liked his music better than his own and – in typical fashion – Berkeley regularly apologised for what he had just composed, explaining that it was not as good as what he hoped to be able to do later. In a sense that was a personality problem that should never have been imposed on the work. Further, Julian Bream, Norman Del Mar and Colin Horsley, in their interviews here, fail to find a strong influence of Britten, and Desmond Shawe-Taylor felt the two composers enriched each other.

Going further with this comparison, I am reminded of Bernard Shaw's preface to *Three Plays for Puritans* (1900) where he has a section entitled 'Better than Shakespear' (he spelt it like that). How about 'Better than Britten'? Obviously not

[46] See John McCabe, *Alan Rawsthorne: Portrait of a Composer* (Oxford, 1999), 247–63.

[47] See Humphrey Searle, *Quadrille with a Raven: Memoirs*, www.musicweb-international.com/searle/titlepg.htm.

[48] Originally in *Revue musicale*, reprinted in Pierre Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. Herbert Weinstock (New York, 1968), 148.

[49] Arnold Whittall, *The Cambridge Introduction to Serialism* (Cambridge, 2008), 238.

[50] 30 September 1937, see Dickinson, *The Music of Lennox Berkeley*, 48.

in opera, where Britten, alongside Strauss and Puccini, was one of the three most successful opera composers of the twentieth century, an astonishing achievement for an English composer from a background with no lengthy operatic tradition. But in the field of chamber music, keyboard works, songs and religious choral pieces, Berkeley does more than hold his own – to the extent that he stands up to the inevitable comparison with Britten as well as any British composer of that generation. And on a larger scale in the concertos, beginning with the Cello Concerto (1939) which waited forty years for a first performance, Berkeley expands the sheer attractiveness of orchestral pieces like the Serenade for strings and the Divertimento. They show Berkeley at his best where he is not troubled by the cut and thrust of logical development traditionally associated with symphonies. The engaging interplay between soloist and orchestra suited him better and this aspect continued into his later style with the Sinfonia Concertante – in effect an oboe concerto – and the final Concerto for guitar.

In *The Music of Lennox Berkeley* my primary aim, as in my earlier articles, was to look at the music in some detail, with over a hundred music examples and a certain amount of analysis, to show that the music rewarded this kind of scrutiny. It does. Fortunately, performers in many countries are now playing and recording the chamber music; the sacred choral works have entered the repertoire; even the operas *A Dinner Engagement* and *Ruth* have achieved international productions since the availability of recordings. Sixty years after that schoolboy encountered Berkeley's music for the first time, its future now seems assured.

– Part I –

Reports from Paris, 1929–34

INTRODUCTION

Between the wars Paris reigned supreme. Harold Acton proclaimed: 'Intellectually Paris was the capital of the world, and the judgement of Paris was final. The Entente Cordiale in the fine arts had never been stronger.'[1] The appalling casualties and deprivations of the First World War had left Paris anxious to forget the Germans and to concentrate on French art and ideals. It was in that spirit that in 1915 Debussy announced his Six Sonatas and signed the title pages 'musicien Français' – but he lived to complete only three and never saw the end of the conflict.

Purely French theatrical traditions were invoked when, starting before the armistice, the Opéra reopened with thirty-three performances of Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*.[2] On 20 January 1919 the song-cycle *Clairières dans le ciel* by Lili Boulanger, Nadia's sister, was given its premiere by the enterprising Société musicale indépendante, which would later present several works by Berkeley. In his letters to his teacher he would refer regularly to the anniversaries of Lili Boulanger's premature death in March 1918 at the age of only twenty-four.

With the entry of the United States into the war in April 1917 and the influx of Americans into Paris, early jazz arrived and the city would remain host to many jazz musicians. It was a cultural shock which the New World injected into the Old – and the Old World has never recovered. These American jazz musicians and entertainers – black and white – were presented in many Parisian night-clubs as well as concert halls. One of the best-known venues was *Le Bœuf sur le toit*, founded in 1921 and named after a Brazilian popular song and a ballet by Milhaud. In jazz, Ravel and the young composers of Les Six found a new stimulus thoroughly in keeping with Jean Cocteau's manifesto *Le Coq et l'arlequin* published in 1918.[3] Cocteau preached a gospel of simplicity as embodied the year before by Erik Satie in the ballet *Parade*, which brought Cocteau and Satie together with Picasso under the auspices of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Stravinsky knew Satie, and in many ways his new direction of pieces based on ragtime followed by neo-classicism emerged from this climate. Cocteau said: 'The music-hall, the circus and America negro-bands, all these things fertilise an artist just as life does.'[4]

In 1921 the American Conservatory was founded in Fontainebleau. It was in the first year that Aaron Copland arrived there and started his lessons with Nadia Boulanger. Over fifty years later he recalled his arrival:

[1] Harold Acton, *Memoirs of an Aesthete* (London, 1948), 149.

[2] According to Roger Nichols.

[3] Jean Cocteau (1889–1963), influential French writer and artist who collaborated with leading figures in all the arts.

[4] Jean Cocteau, *Le Coq et l'harlequin: notes autour de musique* (Paris, 1918), trans. Rollo Myers as *Cock and Harlequin* (London, 1921), 23.

> Paris, of course, was the centre of renewed excitement in the arts. Arriving at twenty on French soil, my expectations were dangerously high, but I was not to be disappointed. Paris was filled with cosmopolitan artists from all over the world, many of whom had settled there as ex-patriots. It was the time of Tristan Tzara[5] and Dada; the time of André Breton and surrealism; it was when we first heard the names of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, and also of the French writers Marcel Proust and André Gide. The painters were enormously active, with Picasso taking centre stage and interesting figures like Georges Braque and Max Ernst working in Paris at that time.[6]

Another American, the composer and critic Virgil Thomson, arrived in 1925 and became aware of Paris as a literary centre too:

> ... the presence of Joyce and Stein, orbiting and surrounded by satellites, gave to Paris in the 1920s and 30s its position of world centre for the writing of English poetry and prose. Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Ford Madox Ford ... Ezra Pound, e. e. cummings and Hart Crane worked out of Paris and depended on it for judgement, as often as not for publication too.[7]

Countless Americans followed. So many young American composers came to study with Nadia Boulanger that Thomson saluted her on her seventy-fifth birthday by claiming that 'for more than forty years she has been a one-woman graduate school so powerful and so permeating that legend credits every US town with two things – a five-and-dime store and a Boulanger pupil.'[8]

Matters were different for Berkeley, who was not a naïve American encountering European civilisation on the spot for the first time. He had a French grandmother; his parents were living in the south of France, although he had been to English schools; and he was bilingual. But, as his letters to Boulanger show, he still had to try and break into the musical scene in Paris dominated by cliques and patrons and with an influx of competing talents from all over the world.

Many new concert organisations and ensembles were founded in Paris during the 1920s. There was also activity in early music with the prominence of Bach, the discovery of Monteverdi, and interest in English Elizabethan composers – all associated with Boulanger. Berkeley was served best by the Societé musicale indépendante, but there were also the Concerts Straram. In 1928 their conductor Walter Straram launched Berkeley's orchestral Suite and the composer conducted it at the Proms in London the following year.[9] In 1933 Berkeley said the Straram Orchestra was 'perhaps the best in Paris at the moment' – and it gave the most first performances.

[5] Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), Romanian poet, one of the founders of the Dada movement in Zurich in 1915.

[6] Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland, Volume I: 1900–1942* (London, 1984), 56.

[7] Virgil Thomson, *Virgil Thomson by Virgil Thomson* (London, 1967), 77.

[8] Virgil Thomson, *A Virgil Thomson Reader* (Boston, 1981), 389.

[9] Dickinson, *The Music of Lennox Berkeley*, 12–14.

The presence in Paris of Stravinsky was enormously influential, as Berkeley's reports confirm. Stravinsky's three early ballets – *The Firebird* (1910), *Petroushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913) – had been a sensation in the productions of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes which brought together the finest talents in all art forms. Stravinsky and his family, after wartime exile in Switzerland, moved to France in 1920 and his connections with Paris continued: the Opéra, which had presented *The Nightingale* just before the war, staged *Pulcinella* (1920), *Renard* and *Mavra* (1922), *Les Noces* (1923), *Le Baiser de la fée* (1928) and *Perséphone* (1928). The Opéra had also put on Stravinsky's Octet in 1923, regarded as the start of neo-classicism, and there were Paris premieres of his Piano Concerto in 1924 and the Capriccio for piano and orchestra in 1929, the last two with the composer as soloist. Then Berkeley reviews later premieres.

Since the end of the war young French composers embodied a new spirit during the 'silly' twenties, although Milhaud, one of the group called Les Six, disliked the term:

> I am always very angry ... when I read about the 'silly' twenties, because I think it has been the most marvellous period that I have been through. At this time everything was possible, we could try everything we wanted: it was a period of experiment, of liberty of expression in the widest sense of this word.[10]

Les Six were reacting against the influence of Wagner as well as the refinements of impressionism in Debussy and Ravel. This was in tune with Cocteau's manifesto, and Berkeley used five of his poems in his set of songs called *Tombeaux* (1926) written in a taut style not far from Cocteau's ideals.

Les Six was a journalistic label used by a critic in 1920,[11] but the composers really had little in common, although they met weekly for two years at Milhaud's apartment, and most of them admired Satie.[12] Honegger had dual nationality, both Swiss and French, and soon made an imposing contribution to the symphonic and choral repertory, as Berkeley chronicles; Milhaud, with his development of polytonality and his interest in Latin-American music and jazz, was the most avant-garde; and Poulenc moved on from apparently light-weight frivolity into songs, orchestral music and opera – and became a good friend of Berkeley.

After Debussy's death in 1918, Ravel became prominent as the leading French composer – and a strong personal and musical influence on Berkeley. Ravel's post-war works included *La Valse* (1920), the opera *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (1925), and *Boléro* (1928), mentioned more than once in Berkeley's reports. Ravel wrote his Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (1929–30) immediately before his Piano Concerto (1930–31) just as Berkeley would write his Piano Concerto (1947) closely followed by his Concerto for Two Pianos (1948). Ravel's Violin and Piano Sonata

[10] BBC Third Programme talk, 4 February 1962, quoted in Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years* (London, 2002), 276.

[11] Henri Collet, *Commedia*, 16 January 1920.

[12] Darius Milhaud, *Notes sans musique* (Paris, 1949), trans. Donald Evans as *Notes without Music* (London, 1952), 83.

(1927) has a slow movement entitled 'Blues' – Berkeley also succumbed to this kind of sublimated jazz influence in several works of this period and the major classic in this cross-over idiom was Milhaud's *La Création du monde*, premiered by the Ballet Suédois in Paris as early as 1923, and now known almost to the detriment of everything else this prolific composer wrote.

Berkeley was an astute observer and his reactions to the Paris scene are consistent and often chime with his views in his diaries forty years later. He admired everything to do with Stravinsky and was present at significant premieres such as the Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra, the *Symphony of Psalms* and the Violin Concerto. He tried to spot winners – Bohuslav Martinů, Igor Markevitch at the age of seventeen, and, more surprisingly, the Swiss Conrad Beck. There were odd reactions too in that he always preferred early Ravel to the post-war works and was often doubtful about Poulenc. This is surprising when they were both such good friends – and history has proved Berkeley wrong. He found little interest in Paris in Vaughan Williams and, together with Britten, would later make fun of his scores.[13] Mahler was unfashionable in Paris and Berkeley never overcame his indifference to both Mahler and Richard Strauss, probably because his own tastes and inclinations were formed when he was young and impressionable in a Francophile context. As a reviewer Berkeley was never afraid to condemn feeble works in print – safely, of course, because the composers were not likely to read a British journal. He was aware of writing for readers familiar with the concert life of London and many of his judgements have stood the test of time. In his final report he wrote about Stravinsky's *Perséphone*: 'It is music that has been ruthlessly stripped of every element that is not purely musical.' That accords with Cocteau's manifesto, Stravinsky's neo-classicism, and even much of Berkeley's own music.

These reports were published in *The Monthly Musical Record*, an influential British music magazine published in London from 1871 to 1960. At the time Berkeley sent them from Paris the editor was the critic and Schubert scholar Richard Capell, who in 1933 handed over to J. A. Westrup, later Heather Professor of Music at Oxford. These are all the reports Berkeley contributed and appear as published with occasional corrections. For further details about *The Monthly Musical Record* see Richard Kitson's detailed survey online in *Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals, 1800–1950*.

Footnotes have been added to cover composers now little known.

[13] Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: a Biography* (London, 1992), 84.

THE REPORTS

June 1929

There is always such a profusion of concerts and recitals in Paris that it is impossible to do more than give some account of those that have presented a special interest or novelty during the last months.

One of the most remarkable of these was a concert of Honegger's works, with the composer conducting throughout. I think it is of particular importance to mention this concert, as Honegger's symphonic works are too little known in England. The novelty of this program was the new mouvement-symphonique *Rugby*. It is interesting to note in passing that the movement-symphonique is in some sense a new form that Honegger has invented for himself; it resembles the overture, but is much freer, having sometimes several main subjects, and not necessarily any recapitulation.

Pacific 231, which is also of the type, was played at this concert, but it is too well known to need any comment. *Rugby* is in my view a masterpiece. No attempt is made at an exact reproduction or imitation of sounds connected with the subject; but the general atmosphere of exhilaration, speed and physical energy is reproduced with wonderful vividness and power. The work is scored for normal full orchestra, but there is no percussion; it is much more tonal than many of Honegger's earlier works, being very definitely in D major, and ending unashamedly with a good solid common chord. The rest of the programme consisted of the magnificent *Prelude to The Tempest*, the incidental music to *Phèdre*, the *Chant de joie*, and the Concertino for Piano and Orchestra. *Phèdre* is a particularly fine work, showing Honegger in that sombre and heavy mood he has expressed so often. This concert was a demonstration of the composer's robust strength of feeling and good workmanship.

Another concert by the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris gave us the first concert performance of Nicholas Nabokov's ballet *Ode* for choir and orchestra, and Stravinsky's *Les Noces*. *Ode* does not seem to me a very satisfactory work; in trying to recreate an older style the composer has only achieved a tiresome and incredibly noisy pastiche of the Russian music of 1860.[14] *Les Noces* is, of course, an acknowledged masterpiece; the performance on this occasion was not very satisfactory; but it is a work of great difficulty. The concert was conducted by Ansermet.

More recently we had a concert of works by Stravinsky, in which the composer took part. The program consisted of the Octet for wind instruments, the Serenade and Sonata for piano – played by the composer – and *L'Histoire du soldat*. The Octet is delightful music, wonderfully scored and beautifully constructed; it is, perhaps, Stravinsky's best work of that period. The remorseless logic of the two

[14] Nicholas Nabokov (1903–78), American composer of Russian origin who came to attention with his ballet *Ode*, commissioned by Diaghilev in 1927. Nabokov said: 'The music of *Ode* was essentially tender, gentle and lyrical ... akin to the music of Russian composers like Glinka, Dargomijsky and Tchaikovsky'. *Old Friends and New Music* (London, 1951), 77.

piano works was well expressed by the composer, and *L'Histoire du soldat* was given a good performance. The spoken parts were recited by Jacques Copeau.

During April two orchestral concerts and one chamber concert were devoted to the works of Albert Roussel. This composer deserves to be better known abroad than he is; his later work in particular is very strong and personal. The *Suite in F,* written in 1926, is particularly fine and vigorous. This, together with *Le Festin de l'araignée*, *Les Evocations*, and a new setting of the eightieth psalm, were given at a concert at the Opéra in celebration of the composer's sixtieth birthday. *Psalm 80*, a very interesting but rather complicated work, is written to the English version, though on this occasion a French translation was used.

On May 3 we heard the first performance of Poulenc's *Concert champêtre* for harpsichord and orchestra, conducted by Pierre Monteux; the solo part was played by Mme. Landowska.[15] This is certainly the most important composition that Poulenc has produced for some time. He has lost none of his extraordinary power of melodic invention and, though the work is perhaps not very satisfactory as regards unity of style and form, it has a great deal of charm. The harpsichord was a little lost in the Salle Pleyel – one wished that its tone could have been in some way amplified; apart from this, it combined very well with the orchestra.

Lastly, I must mention the first performance in Paris of Walton's *Façade*. The wit and colour of this delightful work made an instant appeal to the audience, and the composer, who conducted, together with Miss Edith Sitwell and Mr. Constant Lambert who recited the poems, was warmly applauded.

August 1929

Since I last wrote, the most interesting of the bigger concerts have been those given by the Hofburg Kapelle of Vienna and by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Furtwängler. The Choir of the Imperial Chapel of Vienna, in which Schubert sang as a boy, gave two concerts, one of which consisted of a magnificent performance of Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and the other of short choral works, chiefly by old Italian masters. Both concerts were of exceptional interest, consisting, as they did, in works which one very seldom hears, beautifully performed.

Furtwängler gave two concerts in which he confined himself to classical works – Brahms, Schumann, Beethoven and Berlioz. He can well afford to do so, for his extraordinary technique and subtlety of feeling give one the impression of hearing well-known masterpieces for the first time.

There have been two interesting chamber music concerts. The first was given by the Société musicale indépendante which exists for the primary purpose of performing the works of the lesser-known contemporary composers. On this occasion we had a sonata for cello and piano by the young Hungarian composer,

[15] Wanda Landowska (1879–1959), Polish keyboard player who lived in Paris, where she founded her École de musique ancienne, and was widely influential in the revival of the harpsichord, starting early in the twentieth century. The Poulenc was written for her, and so was Falla's Harpsichord Concerto. She moved to the US in 1940.

Tibor Harsányi.[16] Harsányi is a fine musician, but this sonata seemed a somewhat dreary work. It may not have been well played; anyhow, the general effect was somewhat turgid. Conrad Beck's sonata for violin and piano was excellent. Beck is a young Swiss composer whose string quartet aroused interest at the International Society for Contemporary Music a few years ago. Since then his output has been considerable; his style is severe and contrapuntal, but his music is full of energy, feeling and intelligence.[17]

Three Bulgarian folksongs, arranged for voice, piano, flute, and cello by Lyubomir Pipkov[18] are worthy of comment, as are two very clever pieces for string quartet by Simon Laks.[19] Laks is a young Polish composer; his music has a subtle and ironical flavour that reminds one of Ravel, though the style is utterly different.

The second chamber concert was devoted to works by young American composers; most of them are, or were, students here. The most striking of them is Aaron Copland, an ex-pupil of Mlle. Nadia Boulanger. Copland, who is already fairly well known in America, is an interesting composer.[20] He possesses an extraordinary rhythmical power, a good deal of which is probably due to the influence of jazz. If this is so, it is an instance of the good influence that jazz can have on serious music. Copland's actual technique is outstandingly good. Another promising young American is Roy Harris, whose Sextet for clarinet, piano, and string quartet was played at the same concert. He has less charm and less éclat than Copland, but there is fine feeling in his music.

We have also had a season of Italian opera – or rather a season of Rossini – by the Teatro di Torino. These performances made a great impression. We have been given so much mock Rossini by a certain school of modern composers that it is extraordinarily pleasant to hear the real thing.

Finally, there has been the season of the Russian Ballet at Théatre Sarah Bernhardt. They produced three new ballets. *Le Fils prodigue*, with music by Prokofiev and scenery by Rouault, is among the best things they have given us for some years. The music is extremely simple, yet strong, personal, and, in some places, very moving. Prokofiev is not afraid to be romantic, and there is an entire absence of orchestral affectations. It is straightforward good music. The principal part in the ballet was superbly danced by Serge Lifar.

The music of Stravinsky's *Renard* was not new, but was given in a fresh arrangement. It belongs to the period of *Les Noces* and, though it is perhaps not

[16] Tibor Harsányi (1898–1954), French composer, conductor and pianist of Hungarian birth and early training as a pupil of Kodaly but subsequently based in Paris.

[17] Conrad Beck (1901–89), prolific Swiss composer resident in Paris 1924–34, He was music director of Swiss Radio 1939–66.

[18] Lyubomir Pipkov (1904–74), Bulgarian composer and teacher, Boulanger pupil, who became prominent in various administrative posts in his own country.

[19] Simon Laks (1901–87) was one of a group of young Polish composers studying in Paris at this time. He spent some years in concentration camps during the war, but survived and wrote a book about his experiences.

[20] Aaron Copland (1900–90) was well established in America by this time. Boulanger had premiered his Organ Symphony in New York in 1925 and Koussevitsky had conducted *Music for the Theatre* and the Piano Concerto.

one of Stravinsky's finest works, it is full of life and originality. The ballet was most exhilarating, very grotesque, excellently staged and performed.

Le Bal, which was the third new ballet, was also a success. The scenery in particular, by de Chirico, was admirable – in fact, the best part of it. The music, by the young Italian composer Vittorio Rieti, is of a very light order, and is full of reminiscences, though one is not quite sure whether they are intentional or not; its chief merit is its orchestration, which is extremely good.[21] It is certainly just what is wanted to go with the rest of the ballet, and the whole performance is another example of Diaghilev's wonderful power of combining music, scenery, and choreography into a coherent and aesthetic whole.

December 1929

The most interesting Paris concerts are generally reserved for the 'season'; at this time of year it is rare that anything at all sensational takes place in the musical world. However, the usual orchestral concerts are in full swing, and, if they have given us nothing very extraordinary, they have at least maintained their standard of performance.

Pierre Monteux continues to conduct the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, though he has invited many distinguished foreign conductors to direct his orchestra from time to time, among them Sir Henry Wood, who conducted on November 8. His programme consisted of a Suite by Purcell, an Andante by Mozart, Beethoven's Violin Concerto, and Vaughan Williams's *London Symphony*. The Purcell Suite, arranged by Sir Henry, was delightful, and was received with enthusiasm by the audience, as was also the Mozart Andante. The solo part of the Concerto was admirably played by Mischa Elman. The *London Symphony* was quite well played, but seemed to hang fire a little. It was received with interest, but without much enthusiasm; one feels that Vaughan Williams will never be very much appreciated in France. There is a certain vagueness in his thought with which the French mind is impatient. Is this the fault of Vaughan Williams or of the French mind? Both, perhaps are at fault; nevertheless, one feels it a pity that a man who has done such fine work with purely English material should have failed to carry his art a step farther by diminishing the importance of that very material on which he has built his style, thereby making his music more universal in its appeal. Perhaps this will happen – indeed, it may have happened already. One hears so little English music in Paris that one is often unacquainted with the latest developments.

Mengelberg has also conducted the Orchestre Symphonique lately, and maintained his reputation as one of the greatest conductors of our time.[22]

At the Pasdeloup Concerts we had a concert of Honegger and Milhaud. The two composers conducted their respective works. Nothing new was revealed, but many fine things were played, including Honegger's *Pacific 231* and *Rugby*, and *La*

[21] Vittorio Rieti (1898–1994) American composer of Italian descent who worked in Paris and Rome between the wars and moved to the US in 1940. He wrote ballet music for Diaghilev and for Balanchine.

[22] Willem Mengelberg (1871–1951), influential Dutch conductor, a strong advocate of Strauss and Mahler.