

The Cyril Scott COMPANION

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

*Edited by Desmond Scott,
Lewis Foreman and Leslie De'Ath*



The Cyril Scott Companion



Jane Emmet om Glehn
March 1907.

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Edited by

Desmond Scott, Lewis Foreman
and Leslie De'Ath

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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Frontispiece: Cyril Scott, March 1907. Pencil drawing by Jane Emmet de Glehn (1873–1961)

DEDICATION BY DESMOND SCOTT

*To Corinne,
my most ardent advocate and sternest critic,
who put aside her own important literary work
to ensure that my contributions to this book
were the best they could be.*

*To Amanta,
because without the website of her grandfather Cyril Scott
that she began in the year 2000, this Companion book would not exist.*

*To Dominic,
whose gentle encouragement and tact
helped solve any problem that arose.*

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Contributors

Peter Atkinson

Peter Atkinson recently obtained a doctorate from the University of Birmingham, where he also worked as a Teaching Associate. His PhD thesis was titled 'Regeneration and Re-Enchantment: British Music and Wagnerism, 1880–1920'. He has presented his work on British music at conferences across the UK and Ireland, and his research has also been published in *Music & Letters* and *Notes*, including his extended study 'An Ireland Built Anew: Bax's Tintagel and the Easter Rising' (*Music & Letters* 97/1 [Feb. 2016])

Martyn Brabbins

Conductor Martyn Brabbins emerged on the international musical stage after winning the Leeds conducting competition in 1988. The Musical Director of English National Opera, he is remarkable for the breadth of his sympathies, which range from the latest new music, such as Birtwistle's *The Mask of Orpheus*, through Havergal Brian's *Gothic Symphony* at the Proms, and on to David Matthews's symphonies and Dutton's recording of orchestral songs by Sibelius's teacher, Toivo Kuula. His Brian series with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (and as we write with ENO) for Dutton is definitive, as is his pioneering four-volume CD survey of Cyril Scott's orchestral music on Chandos. His catalogue of premieres encompasses an international repertoire. He has long-standing relationships with many orchestras, and was Artistic Director of the Cheltenham Festival 2005–2007.

Leslie De'Ath

Leslie De'Ath is a Canadian pianist, conductor, vocal coach, author and pedagogue who teaches at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario. He has recorded extensively as a soloist and chamber musician, particularly British and French piano literature – including Algernon Ashton, Billy Mayerl, Florent Schmitt and the complete piano works of Cyril Scott. His involvement in the recording medium has yielded an *Editor's Choice* designation in *Gramophone* magazine and a Grammy nomination. He is an authority on lyric diction and edits a standing column in that field in the *Journal of Singing*. His conducting has concentrated on opera, including several Canadian premieres.

Peter Dickinson

Peter Dickinson was born in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire; went to Cambridge as Organ Scholar of Queens' College; then spent three formative years in New York. There are four full CDs of his music on Albany; three on Naxos; and six on Heritage of his performances or music. As a pianist Dickinson enjoyed a twenty-five-year partnership with his sister, mezzo Meriel Dickinson. His books include studies of Lennox Berkeley (two), Billy Mayerl, Aaron Copland, John Cage, Lord Berners and Samuel Barber. He is an Emeritus Professor of the Universities of Keele and London and chair of the Bernarr Rainbow Trust. *Peter Dickinson: Words and Music* was published by the Boydell Press in 2016.

Lewis Foreman

In the 1970s and 1980s Lewis Foreman researched repertoire for the Kensington Symphony Orchestra, Opera Viva and other groups for the London fringe, planning many concerts. Since taking early retirement as a librarian in 1997, he has been a freelance writer, specialising in obituaries and British music. He has written more than two-dozen books, including *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, now in its third edition. With his wife he wrote the widely admired *London: A Musical Gazetteer* for Yale University Press (2005). He has advised various record companies on unrecorded repertoire, in recent years for Dutton Epoch, and his hundreds of CD booklet notes and session photographs are well known. A study of British symphonies, commissioned by the Boydell Press, is in progress.

Katherine Hudson

Katherine Hudson is the daughter of the biographer Derek Hudson, and the granddaughter of composer Norman O'Neill. Trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, she worked for a number of years in the theatre. First published by the Oxford University Press in Edward Blishen's *Miscellany* series, she subsequently wrote two books for children: *The Story of the Elizabethan Boy-Actors* and *The Story of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Her *A Royal Conflict: Sir John Conroy and the Young Victoria* was published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1994, and she has written for *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and various specialist journals, co-editing with Stephen Lloyd a republication of her father's biography, *Norman O'Neill: A Life of Music*, for Em Publishing in 2015.

Valerie Langfield

Valerie Langfield is an independent scholar and freelance musician, based in south Manchester. A contributor to several major dictionaries, her main research centres on twentieth-century English song, especially that of Roger Quilter and Cyril Scott, and on nineteenth-century British opera. She is a founder-member of Retrospect Opera and has produced editions of a number of British operas for recording and performance, particularly the operas of Balfe, Loder, Macfarren and Smyth. She is currently editing the diaries of Edward Dent and also a collection of his letters to John B. Gordon, staff producer at Sadler's Wells in the 1930s.

Kurt Leland

Kurt Leland received his Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet performance and music composition from Ohio Wesleyan University, and his Master of Music degree in composition from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where he studied with Herbert Brün. His choral works have won several prizes and have been performed and recorded by Harold Rosenbaum's New York Virtuoso Singers. Leland is also an award-winning poet, and author/editor of eight non-fiction books, including *Music and the Soul: A Listener's Guide to Achieving Transcendent Musical Experiences* (2004, dealing extensively with Cyril Scott's occult writings on music). He is a national lecturer for the Theosophical Society in America.

Stephen Lloyd

Stephen Lloyd has had a life-long interest in British music. For sixteen years he was editor of *The Delius Society Journal*, and his books include a biography of H. Balfour Gardiner, a collection of Eric Fenby's writings on Delius, *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers*, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Boydell Press, 2001) and *Constant Lambert: Beyond The Rio Grande* (Boydell Press, 2014). In addition to record sleeve notes, programme notes, reviews and articles, he has contributed to the first *Percy Grainger Companion*, the *John Ireland Companion*, the *Studies in Music Grainger Centennial Volume*, *An Elgar Companion*, *Information Sources in Music* and volumes on Delius, Walton and Bliss. More recently, with Katherine Hudson, he prepared the revised version of Derek Hudson's *Norman O'Neill: A Life of Music*; he is currently editing, with Diana and Brian Sparkes, *Music in their Time*, the memoirs of Dora and Hubert Foss.

Steven Martin

Steven Martin is an Anglican priest. Before ordination training at St Stephen's House, Oxford, Steven read music at the University of Exeter and completed his PhD at the University of Bristol. The subject of his thesis was the history of opera in Britain c. 1875 to 1939. In 2010 he was awarded the McCann Research Scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music, which enabled him to look more closely at the history of the travelling opera in Britain during the early twentieth century. Steven has served on the board of trustees of the Carl Rosa Trust Ltd since 2014.

Rohinten Mazda

Born to Zoroastrian parents Daddy and Mehroo Mazda in Poona, India, on 17 April 1946, Rohinten Mazda came to England in June 1956 and later attended Milton Abbey School in Dorset before settling in London. He subsequently qualified as a barrister as a member of the Inner Temple and worked for a short spell at the Bar before pursuing a career as a Legal Adviser in the Inner London Courts' Service. Rohinten married the late Parsi concert pianist Hilla Khursedji in 1976 in India. Now retired, he makes frequent visits to India to visit family and devotes his time to his interests in music, poetry and natural history. As detailed in his 'Reminiscences' (below), he was adopted by Cyril Scott as his godson.

Richard Price

Richard Price is Professor of the History of Christianity at Heythrop College, University of London. He has published largely in the field of Early Church History but has a special interest in drama, poetry and music of the period between 1890 and 1920. Apart from the music of Cyril Scott, he has made a special study of the works of Scriabin, Rubbra and Sviridov.

Edmund Rubbra

Composer and pianist Edmund Rubbra started his working life as a railway clerk in Northampton. He became a pupil of Cyril Scott when, as a teenager, he promoted a local concert of Scott's music, which the composer heard about. Scott offered free

lessons, which Rubbra could accept because, as a railway employee, he enjoyed subsidised travel. Later a student of Gustav Holst, he established a freelance musical career as concert pianist and composer, later broadcaster and teacher of composition at Oxford and London. His Second Violin Sonata attracted a wide audience, while his orchestral and choral music signalled him as a significant new talent. Active as a composer for more than fifty years, he produced a significant and distinctive body of work in most forms.

Desmond Scott

Desmond Scott is the son of Cyril Scott. He emigrated to Canada from the United Kingdom in 1957 and has spent his life in the Arts as a theatre director, actor and sculptor. Scott taught at the National Theatre School, and directed the first professional Canadian production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, for the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg, in 1961. His exhibition of bronze sculptures in 1990 was inspired by the play, and he served as President of the Sculptors Society of Canada from 1995 to 1997. Scott contributed an article on his father's and Percy Grainger's enduring friendship for Penelope Thwaites' *New Grainger Companion* (Boydell Press, 2010). He was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal in 2012 in recognition of his recording books for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind for the past forty years.

Martin Yates

Conductor Martin Yates's pioneering recordings for Dutton Epoch – now more than fifty discs – mainly with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the BBC Concert Orchestra include the symphonies of his teacher, Richard Arnell, a variety of Vaughan Williams discoveries, and Widor's orchestral music. Yates's remarkable orchestrations and realisations of unfinished works includes music by Ireland, Elgar, Mendelssohn, Arnell, Moeran (Second Symphony), Bax (Symphony in F) and Cyril Scott. His ongoing forensic examination of Vaughan Williams's manuscripts has already yielded recordings of *Fat Knight* and the complete extant music for the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, much not used in the film. His orchestrations of the ballets *Manon* (MacMillan), *Don Quixote* (Acosta) and *Carmen* (Scarlett) have been widely danced at Covent Garden and abroad.

Foreword

MARTYN BRABBINS

DURING the course of the past twenty-five years it has been my privilege and pleasure to play a part in bringing before the curious listening public the music of many previously neglected composers. This process has involved many live public performances and the recording of dozens of CDs. Composers explored include Havergal Brian, Cecil Coles, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Frederic Lamond, York Bowen, William Wallace, Friedrich Kiel, Robert Fuchs, Sergei Bortkiewicz, Sigismund Stojowski, da Motta, Coke, Alkan, Adolf von Henselt, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, David, Goedicke, Hubay, Mortelmans, Edward MacDowell – well, the list could go on, but the idea is clear. There is so much fine music awaiting discovery and rediscovery, and deserving of an audience.

As a conductor with training as a composer, composers and their music are at the heart of my performing passion. I have a strong desire faithfully to serve the composers' wishes, and, above and beyond that, to discover new music both by living composers and by those unfortunate composers whose music has undeservedly fallen out of fashion. Musical fashion being quite fickle, it has been very, very easy for a less well-known or an under-supported composer to fall by the wayside.

It was my good fortune in 2003 to be approached by Chandos Records about recording a number of Scott's orchestral works with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in Manchester. By focusing the remarkable sound of that ensemble on this revival – four CDs of orchestral recordings – we were able to showcase some dozen worthwhile scores which were very favourably received by the CD-reviewing journals and the public, reminding us that Eugene Goossens described Cyril Scott as the 'father of modern British music'. A bold epithet indeed!

Scott was certainly a remarkably creative figure. A friend of Stravinsky, Richard Strauss and Percy Grainger, and a fine pianist, he was a composer with a large and varied output, ranging from works for solo guitar and harp through his vast output of solo piano music, chamber music, choral works, concerti (for piano, harpsichord, violin, cello and oboe), ballets, operas and symphonies. This in itself would be a quite impressive legacy, and worthy of celebration. But that is far from the whole story. Scott was a published poet, author and philosopher – writing on subjects ranging from natural medicine to the occult, Christianity to sleeplessness, health food and, my personal favourite, cider vinegar! I find myself in awe of the intellect and imagination of a man who was able not only to create new worlds of sound, but also to articulate ideas and concepts on such a wide range of very forward-looking topics.

Neptune, the tone poem of 1935, is perhaps my favourite of Scott's orchestral works, and one which I recorded in April 2003. Originally it was entitled *Disaster at Sea* – depicting the sinking of the *Titanic*. The revised score is full of captivating and original ideas. There can be few more striking openings in all British orchestral music: celli, divided in three parts, play pizzicato a chord of D-flat major then glissando up to a chord of F major; they play it three times. It is quite unparalleled in the orchestral literature in my experience, and a perfect piece of musical 'scene-setting'.

Unsurprisingly, *Neptune* contains some powerfully original storm sequences, with Scott displaying a very fine mastery of orchestral colour and a compelling sense of dramatic pacing. There may be hints of his friends Strauss (*Zarathustra*) and Stravinsky (*Firebird*) in Scott's work, but it is none the worse for that! And melodic and harmonic unity are never sacrificed for mere effect. *Neptune* really is a score that should be heard in the concert halls of the UK on a regular basis, sitting comfortably alongside other familiar oceanic depictions by Britten, Bridge and Bax.

My enthusiasm for the music of Cyril Scott, and for the man himself – I am sure he would have been a fascinating companion – has been rekindled in writing this foreword a decade and more after the recordings made in Manchester. Scott is certainly at the top, in terms of originality and quality, of the list of neglected composers I referred to earlier. One has to hope that the music of Scott, one of Britain's most original twentieth-century composers, will enjoy a growing renaissance, and that readers of this volume will spread the word, increasing the appreciation and exposure of the music of this wonderfully gifted creative mind.

Preface

DESMOND SCOTT

THIS book is divided into chapters. Chapters 1–7 give some background to the work of my father, Cyril Scott; Chapters 8–16 are concerned with his music in its entirety; Chapters 17–23 deal with his writings; and Chapters 24–6 are reminiscences from those who knew him personally. To put the rest in context, this brief biography outlines the more significant events in his long life.

Scott's story as a composer is not unfamiliar. He achieved early fame as a modernist, acclaimed both in Britain and abroad, then mainstream music went in another direction until by the end he had been almost completely passed over. Thirty years after his death in 1970, however, a revival and re-appraisal of the music began that is still continuing today. Yet music was only the foremost of many other activities. He also wrote two autobiographies, *My Years of Indiscretion*¹ in 1924 and *Bone of Contention*² in 1969. An extraordinarily versatile man, he believed that the more subjects he became interested in, the less chance there was of being unhappy.³ Those subjects included poetry, philosophy, playwriting, painting and health.

Scott was born on 27 September 1879 to middle-class parents in Oxtou, a suburb of Birkenhead, a ferry-ride across the Mersey to Liverpool. His mother was very conventional and a devout Church of England churchgoer. As Scott relates in his early autobiography, she entered a theatre only twice in her life and both times felt most uncomfortable doing so.⁴ His father was more open-minded. Professionally he worked in the shipping industry, Liverpool at that time being one of the busiest ports in England, but his real interest was in the study of ancient Greek. As Scott remarked, 'he spent too much time studying the Greek Bible to accept the narrow interpretation of any one Church or clergyman.'

As a boy, Cyril showed a precocious talent for music and was fortunate in having a family that not only encouraged him but was wealthy enough to send him to the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, a young institution that had begun taking students in 1878, just a year before Scott's birth. He first went to study piano in 1891, stayed there for eighteen months, then returned to England and began teaching and performing. He then decided he was more interested in composition than in being a pianist, and at the age of sixteen went back to the Conservatory for a further three years.

Those Conservatory years were among the most significant of his life. He abandoned the Christianity of his parents and became for ten years a committed agnostic. At this point, too, he met both the poet Stefan George and his fellow-student and lifelong friend Percy Grainger; he kept photographs of those two very different men in his study wherever he lived. George instilled in him a love of poetry, and

¹ *My Years of Indiscretion* (Mills & Boon, 1924).

² *Bone of Contention* (Aquarian Press, 1969).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 130.

Scott adopted George's ideas about 'art for art's sake', dressing the part with flamboyant clothes and wearing his hair unfashionably long. In 1899 he dedicated his first symphony to George, who was instrumental in getting it performed a year later in Darmstadt. It was entirely due to Grainger that it could be played at all, because, as Scott relates in *Bone of Contention* (p. 84), his copyist had let him down and the two of them were forced to spend the whole night frantically writing out the parts. Without Grainger very many of Scott's works, including this symphony, would have been lost, for he kept withdrawing them and they survive solely because of Grainger and his Melbourne museum.

This first symphony had to wait over a hundred years for its second performance, when it and a number of major Scott compositions were brilliantly played by the BBC Philharmonic under Martyn Brabbins on Chandos CDs. Listening to them I was able to hear and appreciate much of my father's music for the very first time.

In 1901 Scott's first publisher was Arthur Boosey, who paid him a retainer to produce a specified number of songs and short piano pieces yearly. They were highly popular and provided a welcome steady income, but subsequently he felt they detracted from his more serious compositions. Later he met William Elkin, and then William's son Robert, and they became his publishers and friends for many years thereafter.

Also in 1901 Scott's *Heroic Suite* was performed in Manchester, with Hans Richter the famous Wagner conductor at the podium; but the work that catapulted him to the public's attention was the London performance in 1903 of his Piano Quartet, in which Scott had persuaded Fritz Kreisler to take the violin part. As he wrote years later in *Bone of Contention* (p. 88), it 'brought my name before the public in a manner which, short of murder, nothing else could have done. Reviews ... appeared in all the papers, including *The Church Times* – and thus before my mid-twenties I had been launched on the uncertain waters of my career!'

Scott's second symphony was premiered in London in 1903, but that one, too, he rejected as immature. He did, however, salvage three movements and style them as *Three Symphonic Dances*. In 1920 he and Grainger made a two-piano arrangement of the first dance, and their enjoyment in playing it is delightfully obvious from the Klavier Records LP of 1973.

Sometime in 1904 or early 1905 Scott ceased being an agnostic and became interested first in Vedanta, then in theosophy, and finally in occultism, eventually writing nine books on the subject. 1905 also saw the publication of his first volume of poetry, and over the next ten years he produced five books of his own verse and translations of Stefan George and Charles Baudelaire.

The Piano Sonata, Op. 66, the best known of his four piano sonatas, premiered in 1909; Grainger played it throughout the USA and Canada for more than thirty years. I have a letter from him to Cyril written from Moose Jaw, Canada, in January 1952:

Darling Cyril [which is how he addressed all his missives to Scott], I have now played yr Sonata in 4 places (one in USA, 3 in Canada) and am amazed to find how much response there is to it. It gets just as much applause as my Chopin group, or my Bach, which I think is remarkable, seeing that I am playing every-

where in small country towns ... It is 35 degrees below zero here just now but the strange thing is, it doesn't *feel* cold at all. I am wearing my summer trousers, no overcoat or hat, yet there is no sting of cold at all.

Only Percy Grainger could possibly have written that!

Gustav Mahler's widow, Alma Mahler, a musician herself, invited Scott to Vienna in 1911, having been impressed by his Violin Sonata No. 1. The visit was highly successful and led to concerts of Scott's work in both Frankfurt and Cologne.

An extensive tour of his Piano Concerto with him as soloist, a tour that would have included Vienna, was planned for 1914, but World War 1 intervened and he did not perform it there until four years after the Armistice, in 1922, this time accompanied by his novelist wife, Rose (herself Viennese-born), whom he had married in the previous year.

The 1920s saw Scott's reputation at its highest. His music was thought innovative, and his harmonies daring, providing a complete break from the academic writing of such men as Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford. Stanford called some of Scott's songs 'blasphemous', which, of course, delighted Cyril. Major works in this decade included the *Karma Suite* (1924), a Concerto for violin and cello (1926), *The Melodist and the Nightingales* (1929), *Festival Overture* (1929), plus numerous songs and works for solo piano.

As well as contributing frequently to a number of music journals, Scott had been writing books on a wide variety of subjects, and publishing many of them anonymously. The first was *The Real Tolerance* in 1913.⁵ In it he outlined the philosophy that became his 'Unity in Diversity' credo, asking for unlimited tolerance, with differences to be acknowledged and respected, not condemned. In 1920 he published *The Adept of Galilee*⁶ and the first book of the *Initiate* trilogy.⁷ The second *Initiate* book followed in 1927.⁸ In 1921 *The Autobiography of a Child* appeared.⁹ Also published anonymously, this described the childhood traumas of an unnamed character and was, as Scott explained right at the beginning of the book and just below the title, 'written from the psycho-sexual analytical standpoint: for doctors, parents, teachers and psychologists'. Though written during World War 1, it was not published until 1921, when one might have expected a loosening of strictures concerning matters of sex. That, however, was not the case; the attitude, according to Scott, remained one of 'hypocritical intolerance'.¹⁰ The notorious Lord Alfred Douglas brought an action against the publishers, the book was banned, and all copies ordered to be burned.

Scott was fortunate during the war years. Considered unfit for active service, he spent much of this period giving charity concerts. Wartime travel was possible, too,

⁵ *The Real Tolerance* (A. C. Fifield, 1913).

⁶ *The Adept of Galilee* (George Routledge & Sons, 1920).

⁷ *The Initiate, by his Pupil* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1920).

⁸ *The Initiate in the New World* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1927).

⁹ *The Autobiography of a Child* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1921).

¹⁰ *Bone of Contention*, p. 34. [Editor's note: The book he describes here is unnamed but it is, in fact, *The Autobiography of a Child*.]



Figure 0.1 Photo of Granville Bantock, Cyril Scott and Joseph Holbrooke at Harlech in August 1917

so at the invitation of friends he went to Florence – Italy being on the side of the Allies in that war – and was delighted to find himself a celebrity. There was a concert of his works, and he was awarded a medal by the Leonardo da Vinci Society. Near the end of the war Scott went on holiday to Harlech, North Wales, with a friend – the American-born photographer and student of the occult Alvin Coburn. With Harlech Castle as a backdrop Coburn took a photo of the three composers who all happened to be there at the same time: Granville Bantock, Cyril Scott and Joseph Holbrooke (Fig. 0.1).

In her biography of her father, Myrrah Bantock wrote her impressions of Cyril Scott:

As a young man Cyril Scott was quite incredibly handsome. He was slim, always elegant, very intense and very much aware of the impression he strove to create. I never remember seeing him move quickly. He drifted, walking and sitting with the studied grace of a Beau Brummel. He wore the most expensive tie-pins, watch-chains and rings. During the day he was seldom seen. He worked on his music and read books on reincarnation and strange cults. In the afternoons he slept, and on his door would be pinned a notice:

DO NOT DISTURB. I AM IN AN ASTRAL SLUMBER.

We all thought highly of Scott's music. It was exotic, poetic, beautiful and full of fantasy with a characteristic sense of refinement. It was Scott's harmonic idiom that captivated us in those days.¹¹

World War 2, by contrast, was a difficult time for Scott. By then it was rare for a major orchestral work of his to be performed, and one or two songs and a few short piano pieces were all that was heard. It had been thought that as soon as war was declared London would be heavily bombed. People were desperate to go anywhere, as long as it was out of the city, and the family split up. Father took us children down to his sister Mabel's house in Somerset, and Mother went to her friend Melanie Mills, in Sussex.

Once I was back at school and Vivien had gone to join the WAAF, Father left our aunt's home and spent the war years going from one guest-house to another throughout Somerset and Devon. He was sixty, in poor health, short of money, and believed he would not live to see seventy. Without a piano to help him compose, he began in 1942 writing a lengthy memoir with the revealing title *Near the End of Life*. In addition, he revised all his earlier poetry, added new poems, and called the volume *The Poems of a Musician*. During this period he also wrote six full-length plays and a sixty-page document entirely in doggerel, complete with proposed illustrations, that he called *The Rhymed Reflections of a Ruthless Rhymmer*.

In a guest-house in Devon in 1943, Scott met Marjorie Hartston, who was recuperating from a disastrous early marriage. They became friends, and he was delighted to discover that she was clairvoyant. By the time the war ended they had decided to stay together. Through her he was able to re-establish psychic contact with his spiritual guru (with whom there had been no communication for some time), while she discovered her purpose in life. Scott wrote about this new friendship to Percy Grainger, who, with extraordinary generosity, had already decreed that his English royalties were to go to Scott, since money could not be taken out of Britain during wartime. Grainger now suggested that Scott should borrow, rent-free, a small bungalow he and Ella owned in Pevensey Bay, near Eastbourne, until the pair found something more permanent. Eventually Cyril and Marjorie bought a house together in Eastbourne, at 53 Pashley Road. Though they never married, Cyril at first claiming Marjorie as his 'ward', he later had her change her name officially to Marjorie Hartston-Scott. Still, my parents did not divorce. Though separated, they remained friendly, writing to each other regularly and commiserating with each other over publishers and financial problems.

¹¹ Myrrha Bantock, *Granville Bantock – A Personal Portrait* (J. M. Dent, 1972), p. 134.



Figure 0.2 The church in Pevensy where Scott is buried

Scott's final decades were as productive as his early ones. Fully aware that he would hear almost none of it, music still poured out of him. He produced a symphony which he designated the second, but was in fact his fourth (1951/2); a full-length opera, *Maureen O'Mara* (1946); and the hour-long *Hymn of Unity* (1947). There were also three string quartets, two string quintets, a Sinfonietta for organ, harp and strings, a cello sonata, a piano sonata and three violin sonatas. He also continued to write prose, the most important works of this period being *Die Tragödie Stefan Georges*,¹² *The Boy Who Saw True*¹³ and *Man the Unruly Child*. There were

¹² *Die Tragödie Stefan Georges: ein Erinnerungsbild und ein Gang durch sein Werk* (Eltville am Rhein: L. Hempe, 1952).

¹³ *The Boy Who Saw True* (Neville Spearman, 1952).

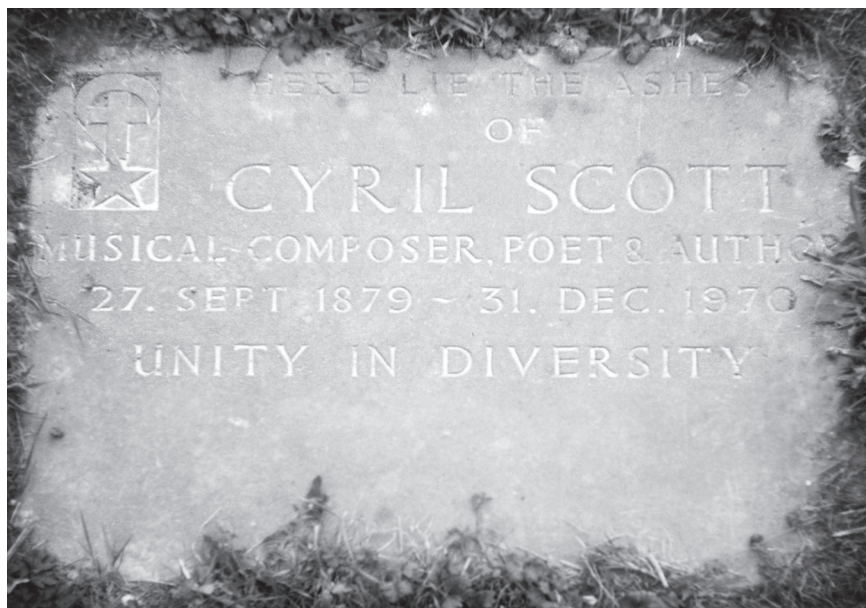


Figure 0.3 Scott's gravestone, bearing his motto, 'Unity in Diversity'

two books on health – *Simpler and Safer Remedies for Grievous Ills*¹⁴ and *Medicine, Rational and Irrational*¹⁵ – plus pamphlets on cider vinegar, black molasses, sleeplessness and constipation.

In 1964 the Cyril Scott Society was formed, with Sir Thomas Armstrong as President, 'to promote performances and recordings of Scott's music'. Sadly, the Society was short-lived.

Though the lack of interest in his music pained my father, it never made him bitter. Perhaps his deep belief in occultism sustained him, for he continued composing and revising until three weeks before his death at ninety-one. He was an unusually accepting man and, as he said to me, 'If my music is worth anything, sooner or later it will be played. If it is not, better it not be heard.'

On the last day of 1970 he died; he was buried in the churchyard at Pevensy Bay (Fig. 0.2). The simple tombstone (Fig. 0.3) reads:

HERE LIE THE ASHES OF
CYRIL SCOTT
MUSICAL COMPOSER, POET & AUTHOR
27 SEPT. 1879 – 31 DEC. 1970
UNITY IN DIVERSITY

¹⁴ *Simpler and Safer Remedies for Grievous Ills* (Athene Publishing, 1953).

¹⁵ *Medicine, Rational and Irrational* (True Health Publishing, 1946).

Acknowledgements

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Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders; apologies are offered for any omissions, and the publisher will be pleased to add any necessary acknowledgements in future editions.

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Editors' Note

CYRIL Scott's many and varied interests afford a perfect example of his motto, Unity in Diversity. The intent of this book is to give in one volume a broad picture of his entire output – musical, literary, dramatic and philosophical. The volume therefore includes discussion of works hitherto completely unknown. We hope it will lead readers – who may be acquainted with only one aspect of Scott's œuvre, be it musical, literary or the immensely popular health books – to look further and discover just how much more there is to learn about this remarkable man. The varying approaches of the different contributors can, in our opinion, only enhance the material discussed. Readers interested in another approach are further directed to *The Aesthetic Life of Cyril Scott*, by Sarah Collins, published by the Boydell Press in 2013.

This is not intended primarily as an academic textbook, being as much for the general reader as for the scholar. But those interested in performing the music, from beginning students to amateur musicians and dedicated professionals, will find the listing of Scott's work, divided into separate categories, an indispensable reference work for years to come.

Inevitably there is a measure of repetition from chapter to chapter, but this has been deliberately retained in the interest of the integrity of each account.

I

SCOTT IN CONTEXT

From Frankfurt with Love: Friendships Observed through Correspondence and Reminiscence*

STEPHEN LLOYD

ON 17 February 1947, in a 'Round Letter to Friends', Percy Grainger wrote in his characteristic if quirky 'Blue-eyed (Nordic) English':

All men ... are trained to think of themselves as ONE-BODIES ((persons)) & LONE-HANDERS ((individuals)), when, in real-hood ((reality)), we are merely pack-beasts (like the poor wolves). The 5 limbs of the 'Frankfurt Group' (Scott, Quilter, Gardiner, Sandby, Grainger) think of themselves as 5 OTHERY ((different)) tone-wrights. In real-hood we are just one 5-fold man, struggling to voice the heart-stirs of Blue-eyed Man at the turn of the hundred-year-stretch ((Century)). Today we may think we see other-hoods of mood, style & taste between Scott & Sandby, Roger & Gardiner. But in 200 years time all our toneries will seem heart-breakingly alike. (Our business is to strive that it will SEEM AT ALL.) All this MEUM-&-TEUM is flounderingness.

Cyril Scott, Percy Grainger and their friends and contemporaries have often been classified as the 'Frankfurt Group', a term chiefly of convenience with which to denote the coterie of expatriate composers who, by studying abroad, stood apart in outlook and education from the mainstream of the conservative British musical establishment at the turn of the century.¹ This term does not apply to the pianists Frederic Lamond and Leonard Borwick, who preceded Scott & Co.; to fellow English students Herbert Golden² and Thomas Holland-Smith, who studied at the same time as Scott; or to others such as the Australian composer and pianist F. S. Kelly, who followed afterwards. Nevertheless, there may be some confusion as to the actual composition of the Group, since Grainger admits the Danish cellist Herman Sandby³ to his list, while noticeably absent is the name of Norman O'Neill, who had died tragically in 1934 as the result of a road accident. Grainger may well

* This article is an expansion of 'Grainger and the Frankfurt Group', my contribution to the Percy Grainger Centennial volume of *Studies in Music* (no. 16, 1982), pp. 111–18. I would like to acknowledge Laurie Sampsel's *Cyril Scott – A Bio-Bibliography* (Greenwood Press, 2000), which has been an invaluable source in the writing of this article.

¹ Grainger warned Sir Thomas Armstrong against regarding the Group as a body of conformists; they were, he insisted, 'united only by their hatred of Beethoven'. Armstrong, 'The Frankfurt Group', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 17 November 1958, p. 2.

² Scott dedicated his *Three Frivolous Pieces* for piano (Forsyth, 1903) to Herbert Golden.

³ (Peter) Herman Sandby (1881–1965), Danish cellist and composer.

have been thinking of the 'living limbs' of the Group, but even though Scott properly numbers O'Neill among this gathering and writes warmly about him in his later autobiography⁴ (his *Danse nègre* of 1908 is dedicated to Norman and Adine O'Neill), his name is omitted from the title page of Scott's first autobiography, *My Years of Indiscretion* (1924), which is dedicated to Grainger, Quilter and Gardiner as 'the friends of my student-days',⁵ a dedication that may itself appear odd because Scott's and Gardiner's periods of study at Frankfurt did not officially overlap.

Much of this confusion arises through the varying ages of the members of the Group. These spanned some seven years, as a result of which at no time were they all studying together at Frankfurt. By the end of 1896 Grainger was fourteen, Sandby was fifteen, Scott was seventeen (Fig. 1.1), Quilter and Gardiner nineteen, and O'Neill twenty-one. When Scott arrived in October 1896, Gardiner had left to enter Oxford. A year later, as Quilter and Sandby were near completing their first calendar year of study, O'Neill too had left. Sandby was to remain more a close acquaintance of Grainger's; O'Neill (whom Grainger referred to in a 1955 letter to Scott as 'a tame cat') was on much friendlier terms with Balfour Gardiner, who became his close neighbour in London – they lived almost opposite each other in Pembroke Villas.

Table 1.1 may help clarify the matter of attendance at the renowned Hoch Conservatoire.⁶ The numbers represent the semesters each member attended, as officially recorded by the Conservatoire (two a year, commencing in September and April), but this takes no account of periods of private study or extended stay. Blank, unshaded sections denote periods when they were in Frankfurt for 'unofficial' private reasons. As this table shows, Scott was the first of the Group to study at Frankfurt and, unlike any of the others, had two distinct periods during which he was enrolled at the Conservatoire.

Quilter's biographer, Valerie Langfield, has written that he spent four and a half years at Frankfurt but adds that the precise period is 'debatable'.⁷ Scott wrote to Grainger on 8 October 1899 urging him to prevent Quilter from returning to England; according to Scott, Quilter was still in Frankfurt in January 1900, when his First Symphony was performed in Darmstadt. There is some uncertainty too about Grainger's actual period of study. At one point he broke off study with Iwan Knorr, his appointed professor of composition, in favour of Karl Klimesch, an amateur musician. But, as Grainger's biographer, John Bird, has stated, it is not possible to ascertain for certain how long he studied with Knorr. In the spring and summer of 1900 Grainger took an extended holiday in Italy, France, Holland, England and Scotland with his mother, Rose, who was recovering from a nervous breakdown. In the autumn he resumed his piano studies (with James Kwast) and his private lessons with Klimesch. However, a further breakdown necessitated that he become

⁴ *Bone of Contention* (Aquarian Press, 1969).

⁵ In *My Years of Indiscretion* (Mills & Boon, 1924), O'Neill receives only a single mention – that he 'left fairly soon after my arrival' (at Frankfurt). Scott's study of humour, *The Ghost of a Smile* (Andrew Dakers, 1939), dedicated to Grainger, Quilter and Gardiner as 'my three oldest friends', was published after O'Neill's death.

⁶ This table is adapted, with acknowledgement, from the one in Peter Cahn's article 'Percy Grainger's Frankfurt Years', *Studies in Music* 12 (1978), p. 110.

⁷ Valerie Langfield, *Roger Quilter: His Life and Music* (Boydell, 2002).



Figure 1.1 Scott the young dandy at seventeen, in Frankfurt

Table 1.1 The number of Conservatoire semesters per academic year attended by members of the Frankfurt Group (and fellow students)

	1891– 1892	1892– 1893	1893– 1894	1894– 1895	1895– 1896	1896– 1897	1897– 1898	1898– 1899	1899– 1900	1900– 1901	1901– 1902
Scott	2	2				2	2	2			
O’Neill		1	2	2	2	2					
Gardiner				2	2						
Grainger					2	2	1	2	1		
Quilter						1	2	1	?		
Sandby						1	2	2	2	1	
Franckenstein						2	1				

the family bread-winner and earn his living as a pianist, by performing and teaching. Mother and son left for England in the summer of 1901. Balfour Gardiner's stay in Frankfurt was considerably extended by private study, then in 1900 he went on to another conservatoire in Germany to study conducting. Even so, while the table should be treated with a degree of caution, at least it gives a general picture of the period of study enjoyed by the five normally regarded as constituting the Frankfurt Group, with the addition of two fellow students.

Born on 27 September 1879 in Oxton, a few miles from Birkenhead on the Wirral Peninsula, Cyril was the third and last child in the Scott family, with an elder sister, another boy having died in infancy. His father worked in shipping but his chief claim to fame was as an authority on biblical Greek. It was his mother who showed the musical instinct; she was a reasonably competent pianist. Apparently Cyril could play the piano before he could talk: 'I was always clamouring to be lifted on to the piano stool, after which I would play by ear till exhausted.'⁸ Consequently, when only twelve years of age, 'one winter's morning in 1891' he was taken by his mother to Frankfurt, principally to study the piano, together with his sister, for whom a place was found 'in a school in a near-lying Spa'. As Cyril's mother spoke no German, they were accompanied by a German spinster returning home via Frankfurt, who kindly helped them in the snow to find a suitable pension for Cyril. Over a meal at the chosen guest-house, some fellow occupants recommended that, before returning, Mrs Scott take her son to hear *Lohengrin* at the city's opera house, and Cyril was duly introduced to Wagner.

Although in his earlier autobiography, *My Years of Indiscretion* (1924), Scott chose to bypass his childhood years and hardly mentions this first visit to Frankfurt, he gives a detailed account in his much later 'life story and confessions', *Bone of Contention* (1969). There he writes of the rather unnerving experience of being auditioned by the austere and 'awe-inspiring' principal, Dr Bernard Scholz, a 'frightening apparition' in front of whom he was first required to play on the platform of the Conservatoire's empty concert-hall before being subjected to an aural test. All of this was then repeated after one of the professors had been summoned and, although he was officially too young for the Conservatoire (thirteen being the minimum age), because of 'the young Herr's unusual talent' an exception was made in his case and he was accepted. His piano professor was the Italian Lazzaro Uzielli (who became a naturalised German); fellow pupil Thomas Holland-Smith, some fourteen years Scott's senior (who became a life-long friend), acted as interpreter as Uzielli spoke no English. For theory he had the 'painfully ugly' Engelbert Humperdinck (who left in 1897), and for his general education Conrad Schmidt, presumably at the preparatory school that was associated with the Conservatoire.

Mrs Scott clearly had sufficient belief in her son's musical ability to make the journey to Germany without any certainty of his being admitted to the Conservatoire, but it is all the more surprising that a boy of such a tender age should be uprooted from his home background, taken to a foreign country and left in the care of strangers when as a child he suffered – through no fault of his 'wise and understanding parents' – an 'unhappy existence' because of 'very poor health and inner sensitivity'. He was subject to 'countless fears ... of being scolded ... of the dark, of thunder,

⁸ *Bone of Contention*, p. 19.

of accidents', and had frequent fits of melancholy. These 'painful idiosyncrasies' he only revealed in old age in *Bone of Contention*.⁹ Yet music 'never ceased to be the one absorbing interest', and his first stay in Germany, which lasted eighteen months, 'during which time I did not return to England even in the long summer holidays', seems to have passed without anxiety. For the first of his vacations, at Easter, he was invited to visit his sister at her girls' school, where 'she was enjoying a more or less happy existence'.

Once he was back home after his first Frankfurt stay, teachers for harmony and counterpoint and for the piano were found for him, as well as a private tutor for this 'freak of a son who was too sensitive to be sent to school'.¹⁰ As this tutor lived some distance away Cyril had a lengthy daily walk.¹¹ However, one day on this walk he was noticed by Hans Lüthy, a middle-aged Swiss gentleman who introduced himself at a musical soirée and in due course became his mentor and one of a number of people who were to have a strong influence on him. Cyril dedicated the song *The Time I've Lost in Wooing*, composed in July 1893, to Hans Lüthy and his wife, Carrie. Lüthy was a pronounced agnostic and before long Cyril adopted a similar outlook.

Until he was sixteen Scott had, in his own words:

serious intentions of becoming a pianist, and of going to Leschetizky in Vienna for 'a few finishing touches'; but towards my seventeenth year I entirely altered my views and preferred a composer's career instead. For that reason I decided to go to Iwan Knorr at Frankfurt, and seriously to take up the study of composition.¹²

At the same time, he realised that he was quite unread, 'so during the next three years Mr Lüthy posted to Frankfurt such books as he deemed essential "for the good of my soul"'.¹³ Lüthy retired to Vevey in Switzerland, on the northern shore of Lake Geneva, and Cyril visited him there. It was a friendship that lasted some twelve years, only ending when Cyril showed too serious an interest in one of Lüthy's daughters.

Scott commenced his second period of study at Frankfurt in the autumn of 1896, his principal professors being Uzielli once again and Iwan Knorr.¹⁴ It was then that he was to form important friendships that would last a life-time. Nearly sixty years later, in January 1956, he gave a twenty-minute talk for the BBC on those friends – the members of the 'Frankfurt Group'.¹⁵ He began:

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–5. Grainger, who was thirteen when he arrived at Frankfurt, had of course his mother in attendance.

¹⁰ *Bone of Contention*, p. 57.

¹¹ He and his father walked the two and a half miles to the Birkenhead Ferry, after which Cyril craftily pocketed the bus fare he was given for the remainder of the journey.

¹² *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 12.

¹³ *Bone of Contention*, p. 61.

¹⁴ In 1925 Uzielli made the journey to Essen for the premiere of Scott's opera *The Alchemist*.

¹⁵ 'The Frankfurt Group: Talk by Cyril Scott', 5 January 1956, BBC Home Service, 19:50–20:05. Annotated typed script given to me by Sir Thomas Armstrong, 24 April 1992.

The 'Frankfurt Group' consisted of Roger Quilter, Balfour Gardiner, Norman O'Neill, Percy Grainger and myself. It was in Frankfurt that we all met for the first time, as students, and formed friendships that lasted throughout our lives – that is, until death brought some of them to a close; for only two of the group now remain, Percy Grainger and myself. In those days – around the eighteen-nineties – the Frankfurt Conservatoire had already become famous for its excellence.

He went on to describe his composition teacher, Iwan Knorr, for whom he had much admiration and who had been his main reason for making his second visit to Frankfurt:¹⁶

He was really a German, though he had lived many years in Russia, and looked rather like a Russian. He was in his early forties, and incidentally had known Tchaikovsky who had influenced his entirely unacademic outlook. In fact he was noted for his broadmindedness ... He had always told us that although we must learn the rules, it was not to stick to them for ever but to know how to break them with discretion and taste. This 'doctrine' I followed later on with less restraint and discretion than did Quilter, O'Neill and Gardiner ... Knorr was a splendid teacher in every way; he seldom lost his temper but administered all reproofs by witty sarcasms – much to the discomfort of some of the female pupils in the classes. Where actual composition was concerned, if we were disgruntled at having to change some of our most cherished bits, he would often say: 'Write what you like for your own enjoyment. But, as what you bring to the lesson is for learning-purposes only, do not write it with your heart's blood.'

Next Scott discussed the individual members of the Group:

Roger Quilter was one of the most original and entertaining characters I have ever met. What with his gestures and his humour, if he had not been a musician he would have made an excellent comedian, for he had a type of wit entirely his own. Moreover he exuded refinement and charm. In spite of this, being essentially tender-hearted, he was always getting into trouble with his successive landladies because he would insist on feeding the birds. For unfortunately the birds were not content just to feed off his crumbs but would leave on the window-sill certain indications of their visits, which so enraged the landlady that one day she stormed into his room and said (in German): 'This is not to be tolerated. Very unrefined!' After that Quilter looked out for other apartments. 'Really!' he said. 'Such hard-heartedness. The poor little birds.' His next landlady, a snobbish Frau Doktor Somebody or other, he contrived to offend in a different way. There was at that time a new and rather expensive metal called Kaiser Zinn, out of which various elegant ornaments and vessels were made. Thinking to please the Frau Doktor, the generous Quilter gave her some of those ornaments for Christmas. But instead of being pleased she was insulted because, she said, it wasn't real silver.

¹⁶ Scott's *Trio in E moll*, Op. 3 (1900), bore the dedication 'To Prof Iwan Knorr in profoundest gratitude and affection'.

Of Quilter's talents, Iwan Knorr remarked: 'He will never be a great composer. But his compositions will be as charming as he is himself.'

Balfour Gardiner was a very different type, yet just as individual in his own way. In contrast to the tall, pale-faced Quilter, Gardiner was a rosy-complexioned young man who spoke with an Oxford accent and amused us all with what might be described as his good-natured cantankerousness. He appeared to be in a constant state of dissatisfaction with everything, especially with his own compositions. In fact this hyper-critical attitude was in a sense to prove his undoing, for in the end he largely gave up composing and took to forestry instead. And yet Iwan Knorr said he was one of the most intelligent pupils he ever taught ...

After Gardiner left Frankfurt, he thought that 'just for fun', as he said, he would go in for a music exam at Oxford. 'I was hopelessly ploughed', he afterwards told us. 'They put me such silly questions. One was "Why was Schumann a great composer?" As I don't agree that Schumann was a great composer, what could I say?' And that was that. Gardiner's likes and dislikes were never the conventional ones.

About **Norman O'Neill** I have to be somewhat brief, for in our student days I saw far less of him than I did in after life. Although we were both pupils of Iwan Knorr's, we did not attend the same classes, and for another thing he was a man who seemed to take everything and everybody, including myself, as a huge joke, which made it difficult to discuss with him anything at all serious – and in those days I took life very seriously. Not that his chronic mirthfulness was the sign of a frivolous nature; far from it, for he had a very good brain. And certainly he had the Irishman's genius for witty metaphor. I remember him saying of a certain gross-looking music critic (long since deceased): 'He has a face like a bad smell.' He himself, I may add, was blest with the most striking good-looks and great personal charm. After O'Neill's talents had matured, he developed an especial flair for writing music for the theatre. This was both fortunate and unfortunate in one sense; for the trouble with theatre music is that when the plays are no longer put on the music is apt to be forgotten. In consequence the name Norman O'Neill is nowadays not so very often seen on concert programmes. He died, as the result of an accident, in his fifty-ninth year.

We now come to the still-living **Percy Grainger**, who is and was even in our student days as different in character from all the rest of us as it is possible to imagine. There was hardly a single subject on which we could agree with him. Though he and I did share the same enthusiasm for certain great composers, especially Bach and Wagner. To begin with, there was our teacher. Whereas the rest of us loved and admired Iwan Knorr, Grainger disliked him and declared he had learned nothing from him at all. But what amused us most of all about the young Grainger was his fantastic ideas. Indeed, so extravagant did they seem that we could not take them seriously but regarded them as the vapourings of youth, to vanish with maturity. And yet we were quite wrong: he has retained them throughout his life. For instance, he maintains that no democrat should ever write a concerto, because that entails giving a more important part to one player than to the rest. (As I have been guilty of writing several concertos, needless to say I don't agree with him.)

Another of his strange ideas concerns the English language; he wants to abolish all French and Latin words and return to what he calls Nordic English. Thus, he thinks that instruments should be called ‘tone-tools’ – a chorus ‘singer-host’ – chamber music ‘room-music’ – a museum a ‘hoard-house’, and so on. As for Italian expression marks, he thinks that ‘molto crescendo’ should be ‘louden lots’, and in choruses ‘tenuto al fine’ ‘hold till blown’. When we have pointed out that such directions are not only inartistic but rather vulgar, he retorts: ‘I like them to be inartistic and vulgar.’ ...

And with that I must end these very inadequate thumbnail sketches of my fellow-students. And if I have said somewhat little about my unillustrious self, it is because egotism is not an attribute I could ever bring myself to admire.

* * * * *

For his second period of study in Frankfurt Scott lodged with a succession of landladies, but towards the end of his stay, in the spring of 1899, having arranged for his lessons to be confined to only two days in the week, he moved to the beautiful village of Cronberg, which lies in the foothills of the Taunus mountains, about forty-five minutes distant from Frankfurt by rail. Grainger cycled to visit him once or twice a week, and Scott would show him his latest work or they would go out for walks. Quilter was also an occasional visitor.¹⁷

Norman O’Neill was probably the first of the Frankfurt Group with whom Cyril became acquainted. O’Neill also studied with Knorr and Uzielli, and although his time at Frankfurt overlapped both of Scott’s periods of study, it was only near the end of his stay that he came across Cyril. While at Frankfurt O’Neill met his future wife, a young French girl, Adine Rückert, who was studying the piano privately with Clara Schumann.¹⁸ In June 1896, after Clara’s death, she had to return to Paris but the two kept in touch, through a lengthy correspondence and with frequent meetings in Paris or London. They were later married, in France, in July 1899. On 1 October 1896 O’Neill wrote to Adine about a ‘little English boy’ in his class, ‘only about 16, but a really great talent for composition’. He invited Scott to tea four days later, feeling it, as he explained, ‘a duty “to be kind” to him as he knows a great friend of mine (with whom I lived here) who looks after him!’¹⁹ Afterwards, he repeated to Adine, ‘He has a very great talent for composition, and such good fingers! It was rather nice to see a regular English school-boy again, & to hear all those

¹⁷ Quilter dedicated an early song, *Mond, du bist glücklicher als ich* (n.d.), ‘To Cyril Meir Scott from the composer’, and *Four Songs of Mirza Schaffy*, Op. 2 (1903), ‘In remembrance of Frankfort days’.

¹⁸ Clara Schumann was head of the Conservatoire’s pianoforte department from 1878 until 1892, when illness and increasing deafness forced her to resign. She continued to teach the piano privately.

¹⁹ Letter, 3 October 1896, from the correspondence between Norman O’Neill and Adine Rückert, London, BL, 71456–71472. The ‘great friend’ was probably Thomas Holland-Smith, with whom O’Neill shared lodgings in Frankfurt for a while.

old school expressions again!’ Later that month they played together a Schumann piece for two pianos.

At an impressionable age Scott came into contact with a number of strong personalities whose influences were to mould his thinking and behaviour. Through fellow student Clemens von Franckenstein²⁰ he met the German poet Stefan George, eleven years his senior,²¹ who instilled in Scott a love of poetry and introduced him to the verses of Ernest Dowson, many of which he was later to set.²² (His own poem, or ballad, *The Soul of Cynara* shows his admiration for Dowson’s art.)²³ George also imbued him with several artistic doctrines, two of which were to stand him in good stead in later years when his music was little appreciated: first, that ‘no artist worthy of the name ever writes for the public, but solely for art itself’; and second, that ‘every artist should be pleased when he receives adverse criticism, for to be easily understood shows one not to be worth understanding’. After the first performance of his Violin Sonata No. 1, no doubt with the latter principle in mind, Scott wrote to Roger Quilter: ‘My concert I think was certainly an artistic success especially so as all the notices were bad almost.’²⁴

A rather different outcome from this friendship was the way in which Scott modelled his appearance on George and took on the poet’s air of arrogance and show of personality. (He even imitated George’s scripted handwriting.) George invited Scott and Franckenstein to visit him at his home in Bingen, on the Rhine, and as O’Neill was a great friend of Franckenstein’s, he came too, the three of them cycling the not insignificant distance of forty miles from Frankfurt. However, although O’Neill showed due respect to his host while in his presence, he treated him ‘as a subject for mirth’ in his absence (somewhat to Cyril’s surprise and dismay), and O’Neill and George never met again.²⁵ Cyril, the youngest of the three:

²⁰ Baron Clemens von Franckenstein (1875–1942), German operatic composer and conductor, of the Moody-Manners Opera Company in England from 1902 to 1907, before taking up posts at Wiesbaden and Berlin. His brother Sir George Franckenstein became Austrian ambassador to England during the Nazi annexation.

²¹ Stefan George (1868–1933), symbolist poet and leader of a group that revolted against materialism. While in Paris in his youth he came into contact with Mallarmé and Verlaine. When he later became acclaimed by the Nazis he went into voluntary exile in Switzerland, where he died. In 1898 Scott set six of his verses as *Sänge eines fahrenden Spielmanns*, Op 1. Schönberg also set several of George’s verses, most notably in the song-cycle *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten* (1908), and Webern set verses from his *Der siebente Ring* (1907–8). In 1910 a translation by Scott of a number of George’s poems was published.

²² Scott did not, as has been erroneously stated, meet Ernest Dowson, who died in 1900. No such meeting is recorded in either of his autobiographies.

²³ *The Soul of Cynara*, from a volume of Scott’s poems, *The Vales of Unity*, published in 1912.

²⁴ Letter from Scott to Quilter, 7 April 1908. He added: ‘The violin sonata is by far the best thing I have done.’ The sonata was premiered at the Bechstein Hall on 24 March 1908.

²⁵ *Bone of Contention*, p. 103.

was the only one to arouse George's special interest. Several times he came to see me in my modest rooms in Frankfurt, several times he invited me to Bingen and when, during the last months of my student days I had moved with my effects to Cronberg ... he came to visit me and stayed a few days each time.

Although Scott did not respond to George's homosexual advances (about which Franckenstein had warned him), despite his admiration for the poet he began to feel ill at ease in his presence. In a moment of confession George had earlier suggested that their friendship would be much easier when Scott had passed the age of twenty-three and had 'shed those idealising elements' that George found attractive in a youth. But things came to an abrupt end one day when George told him 'never to cross his path again'. This friendship was, however, later renewed 'on a much more comfortable and secure footing', and they met at intervals in the years before World War 1.

* * * * *

In September 1897 O'Neill was back home with his parents, starting to make his living as a composer in anticipation of his marriage. A year later, after a holiday in the Tyrol with Clemens von Franckenstein, he paid a return visit to Frankfurt, and on 6 September 1898 he wrote to Adine: 'I saw some nice work of Scott's after dinner today – when I went back to his rooms. His imitation in every kind of way of S George is too comic!'

On 6 December Adine was visiting Frankfurt and she wrote to Norman, who was then in England:

I walked then with Scott who talked the whole time about himself & Stefan George. The boy is simply killing. I will tell you about it; he makes himself perfectly ridiculous as really one could think anything of that friendship. He is coming here tomorrow a'noon to play me his latest things. I ask him, knowing he hates women for the present. He said to Fis[c]her,²⁶ 'Does women make any effect on you?'

Norman replied the next day:

I wonder what Scott will turn out when he is through all these poses. He ought to find some girl who will really get him under her influence, the best thing that could happen to him!

Ten days later Adine gave a fascinating account of the regard in which many of Cyril's compositions were held and how, to her ears, they compared with Grainger's:

²⁶ Carlo Fischer (1872–1954), American cellist who studied at the Hoch Conservatoire 1894–9 and was a friend of O'Neill and the Graingers. He performed O'Neill's Cello Sonata with the composer.

Today the little Scott came.²⁷ He played me an amount of work – not all Knorr says that the quantity of things he had done since the summer is quite wonderful. A trio, a string quartett, a sonata piano & violin, a sonata piano & also etc. he played me *préludes* for the piano. Some of them are nice, some other I did not care. Then the Trio is awfully nice but the string quartette is really the best and must sound so well, so full of go, character and so clever too. I know you would like it. He gets so excited at the performance of his works. After we went together to the Graingers & we made Percy play some of his own compositions. It's awful & sounds so queer. The themes are nice but spoiled by awful discordings harmonies, the littler chap enjoys that! I played them your variations and your slow C mi piece. We had tea & Scott went to the piano and for an whole hour played Tristan & Isolde but perfectly wonderful the way he did it & he got more & more excited, got quite mad and we really were obliged to stop him otherwise we would still be there.²⁸

The humorous tenor of the correspondence, together with the difference between Cyril and Norman's ages, perhaps suggests why theirs was not to be such an intimate relationship, unlike that Scott enjoyed with Grainger and Gardiner.

Nevertheless, Cyril was a fairly frequent visitor to the O'Neills in London at 4 Pembroke Villas, and much later their daughter Yvonne was to enjoy a warm friendship with him. She came to know him when she was about sixteen, and towards the end of her life remembered him as 'an enormous influence on my life – my greatest friend of all'.²⁹ He would occasionally visit her at her boarding school and take her out – to the delight or envy of her school friends, who were fascinated by this person in black hat and cape. Then, while she was sixteen and seriously ill, confined to bed for many weeks with heart trouble, Cyril came nearly every Monday with Lily of the Valley (its smell apparently being good for the heart), two books and some sweets, and, in keeping with the various health cures that he was interested in, he would recommend homeopathy to her. He was a frequent correspondent. She often went to tea with him and his wife, Rose, when they lived in London at Ladbroke Grove, and when she was having boyfriend problems he would give her advice on such topics as jealousy and envy.

The interior of Scott's house was something no visitor could forget. The first feature to be encountered was a sculpture in plaster of himself by Derwent Wood,³⁰ then there were the stained-glass windows and his uncomfortable Gothic furniture, both of which he designed and had made in imitation of the German artist Melchior Lechter; his own murals adorned the walls, there was a green grand piano with gold designs, and a talking parrot that he kept for many years, which would surprise

²⁷ A curious adjective to use, as Scott was then nineteen.

²⁸ 17 December 1898. Some small corrections to Adine's punctuation have been made for ease of reading; otherwise her idiosyncratic English has been left unchanged.

²⁹ Yvonne Hudson (*née* O'Neill, 1916–1996), in conversation with me at her home in Guildford, 8 September 1991.

³⁰ Francis Derwent Wood (1871–1926). The original bronze was first exhibited in the Fourth Exhibition of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers (London) in 1904.

the visitor with sudden and rather rude interjections. Scott dedicated a humorous piano piece, the scherzo *Miss Remington* (1934), to Yvonne, its title referring to the then familiar advertisement depicting a secretary named after the typewriter manufacturer; earlier her mother, Adine, had been the dedicatee of the piano piece *Intermezzo* (Elkin, 1910).

In 1903 Adine O'Neill was appointed head music mistress of St Paul's Girls' School, with which she was associated for thirty-four years. (Norman O'Neill wrote the music for the school song.) The *Saint Pauls Girls School Book, 1904–1925* records that in 1908 Mrs O'Neill 'gave the first audition at which her pupils played selections from the works of Cyril Scott and Norman O'Neill'. But it seems that a few years later the suitability for young girls of Cyril's popular piano pieces was being challenged. It may have been after a school concert that Thomas Dunhill wrote to Adine on 28 August 1915:

I feel it is a little difficult to answer your question without seeming to say something which might be construed into a very small & merely personal prejudice – & I am especially diffident when the composer is a brother Englishman! But you ask me frankly & I feel I must answer frankly – & I hope you will believe that I am a person without any jealousy of any kind – which is the sober truth. But I do think those little pieces of Cyril Scott which so many of the girls played are very unhealthy & of no particular educational value. They are of course very clever – but I somehow feel that to give such music so extensively in a school is a little analogous to dosing the girls with literature such as, say, Oscar Wilde. This being my opinion I did not feel I could give an honest report without expressing it.

The outcome of this exchange is not known.

* * * * *

The member of the Group with whom Scott was to have the closest and longest-lasting friendship was Percy Grainger. They met at the home of Grainger's teacher, Karl Klimesch, to whom Percy had turned after falling out with Iwan Knorr. The Klimesch family had 'raved about the sweet & gifted little boy [Cyril] had been on his first stay', and Klimesch's daughter Pauline was keen to bring them together.³¹ In an eightieth-birthday broadcast tribute to Cyril, Percy remembered the occasion: 'When we met the person who introduced [us] said, "Percy's writing a concerto." And Cyril Scott said to me, "Do you know anything about musical form?" and I said, "No." He said, "Well, you can't call it a concerto." And that was the beginning of our friendship!³² In that eightieth-birthday tribute Grainger went on to refer to Scott as a 'man

³¹ 'My First Meeting with Cyril Scott', in *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, ed. by Malcolm Gillies, David Pear and Mark Carroll (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 87.

³² WQXR (New York) broadcast, 1959. The 'person who introduced us' was Pauline Klimesch, daughter of Karl Klimesch (*Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, p. 87). As regards the piece, a piano-concerto movement in C minor (1896) by Grainger, edited by John Lavender and orchestrated by Benjamin Woodgates, received its first

I have admired all my life and a man who really made me a composer'. He spoke warmly of the 'great deal of compassion in his music', and how he was 'benevolent, kindly and helpful to other people'.

Scott and Grainger were the original thinkers of the Group, and acted in many ways as sounding-boards for each other's creativity. Sir Thomas Armstrong has written that 'there is no doubt that Cyril Scott was a musician of truly original mind',³³ and the conductor Basil Cameron, who had a close association with the Group, said in a BBC broadcast that 'there is no doubt that Cyril Scott's flamboyant originality in his music and his enthusiasm for experiment spurred Grainger on to carry into effect a whole train of innovations in musical composition that were already stirring in his mind.'³⁴ Even Scott's professor of composition, Iwan Knorr, remembered him as 'brilliant, revolutionary', and elsewhere Grainger generously acknowledged his debt to Scott:

It seems to be as if I might never have been a modernist composer but for my contact with Cyril Scott. When he found me ... I was writing in the style of Handel & seemed to know nothing of modern music. 'Aren't you interested in writing modern music?' he said to me. 'What do you mean by modern music?' I answered. He played me Grieg's Ballade & Tchaikovsky's Theme and Vars (both quite new to me). Then, his own modernist music was a fiery awakener of my own modernistic powers. It is true that, as a boy of 11 or 12, in Australia, I had heard in my head my Free Music, made up of beatless lilts, gliding interval-less tones & non-harmonic voice-leading. But this early tone-vision had no connection with the conservative composing I was doing in Frankfurt in the pre-Scott days. So ... one may say that I never would have become a modernist composer without Cyril Scott's influence. But my influence upon him, in a modernising sense, was soon to become equally great. My discordant diatonic harmonies ... were an influence. Still more so my irregularly-barred music ... which, after a few years, led Scott to ask my permission to take up this aspect into his own music, with results seen in his Piano Sonata op 66 & numberless other works. His extremely discordant harmonic style ... was, I think, evolved without influence from me. It, in turn ... influenced my discordance in 'The Warriors' & the Pastoral in the Suite 'In a Nutshell' [inscribed 'For my dear comrade in art and thought Cyril Scott'].³⁵

It was a two-way traffic of influence and admiration. Grainger could write of Scott's 'amazing genius' during the Frankfurt days and how he 'outsoared all others in composition';³⁶ Scott in turn wrote to Grainger in 1911: 'Saturday was a gorgeous

performance by Penelope Thwaites and ensemble at Kings Place, London, on 8 October 2014.

³³ Armstrong, 'The Frankfurt Group', p. 3.

³⁴ 'Percy Grainger (born July 8, 1882)', broadcast talk by Basil Cameron, *BBC Music Magazine*, 6 July 1952. Extract rebroadcast 30 June 1968.

³⁵ 'English-Speaking Leadership in Tone-Art', in Thomas Slattery, *Percy Grainger: The Inveterate Innovator* (Instrumentalist Co., 1974), pp. 270–1.

³⁶ John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (Elek, 1976), p. 29; reprinted edn (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 33.

time for me – for Heaven’s sake let’s repeat it often – it is more help to me, hearing your work, than anything on earth.’³⁷ And in 1936 he acknowledged that ‘Grainger influenced me, not so much by the colour and texture of his music as by his ideas. To him I certainly owed the idea of writing in irregular rhythm.’³⁸

Another aspect of Scott’s broadening of the Group’s vision was touched on by Grainger in his letter to Sir Thomas Armstrong: ‘When Cyril returned to F[rankfurt]. in 1896 the books & pictorial art we got to know thru him were the plays of Maeterlinck ... the poems of Stefan George & Ernest Dowson, Walt Whitman, Aubrey Beardsley.’³⁹ How far Scott’s absorption in the artistic ferment of the 1890s affected the others in the Group is not easy to assess. Suffice it to say that on his return to Germany he brought with him an awareness of the literary movements and cross-currents both at home and on the Continent. Scott became engrossed in many *fin-de-siècle* figures. His fascination for the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists inevitably led him to Maeterlinck, whose works inspired three early orchestral pieces: the *Pelleas and Melisanda* overture, Op. 5;⁴⁰ the *Princess Maleine* overture, Op. 18;⁴¹ and the *Aglavaine et Sélysette* overture, Op. 21.⁴² (It was probably mere coincidence that, as a composer of theatre music, in 1909 O’Neill wrote incidental music for the first English production of Maeterlinck’s *The Blue Bird*.)

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Friendship was very much the Group’s unifying element, though not so much from their activities while studying at Frankfurt as from their prolonged companionships

³⁷ Letter from Scott to Grainger, 27 February 1911, quoted in Eileen Dorum, *Percy Grainger: The Man behind the Music* (IC and EE Dorum, 1986), p. 66.

³⁸ ‘Grainger and Frankfurt’, in *The Percy Grainger Companion*, ed. Lewis Foreman (Thames Publishing, 1981) p. 54. The use of irregular rhythms nearly became a contentious issue, as Grainger wrote to Karen Holten, 23 May 1907: ‘Cyril has done me the compliment of telling me that he also is going to write “irregular music”; music with irregular bars. I don’t like it; I prefer to do my own experiments myself ... I am very jealous on these matters. I so long for the world to have to say “such & such was an Australian’s discovery”.’ See *The Farthest North of Humanness: Letters of Percy Grainger, 1901–14*, ed. Kay Dreyfus (Macmillan, 1985), p. 111.

³⁹ Letter from Grainger to Sir Thomas Armstrong, 1958, quoted in the latter’s article ‘Delius Today’ in the 1962 Bradford Delius Centenary Festival programme book, p. 18. How much this was due to the influence of Hans Lüthy is uncertain.

⁴⁰ The Overture to *Pelleas and Melisanda*, Op. 5, was dedicated ‘To Herrn Willem de Haan – in grateful remembrance of January 8th 1900’ (when Scott’s First Symphony was performed). A copy was inscribed to ‘H. Balfour Gardiner wishing him the highest and greatest inspirations: – from his sincere C. S.’

⁴¹ Performed 22 August 1907 (Proms, cond. Henry Wood); revised with chorus and performed in Vienna, May 1912, conductor Franz Schrecker; and reworked as the *Daily Telegraph* prize-winning *Festival Overture* (1929–33) for orchestra, organ and chorus or orchestra alone (Queen’s Hall, 9 May 1934, cond. Adrian Boult). It was dedicated to Grainger, who experimented with various orchestrations and conducted the work himself in America.

⁴² Composed c. August 1901. (Letter to Gardiner, 28 August 1901.) Unperformed.

that remained for the rest of their lives, strengthened by correspondence and occasional meetings, even though they were each to pursue different courses. There was no rivalry, no competitiveness, but instead a readiness to bring support and encouragement to each other, with a genuine interest in each other's success. This unity was something that Grainger particularly strove to preserve, not just during his lifetime, but also for posterity in the Grainger Museum on the campus of Melbourne University. Theirs was a brotherhood, a fellowship, and the many mutual dedications and their extensive surviving correspondence testify to this. Grainger's 1947 round-letter (or 'send-writ' as he would term it) is like a rallying call from a general responsible for the morale of his troops, with a distinct element of 'the old school tie' about it.

In that same letter to Sir Thomas Armstrong, Grainger tried hard to define other, stronger, musical bonds between the members of the Group.

As I think of the other ones (Scott, Quilter, Gardiner & myself) & seek to find a characteristic that marks our group off from other British composers it seems to me that an excessive emotionality (& particularly a tragic or sentimental or wistful or pathetic emotionality) is the hallmark of our group ... All we 4 composers spoke German as fluently as English – tho not necessarily grammatically. I think it might be true that the exaggerated tenor of German emotionality had some influence on us all 4. The influence, if any, lay in the willingness to take such emotional views of things. The feelings themselves were typically English in their wistfulness and patheticness. Perhaps it might be true to say that we were all of us PRERAFaelite composers ... Under 'prerafaelite' I understand art which takes a conscious charm from what is archaic, an art in which KNIGHTS or heros are always present. And what musical medium could provide the agonized emotionality needed? ... I think the answer is 'the CHORD'. The chord has a heartrending power we musical prerafaelites needed. Based on Bach, Wagner, Skriabine, Grieg & Cesar Franck Cyril, Balfour & I became chord-masters indeed ... If the chord gave us human unity, irregular rhythms gave us the tally of English energy – that is, in fast tempos (at slow tempos irregular rhythms are, of course, hardly distinguishable from regular ones).

As Sir Thomas (who knew Grainger, Quilter, Scott and especially Gardiner) has shown, the 'chord' (which he defined as a version of a chromatic chord on the major sixth of the scale with its ninth and appoggiaturas)⁴³ was neither invented by the Group nor became their exclusive property – one only has to look, for example, to the music of Delius. Yet their thinking was essentially chordal, especially Scott's, who, as his harmonic language crystallised, made increasing use of the 1-4-7 chord (which is, in fact, the 'upper half' of Scriabin's 'mystic' *Prometheus* chord), notably to much effect in the Third Piano Sonata (1956).

At Frankfurt, as Scott explained in his first autobiography:

my ideal was to invent a species of Pre-Raphaelite music, to consist mostly of common chords placed in such a way as to savour of very primitive church

⁴³ Armstrong, 'Delius Today', p. 19.

music, thereby, as I thought, reminding its listeners of old pictures. I even wrote a Symphony and a pretentious Magnificat along these lines, and was rewarded by exciting the admiration of both Quilter and Grainger.⁴⁴

Scott's admiration for Stefan George led him to compose six songs with piano to texts by George, the *Spielmannslieder*.⁴⁵ These bear the lengthy dedication 'These few songs may the names of dearest friends adorn: Hans Lüthy, Clemens Franckenstein, H. Balfour Gardiner, T. Holland Smith [and] In remembrance of hard striving collegueship to Roger C. Quilter one of the best & dearest friends of his sincere Cyrillus'. It was Holland-Smith who had impressed on the young Scott the need for any composer of merit to have a style of his own, and during his Frankfurt years and those immediately following Scott was very much a composer in search of a style.

A small number of Scott's works were performed while he was at Frankfurt. He played his *Variations on an Original Theme*, for piano, in an examination concert in the spring of 1898, and in June 1899 an early piano trio was performed at a Conservatoire concert with Sandby and Grainger as two of the three players. But his first orchestral venture had to wait until after he had left Frankfurt, when his first symphony, completed April 1899, was given at Darmstadt on 8 January 1900. This performance came about through the influence of Stefan George, who was the son-in-law of Willem de Haan (1849–1935), conductor at the Darmstadt opera house. Scott repaid this kindness by dedicating the symphony 'In the truest friendship + admiration to the Poet Stefan George to whose art I am indebted for many of my best and most religious ideas'. When Scott played the work on the piano to de Haan the latter confessed that some of it was rather too modern for his taste, but he nevertheless agreed to its being performed the next season. Early in 1899 Scott wrote to Gardiner about the progress he was making with the symphony:

My dear Balfour

I was indeed glad to get your letter & to hear such good news of Percy. It is well you get on together & I am in expectation of your own new work ... Of the Symphony I am doing three movements at once. 1st Andante & Finale. The Final[e] is very strong & ugly, modulates a lot & is very extravagant. I have done most of the Andante. On Friday I sent Percy a cantilene for Cello, something for Sandby. I certainly put all my lifeblood into it & it seems very good[.] If you visit him you will see it. Otherwise nothing new.⁴⁶

On 26 June, from Brussels, he wrote excitedly to Percy that de Haan admired both the symphony and the *Spielmannslieder*. On 29 August, from Oxtou, he wrote that de Haan wanted him to conduct the work himself at Darmstadt. Another letter, dated 2 October, concerned 'instructions for copying symphony wanted urgently by de Haan', to be followed on the 8th and 11th by two more relating to 'copying

⁴⁴ *My Years of Indiscretion*, pp. 25–6.

⁴⁵ *Sänge eines fahrenden Spielmanns von Stefan George* (August, 1899).

⁴⁶ Written in Stefan George's printed style, possibly April 1899.

instructions'.⁴⁷ Cyril returned to Germany the day before the first rehearsal of the symphony, only to be met with problems. First, it turned out that the copyist had failed to complete his task, and consequently Cyril and Percy had to sit up all night preparing the parts before taking a very early train to Darmstadt the next day. The plan had been for de Haan to conduct the first rehearsal and for Scott to take over the second rehearsal the following day and the performance. But it soon became clear that Scott did not yet have the necessary experience, and de Haan conducted in his place. Quilter was still in Frankfurt, as were Grainger and his mother, and they came to the concert together with Gardiner, Iwan Knorr, Stefan George and Hans Lüthy, who had travelled from Liverpool especially for the occasion. By all accounts the work had a mixed reception, with some hissing mingled among the applause. 'One ought to play that to the Boers,' Gardiner overheard someone say, 'then they'd run as far as the Equator.'⁴⁸

Fortunately, the existence in the Grainger Museum of the manuscripts of some of Cyril's early works has enabled them to be resurrected and recorded, and the Chandos CD of the First Symphony has shown it to be a most approachable and delightful work, with an especially expressive pastoral second movement *andante*.⁴⁹ The last movement, with a slight Lisztian ring dominated by a brass chorale-like figure, was presumably what would have sent the Boers running! Although in no way representative of his later music, it was nonetheless a considerable achievement for the twenty-year-old Scott, demonstrating a gift for melody and a fine command of orchestration.

There were hopes that the symphony would receive a second performance at Frankfurt, and Scott consequently prolonged his stay in Germany, spending 'three stimulating weeks with Grainger and his mother – who treated me almost as a son – stimulating because his own compositions were beginning to excite my admiration as they have done ever since'.⁵⁰ Grainger showed him his *English Dance* for orchestra, 'which gave me the most pronounced musical thrills' (Percy dedicated the work to Cyril),⁵¹ and in exchange Scott showed him his recently completed overture to *Pelleas and Melisanda*. 'The *Magnificat* was also brought out from the depths of my trunk, and at Grainger's request played on the piano – with an obligato of whistling, humming, etc. – to various musical friends who turned up for tea or supper at the Pension where we were staying.' One such person was Percy's father on a rare visit. 'Very reverent!' was his comment when Cyril had finished,⁵² at which both Cyril and Percy burst into laughter. With Cyril now a confirmed

⁴⁷ From a summary of the correspondence between Scott and Grainger, 1899–1960, Grainger's copies held in the Grainger Museum. This is an extensive correspondence, comprising several hundred letters and postcards.

⁴⁸ *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 38.

⁴⁹ CHAN 10452, BBC Philharmonic, Martyn Brabbins. Recorded October 2007. The start of the third movement, of which two pages were missing, was reconstructed by Leslie De'Ath.

⁵⁰ *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 39.

⁵¹ Gardiner also composed an *English Dance*, which he dedicated 'To Percy Grainger who first taught me "The English Dance"'.
⁵² *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, p. 22.

agnostic, reverence certainly had not been the intention.⁵³ Both works, he added, were eventually consigned to the crematorium as ‘the best and safest place for them’.⁵⁴ As it turned out, instead of the hoped-for second performance of the symphony, the overture to *Pelleas and Melisanda* was given at Frankfurt on 1 February, conducted by Max Kämpfert.⁵⁵

Illness delayed Cyril’s return home, and Stefan George invited him to Berlin where he received an entrée into George’s circle of friends. He stayed with Balfour Gardiner’s brother, the eminent Egyptologist Alan Gardiner, and his wife,⁵⁶ and while in Berlin he visited the artist Melchior Lechter, whom he had first met through George in Frankfurt and whose flat of stained-glass windows and Gothic furniture was strongly to influence him. Indeed, as he wrote, his own house was to bear ‘as close a resemblance to Lechter’s in atmosphere as it has been possible for me to reproduce’.⁵⁷ Describing Scott’s Liverpool house, Grainger wrote to his mother: ‘Cyril’s place here is 1st class, style perfect, & furniture that he has designed is simple & strong. Nice Lechter & other pics, of course the whole thing wld give me the Fantods to live in, but I appreciate it as an excellent realisation of *his* ideals’.⁵⁸ Lechter’s work was much influenced by the pre-Raphaelites and by Stefan George, several of whose anthologies he illustrated. He had an interest in music and was also an occultist. It is not surprising that a friendship ensued that lasted for several years.⁵⁹

* * * * *

Back home again with his Frankfurt studies completed, Scott divided his time between composing and practising the piano, with the intention of launching himself with a recital in Liverpool and gaining pupils to provide an income. He gave his first public recital on 18 October 1900 in St George’s Hall, Liverpool. Through the University College he struck up a close friendship with Charles Bonnier, professor

⁵³ The *Magnificat* of 1899 bears the multiple dedications: ‘To those friends without whose admiration and influence this work could never have been written: Percy, Roger, Eric, Agnes, Hans, Carry in all affection and gratitude’. Despite his agnosticism, in 1935 Scott composed an Evening Service consisting of a *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, and a *Jubilate*.

⁵⁴ The holograph full score of the (First) Symphony has in fact survived in the Grainger Museum at Melbourne (together with another copy of the full score in a copyist’s hand), as well as a piano score, in Grainger’s hand, of the *Magnificat*. See Phil Clifford, *Grainger’s Collection of Music by other Composers* (University of Melbourne, 1983).

⁵⁵ Recorded on Dutton CDLX7302 by Martin Yates and the BBC Concert Orchestra, the overture to *Pelleas and Melisanda* is a most impressive and atmospheric work.

⁵⁶ Scott dedicated the song *A Gift of Silence* (Elkin, 1905) ‘to Heddie and Alan Gardiner’.

⁵⁷ *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 42.

⁵⁸ 24 October 1902, from 129 Canning Street, Liverpool; see *The Farthest North of Humanness*, p. 18.

⁵⁹ To Melchior Lechter (1865–1937) Scott dedicated both the song *Sorrow* (a setting of Dowson; Elkin, 1904), and his *English Suite* (Suite No. 1 for Orchestra), Op. 6, completed March 1900 with the inscription ‘To Meister Melchior Lechter affectionately dedicated in profoundest admiration of himself and his art’.

of French literature, from whom he learned the art of writing verse. They shared a house in Canning Street, Liverpool, to which another close friend, the singer and composer Frederic Austin, was a frequent visitor.

Scott made many visits to Germany, and to Frankfurt in particular. (In Frankfurt he was a welcome guest of Uzielli's first wife, and at Cologne of Uzielli and his second wife.) It was probably during these return visits to Frankfurt that he got to know Balfour Gardiner. After two years at Frankfurt, Gardiner had returned home to enter New College, Oxford, in October 1896, at the same time that Scott renewed his Frankfurt studies. But he returned to Frankfurt in between the Oxford terms and he was back in Germany in the summer of 1900 for private study with Knorr. As a token of this new friendship Cyril inscribed to Gardiner a printed copy of an early song, *April Love*, 'To Henry Balfour Gardiner as a small return for the sympathy without which one could never work – May 1900', and on another song, *Ad domnu-lam suam*, 'In remembrance of Frankfurt – Xmas 1900.'

In January Gardiner went on to Sondershausen, some fifty miles west of Leipzig, where he studied conducting and had his first two orchestral performances, a symphony and an overture, neither now extant. Even when separated the Group's camaraderie, enthusiasm, mutual interest and support remained strong. Perhaps in the days of their youth their judgements not unexpectedly gave rise to some over-assessment of themselves and each other, but the strength of their friendships is particularly evident from their many mutual dedications, borrowing of ideas and themes, and from their surviving correspondence, which also provides an insight into the works in progress. They were ever keen to hear each other's works and to offer advice or criticism. Balfour Gardiner, who came from a wealthy background, was much loved and respected by the others of the Frankfurt Group, as much for his warmth and generosity as for his musicianship. Unfortunately his highly self-critical nature made him give up music in later life and not live up to the high hopes that his friends had of him as a composer. Scott in particular had great respect for him, as the following mainly undated letters indicate. They also show Scott's musical fertility and his youthful energy and excitement:

I was so glad to have seen you again & hear all your new work. Your melodies are still ringing in my ears & I am so glad to have them. This is a splendid place & I am with charming people. The weather is mending too & it promises well. But I am not inclined to write yet. No doubt you are writing a grand first movement. I wish you luck. Do write me often from Sondershausen & tell me what [you are] doing, and ever so many thanks for all your kindnesses. From your affectionate & admiring friend.⁶⁰

Percy wrote me such good news – namely that you had been doing such fine work, original & glorious, and such a change to what I heard. Well done! My dear friend – there is nobody more convinced of your genius than I was if it would only come out – and now it is doing so.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Undated letter from Ward Hill, Farnham.

⁶¹ Letter from Scott to Gardiner, [April 1901], from 64 Canning Street, Liverpool.

My dear Balfour,

Did I not tell you all along how good you were & now at last you come to believe it. It delighted me beyond words to get your letter & hear good news. There is but one pity, that is my not hearing it. Well some day no doubt I shall. I expect to come back from Switzerland about Sept. 15th. There is nothing I should like better than a day or two with you. If your Vtet is not Vtmäsigg then start again, the one idea being to make it so. I destroyed my Quartett on that account & the new movement is another thing altogether both in technique & idea. Every part has equally something to do. I just finished it yesterday. I shall see Percy on the 16th. He had a great success & is getting on well. Do write to me in Switzerland Keep me posted as to all your doings. That is all I have to say so farewell. Work on hard for one who thirsts for your beauties & genius with feverish haste.⁶²

In July 1901 there was encouragement from Grainger, writing to Gardiner:

Your lovely Eb mel. is a fine invigorator of dull moments, it takes its place among the very lovely. I had a joke with Scott about it. He says he does not like it as well as most of your other things, but when I played it among other things, he started up with 'What is that lovely thing?' etc. So you see how much one may rely on a person's opinion. I am longing to hear more of yours.

That summer, before going abroad, Scott called on Grainger and his mother, Rose, who were then living in London in Kensington. Cyril was particularly struck by one piece that Percy played to him. From Vevey, where he was staying with Lüthy, he wrote to Gardiner on 13 August 1901:

Your remarks are quite right as they always are. But, when one is in the 'erste Leidenschaft' everything is harmony. You will notice it by all, Grainger, yourself etc. When that craze is over one gets into more important things as well, makes use of the harmonic experiments in a less crude manner & later on one invents harmony again which would never be as striking though. But at any rate you will see a harmonic change in me when we meet.

Since I am here I did the Prelude to Aglavaine & Salyssette, one movement of a Piano Quartett & a Pianoforte Sonata,⁶³ the latter being the strongest if not even the best thing I have done for a long time – but I will not say much as I have lost a lot of confidence of late & tomorrow I may dislike it. After hearing Grainger's Cello piece all my work seems insipid. The boy is a genius of the first water – possessor of a strength and originality, pathos & beauty which baffles all description. And as to you well I am very anxious to hear your new work. Your idyllic phrase has been a source of great pleasure to me and many others. May there be many more like it. Write to me whenever you can & describe your work a bit, even if it be only on a postcard. I should love to see Knorr again, he always sets me straight. I am all for the Heroic at present – the p. Quartett & Piano Sonata are tremendously

⁶² Letter from Scott to Gardiner, 9 July [1901], from 129 Canning Street, Liverpool.

⁶³ Introduced by Grainger on 29 November 1901.

so – perhaps the landscape causes it. Well I shall be charmed to receive you to my house.

In *My Years of Indiscretion* Scott wrote of the cello piece (*A Lot of Rot* for cello and piano, composed March 1901, and later renamed *Youthful Rapture*):

it absolutely transported me. There was a painted, powdered pathos about it, to use my own words at the time, which haunted me with its beauty for weeks afterwards. Grainger had caught something of the sad, sentimental vulgarity of the music-hall ... And even months later it was still the memory of this music-poem which prompted me to write my 'Two Pierrot Pieces',⁶⁴ with their atmosphere of the variety stage.⁶⁵

Either that work or Grainger's similarly themed *Love Verses from 'The Song of Solomon'* must have been very much in Scott's mind when he was engaged on his early Piano Concerto in D (referred to in the next letter), as the main theme in the dreamy middle movement of this recently resurrected concerto is based on an idea that owes much to Grainger.⁶⁶ There are similarities with his *Youthful Rapture* and the *Love Verses*, too, though one must bear in mind that Percy himself has written that 'many elements in [my] early style (such compositions as *Love Verses from the Song of Solomon* & *The Inuit*) were strongly influenced by Scott's then style'.⁶⁷

From Vevey again, on 28 August 1901, Scott gave Gardiner a progress report:

The Piano Quartett is done all but a little Intermezzo which I want to place between the last two movements. Formal[ly] is it different to anything I have done. The movements are Prelude, Scherzo, Andante (Intermezzo not done) and Finale – Lento. Sonata form has arrived at the time of further development. Old methods do not satisfy me any longer. The Prelude is one great Cantilene from beginning to end, the theme coming in in different ways & different keys from time to time. It gives a tremendously bedeutend [distinguished] ring to the work. You must broaden your mind for it and not think me chaotic or formal[ly] bad for branching off in a new direction. Imagine the beginning of the Mathäus Passion in a modern style with a broad sweeping theme, then you have a vague idea of it. The 2nd & third section of the Piano Sonata do not come up to the first section so I am changing them. If it is I that bring you ideas which is doubtful there is plenty [to]

⁶⁴ *Pierrot triste*, dedicated to Ernest Thesiger, and *Pierrot gai*, dedicated to T. Holland-Smith (Boosey, 1904).

⁶⁵ *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Concerto in D for piano and orchestra, Op. 10, realised and completed by Martin Yates. Recorded November 2012 by Peter Donohoe, BBC Concert Orchestra, cond. Martin Yates. Dutton CDLX7302.

⁶⁷ 'An Untamed Buffalo', in *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger, 1914–1961*, ed. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear (Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 121. Scott has described the *Song of Solomon* as 'a choral composition replete with melodic beauty of a touching and appealing type'. See 'Grainger and Frankfurt', in *The Percy Grainger Companion*, p. 54.

show – 2 movements⁶⁸ of Piano Concerto (of which you only heard snatches & never saw) Symphonic Fantasia, 1 movement of String Quartett, Ballade of Dark Rosaleen, Prelude to Aglavaine & Selysette, Piano Sonata & Pianoforte Quartett.

* * * * *

As Scott freely admitted in *Bone of Contention*, at Frankfurt ‘I had developed some extremely unpleasant characteristics which were to cause much pain to my parents ... By the time I was nineteen I had become a most unbearable and arrogant young man’, sporting long hair and curious ties that he felt befitted an artist and a musician.⁶⁹ However, it seems that much of this arrogance had rubbed off by 1901, as Grainger wrote a little later to Herman Sandby about a visit by Scott:

There is Scott, from whom I have just had a delightful visit, who is absolutely incapable of jealousy for *anybody*, & who would do anything for poor little ME ...

Scott has grown *so very* much nicer again than he was in Frankfurt last Xmas, he is quite his dear affectionate old self once more, & charming hours we have enjoyed together. He simply *raves* about Cello-piece & is going to copy it & get it done in Liverpool privately ... He has completely changed his style once more, & now it is far greater, larger, & still finer in form. He has certainly been influenced (as regards form) by my work, & himself asserts that his present period is entirely the outcome of the Cello piece. His last things are most original, chiefly of great unbroken flow, & he has whole movements that are ‘aus einem Guss’ [a perfect whole] like 1st chorus Matthäus Passion. He has written a piano sonata for me which I consider the *only* successful modern Klavier sonata ... Then there is the Piano-quartette, simply gigantic in impression, *all* flow. The 1st movement (every instrument playing solo expresivo) rises & falls like a great SONG, the 2nd (a scherzo) is lively & beautiful & breaks out into a huge Dance-like climax at the end, melodic and rich. The slow movement I admire less, the flow is good but it is not strong inventively to my mind. 4th movement (Intermezzo) is splendid, delicate & pastoral & flowing & *ECHT* Scott.

The Finale I consider bad in form, it being Flowing yet *very* much broken-up, however there are glorious melodic bits in it. The *whole* work is nothing less than gigantic, & would sound better than *any* previous chamber music work ... Besides these is a ‘Study for an English Requiem’ merely a sketch for a big choral work he is about to begin. The sketch is unceasing melodic continuance. There is also a Cello piece that he calls privately ‘Fürchterliche Eier für Cello & Klavier’ [Frightful Eggs for Cello and Piano], it is inspired (title & music) by ‘A Lot of Rot’ & is a development of my piece in that the Cello never ceases for one moment from beginning

⁶⁸ This may relate to two items in the Grainger Museum catalogue: Study for a slow movement – No. 1 Andante; Study for a slow movement – No. 2 Largo, both on Lausanne-Vevey manuscript paper.

⁶⁹ *Bone of Contention*, p. 74.

to end, & that the flow is better & the form more consistent, but it is not perhaps so bedeutend [important].⁷⁰

Hans Lüthy was one of two friends able to pull a few strings and arrange for Scott to meet Hans Richter, conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. Cyril played through his *Heroic Suite* on the piano to this 'very elusive gentleman', who consequently conducted the first English performance of any orchestral work of his, at Manchester in December 1901, and at Liverpool a month later. (O'Neill had met Richter in October 1897 and described him to Adine as 'quite charming – a nice fat simple old German!')⁷¹ Cyril mentioned his own meeting with Richter in a letter to Balfour in November:

My dear Balfour

Thank you so much for sending me Palestrina. You do not know how Stimmungsvoll it made me – fancy your not appreciating him. He gives me ideas like anything. Let me know when you want it back I hope not soon though ... Percy is getting on grandly I am so glad. He is playing my Sonata on the 25th at a Song Festival & then later on again. I have done no work at all hardly – I don't know what has come over me. I am usually so prolific. I am too well.

I dined with Richter on Wednesday. He is a delightful old chap & very amusing indeed, awfully well disposed towards me. In L'pool he is going to move the Berlioz & put me in at the 2nd concert. So that is all in order. He talks of doing the work in Bradford & Leeds too.⁷²

Just over a month later he wrote again:

Thank you for your letter. You do not seem to be very bright & I can sympathise. For the last week I have been in the most awful Stimmung possible – if one's life was always this way it would hardly be worth living. As to the Suite,⁷³ well, that is not till tomorrow week. It might do you good to hear it. In fact I believe it would & by that time you will have got over your travels & feel on the go again most likely. However I am not going to persuade you. All I know that in my present Stimmung I am glad to see any dear friend & if you find after trying to work some time that you get no further then you had better come! I am going to London about the 27th. I shall take a room near Percy for a week so I hope to see you. I have written a jolly good Waltz [*An English Waltz*] suitable for P. & another song.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Letter from Grainger to Sandby, from 31 Gordon Place, Kensington, 27 September 1901. *The Farthest North of Humanness*, pp. 3–4.

⁷¹ Letter from Norman to Adine Rückert, 27 October 1897, in Derek Hudson, *Norman O'Neill: A Life of Music* (Quality Press, 1945; rev. ed. Em Publishing, 2015), p. 27 (p.30 rev. ed.). Seven years later Richter was to conduct the first performance of Elgar's First Symphony.

⁷² Letter from Scott to Gardiner, 2 November 1901, from 27 Albert Road, Southport.

⁷³ *Heroic Suite* (Orchestral Suite No. 2), Op. 7, performed at Manchester on 12 December 1901 and at Liverpool on 14 January 1902. Scott himself conducted the first and last movements at Bournemouth on 19 November 1903, together with the Pastorale and March from his *English Suite*, Op. 6.

⁷⁴ 4 December 1901.

Gardiner did go to hear the suite, and Scott tried to persuade him to stay for its second performance, in Liverpool, two days later:

Splendid that you come after all. But cannot I induce you to spend Friday with me in Liverpool. I could then show you my work & Bonnier goes to Paris that day & I am not off till Saturday. You would favour me greatly by doing that for then I shall not be alone. Why should you go to an hotel? ... Next year I contemplate a Symphony & am summoning all my energies for that ... Did you see the bad notice of Sonata in 'Times'. I am glad.⁷⁵

The most important work to occupy Scott's attention in 1902 was his Second Symphony, which Henry Wood had programmed for the next season's Proms. He wrote to Gardiner:

From what you say I am convinced that your Vtett⁷⁶ must be good. If you get doubtful about it send it here to me. For my own part my score of the Symphony [No. 2] is such a laborious one that it gets on but slowly. The slow movement is the one I am working on at present, the first movement not being composed yet although the ideas are more or less thought out. You will regard this certainly as the 'voluptuousness of purity' & as to polyphony it oversteps everything. The first cantilene is 56 bars in length. I hardly expect to have the whole Symphony done before the summer but I will try & get one movement done by Easter at least. I suppose you will go & hear my IVtett on Thursday next at Leighton House. It would be kind of you to write & let me know how it went.⁷⁷

The following year the Sextet for piano and strings, Op. 26, was the work with which he seemed most satisfied. With the symphony nearing completion, he was calling on Gardiner, with his sharp critical musical brain that would spot anything amiss, to give the manuscript a thorough check before the orchestral parts were made:

I am coming to London on the 11th & hope to see you about that time there & to hear anything you have done. The 6tet is by far the best chamber music I have done & harmonically is a great advance – only in 3 movements but I may add [another] for the next season Broadwood concert. In the mean time I want to begin the Requiem.⁷⁸ Forsyths are publishing the 6 pieces⁷⁹ & the 3 frivolous pieces & I expect them to be out soon. The [English] Waltz⁸⁰ appeared last Wednesday &

⁷⁵ 9 December [1901].

⁷⁶ Gardiner's String Quintet in C mi, first performed November 1903. Now lost/destroyed, though the last movement was reworked c. 1936 by Grainger as *Movement for Strings* (Schott, 1949).

⁷⁷ Undated letter, from 129 Canning Street, Liverpool.

⁷⁸ Grainger had much earlier written to Sandby, on 27 September 1901: "'Study for an ENGLISH REQUIEM" merely a sketch for a big choral work he is about to begin'.

⁷⁹ Scott's *Six Pieces* for piano, Op. 4 (Forsyth, 1903), were 'dedicated to Professors Iwan Knorr and Lazzaro Uzielli in grateful remembrance of my student days'.

⁸⁰ *An English Waltz*, Op. 15 (Novello, 1903), was dedicated to Grainger. Adine O'Neill performed it in her second Promenade appearance, on 28 September 1906.

the songs will be shortly. If you can perhaps correct the last two movements of the Symph. I should be glad before sending them to the copyist. The 1st are done & gone. Let me hear from you very shortly.

Grainger had taken up the rather flashy *English Waltz* the previous year when touring with Adelina Patti, playing it in many towns and bringing Scott's name before the public. 'Great enthusiasm after the Waltz – well-earned encore', Percy wrote to his mother after playing it in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.⁸¹ Cyril followed it with a number of piano 'trifles' that became popular and, as he later wrote, 'did me both good and harm, in that on the one hand they made my reputation and on the other hand they killed my reputation as a composer of larger and more serious works'.⁸² He was to some extent himself responsible, as he became very popular as a pianist at society functions. Eugene Goossens described him 'wearing a cravat which made him look like a good-looking reincarnation of Chopin, [an] exotic personality and lovable but aloof man [who] played his delicate piano works as no one else since has been able to play them'.⁸³ Scott was later to consider that none of his early orchestral works was satisfactory until the *Two Passacaglias on Irish Themes*, first performed in 1914.⁸⁴

Balfour Gardiner, in contrast, was not someone who found composition easy, his self-critical nature always having the upper hand, and Scott suggested that they went away to the country, to the Cheshire village of Helsby, where between them they could thrash out these problems, with Cyril offering Balfour ideas when he was at a standstill. Cyril tentatively put the idea to his friend in his next letter:

My dear old Balfour

I had not a moment to write before – so busy have only just returned from London these last days – since then very hard work. Of London this: Wood will do Symphony in the Autumn – Booseys are printing the IVtet & two songs. Dairy & Yvonne of Brittany.⁸⁵ Richter (I hear from Forsyth) will do some recent work of mine at his concerts in London next season (Autumn). The [English] Waltz will appear in a fortnight. For it I get a royalty of 2d for 1st 300 then 4d. On the songs 3d which is very good as royalties go. I also saw Stanford who spoke of you & wants to do my Heroic Suite at the Royal College. Apart from that various singers are singing [my] songs & pianists are playing [my] piano pieces.

Now as to work, dear old boy. I have used up your glorious *Steigerung* in the finale of a Piano Sextett which I am writing (I begun with the Finale). I have also written two good songs quite different from any I have done before & harmonically really good. I am working from morning till night till May & then return to London again.

⁸¹ Letter from Percy to Rose Grainger, 9 October 1902, *The Farthest North of Humanness*, p. 11.

⁸² *Bone of Contention*, p. 91.

⁸³ Eugene Goossens, *Overture and Beginners: A Musical Autobiography* (Methuen, 1951), pp. 94–5.

⁸⁴ *Bone of Contention*, p. 92.

⁸⁵ Piano Quartet, Op. 16 (Boosey, 1903); *Dairy Song* (dedicated to Quilter); and *Yvonne of Brittany* (Dowson), Op. 5 (Boosey 1903).

I heard of some delightfully cheap farm houses in Helsby. Do let us live in the summer at two separate farm houses. It would be simply ripping & we could work like hell. Write & tell me about your new work etc. as soon as you can.⁸⁶

He elaborated on his suggestion in his next letter, as Balfour, typically, was already showing some doubts as to the plan's worth:

My dear Balfour,

I was so pleased to get your letter – how delightful it will be in Helsby. But I want you to put yourself entirely in my hands. In the first place 6 weeks is not long enough. I want you to keep yourself absolutely free till Xmas. You must really do that. Your music is your first consideration & until you can get your ideas to go as they ought all else must be put aside. Why the distractions (non-musical alas) of Oxford? ... Helsby is a lovely place. In your first letter you said 6 months with me would do you good. Now it has dwindled down to 6 weeks. You seem such a mixture of weakness & strength, one day great prospects, the next day chaos, lack of enthusiasm – logical thinking out (dangerous game) do take the bull by the horns & don't complain until you have done that, do place yourself in my hands. Study as it were with me & at any rate we will get your technique in order, I will give you ideas how to go on when you get stuck to the best of my ability & even if your inspiration is not as happy as it might be you will find very soon on these lines it will pick up. Do consider this prospect very carefully or if meditating upon it has the usual disastrous effect, then don't think about it but plunge into the water head first. We will take a week's holiday in September & go to London to hear the Symphony⁸⁷ & you to see your father & then you must come back either to rooms nearer Liverpool or again Helsby. With your life & your means it is utterly ridiculous that anything should prevent you.⁸⁸

Things seemed more promising from the tone of Scott's next letter:

Thank you for your letter & suggestions. I got those delightful cans alright & will return the hamper. Yes, the rooms are taken from June 15th ... I am half way through a Finale for a string quartet – the waltz is selling well & I have another publisher on my track. The Sonata I hear & see was a great success played by Miss [Evelyn] Stuart. The 9 pieces Forsyths are doing ought to be out soon ...⁸⁹

In May the sextet was performed at the Chelsea home of Mrs Lowrey, a society hostess well known to the Frankfurt Group. Indeed, in the early years of the century an *ad hoc* chorus that might consist of Scott, Quilter, Grainger, Gardiner, Sandby, Franckenstein, Frederic Austin, Gervase Elwes, and the painter and actor Ernest

⁸⁶ Undated letter, from 64 Canning Street, Liverpool.

⁸⁷ Symphony No. 2, Promenade concert on 25 August 1903, Queen's Hall Orchestra, cond. Henry Wood.

⁸⁸ 20 April 1903.

⁸⁹ 6 May 1903.

Thesiger⁹⁰ would meet at her house to try out Grainger's part-songs. From Chelsea Scott wrote to Gardiner:

My dear old chap

When are you coming up to town? I am simply longing to see you & I have all sorts of news to tell you. Everybody is mad about my new work & your glorious steigerung finds great favour. Miss Suart the little pianist who you saw & liked at the Broadwood Concert is awfully keen & wants to meet you. They are charming people. Dear old Francky is back in town & the Sextett is on the 26th here ... Metzlers want to take over & publish all my works. Sandby is back playing better than ever. I wrote a movement of a string IVtet did I tell you. My new work is as different to the last as you could wish. I saw Richter who is going to do my things next season because he will then have room for novelties. In ten minutes we have a rehearsal of 6tet. You ought to hear one you know before the performance. Now do come up, or at any rate write.⁹¹

The sextet⁹² quite likely went through several revisions until it emerged as the Piano Quintet, because much later in life Scott wrote about that borrowed idea:

There was a theme in a Piano Trio⁹³ of [Gardiner's] which I especially liked. 'Aw,' he said distainfully [*sic*], 'I hate the thing. I'll give it to you if you can make anything of it.' The theme is now incorporated in the Piano Quintet for which I was many years ago awarded the Carnegie Prize. Perhaps save for that theme I would never have received the award!⁹⁴

Thematic borrowings and mutual influences were quite common among the Group. Gardiner's *A Sailors' Piece* for piano (dedicated to Quilter) leans heavily on Grainger's *Gumsucker's March*. A tune 'cribbed' from Scott's early unperformed *Magnificat* was given a new lease of life in Grainger's *Mock Morris*.⁹⁵ Scott's *Victorian*

⁹⁰ Ernest Thesiger (1879–1961) met Scott at Mrs Lowrey's, and his music 'was a revelation to me, and I knew at once that I had found what I had been searching for in the way of music. Till then I had thought Wagner the last word in music, but now the possibility of a new language was hinted at.' See Thesiger, *Practically True* (Heinemann, 1927), reprinted in *Portrait of Percy Grainger*, p. 39.

⁹¹ Undated letter (May 1903), from Queen's House, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, home of Mrs Lowrey, a devoted admirer of Grainger, who, at her urging, had his first sexual experience with her (*Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, pp. 95–6).

⁹² Performed 28 May 1903 in London with Grainger and Sandby among the performers. The violinist, Alice Liebmann, and Grainger were at Scott's house in Liverpool in October 1902.

⁹³ Surviving sketch, Frankfurt, August 1898. Like many of Gardiner's early works it was later lost/destroyed.

⁹⁴ 'The Late Balfour Gardiner and our Student Days: Some Reminiscences by Cyril Scott', *The Music Teacher*, September 1950. The award-winning work was the Piano Quintet No. 1, first performed in June 1920 and published in 1925.

⁹⁵ Bars 9–12. Lewis Foreman, 'Miscellaneous Works', in *The Percy Grainger Companion*, p. 138.

Waltz was built on a fragment by fellow student Thomas Holland-Smith. Grainger devoted considerable time to the 'free treatment' or revision of works by his colleagues. Scott's early piano sonata of 1901, dedicated 'to Percy Grainger as a token of intense admiration and love and in remembrance of the days of our youthful inspiration', in Percy's editorial hands became the shorter *Handelian Rhapsody*. Scott was often affected by Grainger's melodies, one example being the delicate *My Robin is to the Greenwood Gone*, whose principal tune emerges slightly transformed in the slow section of the first movement of Scott's Piano Concerto No. 1. (Scott follows Grainger's alteration to the very start of the 'Old English' tune so that the first two notes read G – G instead of the original E – G.)

It was the form of Scott's works that received the severest critical attack. In reviewing the first performance of the Piano Quintet, Edwin Evans commented on 'some lovely moments' but had some serious doubts about the structure:

It is cast in one movement, which was rather unwise of Mr Scott. To unify a work that runs on continuously for over half an hour, to distribute points of emphasis and of repose so that the hearer's attention shall never flag, to show one mood growing logically out of another, and to make the last few pages seem not a mere finish but a conclusion – not a dismissal but an exit – all this demands organic architectural power, and it is precisely this power that Mr Scott most conspicuously lacks.⁹⁶

The matter of structure and flow had come to a head with Scott's second symphony, which received its only performance under Henry Wood at the Proms on 25 August 1903. Scott's declared intention was 'to secure continuous flow, without a cadence from beginning to end of the movement', but, as *The Times* critic pointed out, he had set himself a difficult task, not merely 'of avoiding the cadence, but of making the avoidance necessary'. Robin Legge, music critic of *The Daily Telegraph* and an acquaintance of the Frankfurt Group, had some interesting observations to make on Scott in a letter to Roger Quilter on 31 August 1903:

I don't agree that C. S.'s symph. is great & you know I'm level minded enough in these things. I am quite sure he will have to modify his idea of flow for flow's sake in instrumental music. That there is much that is astonishingly brilliantly good & beautiful of course I grant you, but the music does not seem to me to be abstract music – but to be, roughly speaking, a concourse of lovely, sweet & remarkably voluptuous – almost sensuous – sound. It is decadent rather than strong – exotic if you like, & magnificent, but 'great' is a very large expression. Every man may be & no doubt is influenced by Wagner – but C S adopts – half assimilates almost the actual texture of *Siegfried*, & there is a suspicion of mannerism in much of his harmony. After all, endless melody is a mannerism, an artificiality. Mind you, & believe me, I recognise as well as you all the good things C S says & I would not want published what I say here. I am sure C S himself, no fool, will see some of it himself as he grows in age and wisdom – if he can be kept away from petticoat influence. If not, then he'll be useless to the world & to himself, for he is not the

⁹⁶ *The Sunday Times*, 13 June 1920. Aeolian Hall, London String Quartet and Evelyn Howard-Jones.

strong man that Percy is though he is in a sense more purely musical. C S must develop his mental strength: he must live & live in this world, not in the fetid atmosphere of a crowd of mutual admirers & quasi courtiers. If he will, then he will by God's grace develop into the biggest – greatest – thing we have produced. There's my sentiments for your private delectation.

Unless Legge's comments were directed mainly towards the symphony's first movement, *Andante*, which is no longer extant, his concern with flow seems less important today with regard to the other three movements, which Scott revised as *Three Symphonic Dances*.⁹⁷ But one can agree with his description of 'voluptuous – almost sensuous – sound' in the luscious slow movement, a richness which was much later to find its counterpart in Grainger's Pastoral from his suite *In a Nutshell* (1915–17). Grainger was sufficiently impressed by the three dances to arrange them for two pianos in 1922 and to record the first for a Duo-Art piano roll with Cyril while he was in America.

* * * * *

With his more refined life style, Roger Quilter was probably the member of the Group with whom Scott had the least contact. But that is not to mean that there was any lack of friendship, as a letter of April 1908 shows:

My dear old Roger

I was so glad to get your sweet letter, & to hear you will soon be back again in town. I am longing to see something of you once more like in old times.

My concert I think was certainly an artistic success especially so as all the noises were bad almost. The violin sonata is by far the best thing I have done.

... You asked me about Fauré. I love a lot of his things & met him personally in Paris two years ago.

Do let me know when you return & we will have a 'vortragsabend['] of new works. I suppose you knew that Knorr is made Director now in place of old Schulz.

Best love

Ever yrs.⁹⁸

More than mere friendship, there was a remarkable collective generosity among the Group. In July 1910 Grainger wrote to his Danish girlfriend, Karen Holten, a friend of Herman Sandby:

⁹⁷ Recorded on Chandos CHAN 10407, with Martyn Brabbins conducting the BBC Philharmonic. In the absence of the symphony's manuscript, it is difficult to determine the extent of Scott's revisions of the three movements, two of which he conducted himself at Birmingham in June 1907. If there were any, they may have been just a few judicious cuts. One similarly wonders whether his revision of *Disaster at Sea* (first performed 1933) as *Neptune* amounted to anything more than a change of title, since the *Titanic* programme is still very evident, even to the extent of a liner-motif, imitation fog-horn, Morse Code signals and clear statements of 'Nearer, my God, to Thee'.

⁹⁸ Letter from Scott to Quilter, 7 April 1908, from 274 Kings Road.

Last night I met Cyril. He looks so notably younger and fresher again, and it was a pleasure to see him like that, and the firm Schott Söhne Mainz have made an excellent contract and are going to print his orchestral and instrumental works ... Only yesterday morning I was planning that if I make a lot of money this winter that I would give the money for publishing an orchestral work of Cyril's.⁹⁹

Some of Grainger's works were also to be published by Schotts, and in February 1911 he was playing several pieces to Willy Strecker, the firm's representative. Cyril was present, and Percy wrote to Karen:

The evening of the day before was so delightful ... We were all rarely [*sic*] happy. Cyril was so enthusiastic for me and of course infected Strecker by it, Cyril without a *spark* of jealousy, doesn't know it, completely abstractly enthused and delighted that I will be published by the same publisher as him ... Cyril looked splendid and is happy and fresh again.¹⁰⁰

Grainger only found out later, as he told Sandby: 'Dear old Roger has been a friend indeed. It was he who fixed up Schotts for me, & he wants to pay for the expense of printing a few of my bigger scores'.¹⁰¹ Quilter, in fact, offered to pay for the publication of Grainger's *Father and Daughter*. Percy himself was also generous, in directing some of his royalties towards Cyril when he was in more difficult financial circumstances.¹⁰²

* * * * *

The music of the Frankfurt Group had its finest representation in the two series of concerts organised, financed and in part conducted by Balfour Gardiner in London's Queen's Hall in 1912 and 1913. Consisting almost exclusively of British music – with the exception of Borodin and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, in which Grainger was the soloist – and with a good number of premieres and first London performances of works by Holst and Vaughan Williams, it was an excellent showcase for Grainger, whose works appeared in seven of the eight concerts. Each of the other members of the Group was represented, and Scott had his *English Dance and Fair Helen of Kirkconnel* (soloist Frederic Austin) performed in the first series.¹⁰³ These works came under Gardiner's close scrutiny – he was to conduct them. He wrote to Grainger on 3 May 1911: 'I looked at Cyril's *Scherzo* going home in

⁹⁹ Letter from Grainger to Karen Holten, 15 July 1910, *The Farthest North of Humanness*, p. 375.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Grainger to Karen Holten, 27 February 1911, *ibid.*, pp. 405–6.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Grainger to Herman Sandby, 10 August 1911, *ibid.*, p. 419.

¹⁰² Eileen Dorum, *Percy Grainger: The Man behind the Music*, p. 62.

¹⁰³ The first London performance of *The Ballad of Fair Helen of Kirkconnel* (dedicated to Frederic Austin) was given at the Bechstein Hall on 5 June 1905, with Austin the soloist and a young Thomas Beecham conducting. *The English Dance* was the third of *Three Dances*, Op. 20.

the train last night. Even that – every note of it will have to be rescored.’ As for *Helen of Kirkconnel*, three days later he was writing: ‘Austin is staying with me; & we have been rescoring Cyril’s “Helen”. I have never come across a work with such possibilities of instrumentation. Needless to say Cyril has missed them all.’ The planning of these concerts was undoubtedly a most exciting time for the Group, often meeting at Balfour’s house with such others as Austin, Bax, and Holst also present. At the time of the first series Scott was, in Grainger’s words, ‘a sea of enthusiasm and fire’.¹⁰⁴

Also well represented in the series was Frederick Delius, around whom all the members of the Frankfurt Group, with the exception of Scott, were to gravitate. In March 1907, possibly at the request of Henry Wood, Scott had written to Delius¹⁰⁵ suggesting some accommodation in Chelsea for when he visited England the next month from his home in France. In April Delius wrote home to his wife, Jelka, ‘Cyril Scott I have also seen & he is really very nice.’¹⁰⁶ Three days later he wrote of meeting Grainger, whom he considered ‘more gifted than Scott & less affected’.¹⁰⁷ On 23 July the critic Robin Legge wrote to Delius:

Balfour Gardiner tells me he is going over to see you – also Cyril Scott. The latter is devoted now only to ‘occultism’ – & is seen everywhere with a black Yogi who is supposed to hold in his head all the Secrets of the Universe. Scott is a wholehogger in the matter.¹⁰⁸

Scott attended Fritz Cassirer’s performance of Delius’s *Appalachia* in Queen’s Hall in November and afterwards wrote a letter of self-centred appreciation that was hardly likely to endear him to Delius, saying that ‘although my own productions may not be over sympathetic to you – yet I hope that will not lead you to think I can not rise to the beauties of yours!’ He added, with reference to an earlier concert when Delius’s Piano Concerto had been given, ‘I could not help feeling [it] was not an adequate expression of yourself.’ Unlike the remainder of the Group, he was not to make trips to visit Delius in France.

The outbreak of World War 1 terminated plans for further Balfour Gardiner concerts, and Grainger’s departure to America, where he was essentially to remain for the rest of his life, might have put a seal on the activities of the Frankfurt Group. But they continued after the war, if on a less frequent basis. In 1920 and 1921 Scott made his only visit to America and Canada, performing his piano concerto in Philadelphia on 5 November 1920 with Stokowski conducting (a fact he omits from both autobiographies).¹⁰⁹ In New York he met the Graingers, and Percy and Cyril seized the

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Grainger to Karen Holten, 15 March 1912, *The Farthest North of Humanness*, p. 451.

¹⁰⁵ Delius came to England in April 1907 to make arrangements for the performance of his Piano Concerto in October at the Promenade Concerts under Henry Wood.

¹⁰⁶ Lionel Carley, *Delius: A Life in Letters*, vol. 1 (Scolar Press, 1983), p. 285 n. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹⁰⁹ He played the concerto in Vienna in 1922.

opportunity to record for the Duo-Art system a piano roll of Scott's *Symphonic Dance No. 1* arranged by Grainger for four hands.

Tragedy was soon to strike, with Rose Grainger's death by suicide in New York in April 1922. 'Mother always loved Cyril & Roger', Percy had written, and during Cyril's Frankfurt days Rose had quite likely filled the role of surrogate mother while he was abroad. Indeed, he wrote in his second autobiography that he would always remember her with great affection, and that 'she treated me almost like a second son until her tragic death'. On her death it was even reported in the papers that her will stipulated that on Percy's death the estate was to be divided between Cyril and her sister, Clara Aldridge.¹¹⁰ Percy had been away when the tragedy occurred; while returning by train to New York on 3 May he wrote to Balfour Gardiner as 'the only reliable one I can turn to for so many different things involved', giving him clear instructions regarding his unpublished works 'should my body break under this strain'.¹¹¹ Over a month later he made a new will, leaving a sum to his aunt Clara and the residue of the estate to Gardiner, adding that should Balfour predecease him the estate would pass to Cyril.¹¹² Irresponsible and possibly inaccurate reporting in the press at the time of his mother's death had greatly disturbed Grainger, but as a consequence of this tragedy something else threatened to break up his friendship with Cyril. With his interest in spiritualism Cyril had suggested to Percy the possibility of making contact with his mother through a medium. Grainger's reply was unequivocal:

It has made me very wretched that you have tried to deliver this 'message' to me in spite of what I wrote you of not wishing to receive any such messages thru a 3rd person, because of my instinctive feelings about such things & my lack of belief in spirit messages. It is not that I prize my disbelief higher than yr belief. On the contrary, I admire you deeply & yr religious nature & for the time you have devoted to these theories – yr beliefs being what they are. But I do not share yr beliefs & I cannot & will not have these things forced upon me. To receive a message that purports to come from my adored mother, of the genuineness of which you are convinced but of the genuineness of which I am not convinced, is the greatest possible agony to me ... This matter will break up our old & lovely friendship if you do not exercise tolerance with my disbelief just as I exercise tolerance with yr belief.¹¹³

Fortunately their friendship was too deeply rooted; Scott meant much to Grainger, as it seems he had to his mother. Percy has written: 'Mother sometimes said to me, "If you should die, I would try not to be too desperate. I should devote myself to the career of some other great composer, such as Cyril."¹¹⁴

In August 1922 Grainger made a visit to the Continent, with some folk-song collecting in Denmark. By chance he bumped into Gardiner, who had been staying

¹¹⁰ *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 May 1922, as quoted in Dorum, *Percy Grainger: The Man behind the Music*, p. 132.

¹¹¹ *The All-Round Man*, pp. 55–60.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 56 n. 1.

¹¹³ 21 October 1922, *ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger*, p. 50.

with Delius, and together they travelled through Norway. It was their first meeting for eight years, with Grainger later declaring that Balfour had been the only one of his friends willing to go anywhere with him after his mother's death. In December Gardiner, Grainger and Quilter met in London to hear the first performance of Bax's First Symphony.

The Group's last collective flowering came in July 1929, when a festival of British music was held at Harrogate. Planned by Basil Cameron, conductor of the Harrogate Municipal Orchestra, with assistance from Grainger, this time it was far from representative of British music in general, with the notable absence of works by Elgar and Vaughan Williams. It was in fact a blatant showcase for the Frankfurt Group, all of whom performed except for one absentee: Balfour Gardiner was then becoming disillusioned as a composer and let it be known that he would not attend, writing to Grainger on 26 May: 'I have been now telling you for years that I dislike music, & that it worries me & depresses me & I cannot understand why you do not believe me.' Sixteen days later he added a sad coda: 'Music has been the best thing I have known in life. Like youth, it has left me.'

The programme for the festival is worth listing.

July 24

O'Neill: Festal Prelude *The White Rock*, conducted by O'Neill

Delius: *A Song before Sunrise*, conducted by Cameron

Scott: Piano Concerto (No. 1), soloist Scott, conducted by Cameron

Quilter: *I arise from dreams of thee*, f.p. soloist Mark Raphael, conducted by Quilter

O'Neill: *Alice in Wonderland* – ballet music, conducted by O'Neill

Grainger: *Jutish Medley*, conducted by Cameron

Scott: piano solos *Pierrot triste*, *Water-Wagtail*, *Pastorals No. 3*, *Souvenir de Vienne*, *An English Waltz*, soloist Scott

Quilter: songs *The Jealous Lover*, *It was a lover and his lass*, *Weep you no more*, *To Althea from Prison*, soloist Mark Raphael

Gardiner: *Shepherd Fennel's Dance*, conducted by Cameron

July 25

Arne: Overture in B♭

Delius: *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, *Summer Night on the River*

Quilter: *A Children's Overture*, conducted by Quilter

Scott: Scena for soprano and orchestra, *Rima's Call to the Birds*, f.p. (orchestral version)¹¹⁵ soloist Gertrude Johnson, conducted by Cameron

Bax: *Romantic Overture*

Grainger: *Hill Song No. 2*, conducted by Cameron, *Spoon River*

Herbert Bedford: tone poem *Hamadryad*

Quilter: *Three English Dances*, conducted by Quilter

Scott: Songs, soloist Gertrude Johnson

Warlock: *Capriol Suite*

¹¹⁵ *Rima's Call to the Birds* was first heard at the Wigmore Hall, 4 May 1927, with Gertrude Johnson and the Brosa String Quartet.

July 26

Purcell arr. Hurlstone: Suite for Strings in C

Holbrooke: *The Birds of Rhiannon*

Unspecified aria sung by Frank Phillips

Scott: 'Dance of the Citizens' from the ballet *The Short-Sighted Apothecary*, conducted by Scott

Leslie Heward: *Nocturne* for small orchestra

Grainger: *Youthful Rapture*, soloist Beatrice Harrison, conducted by Cameron [Gibbons arr. Fellowes: *Fantasia*, planned but not played]

[Byrd arr. Terry: *The leaves be green*, planned but not played]

Frederic Austin: Suite *The Insect Play*, conducted by Austin

Cecil Milner: Tone poem *In a Pine Forest*

German: 'Bourrée and Gigue' from *Much Ado about Nothing*

From now on meetings of members of the Group were to be much less frequent. The ever generous Gardiner took O'Neill and Frederic Austin to Italy and Yugoslavia in April 1931, meeting Franckenstein in Munich. In July 1936 Grainger, now married, went with his wife, Ella, and Roger Quilter to the Dolmetsch concerts at Haslemere. In September, Percy and Ella, Cyril and Balfour went on holiday together in France, meeting again in October at Balfour's Dorset house at Fontmell Hill, when Cyril's *Festival Overture* was down for performance at Bournemouth with Balfour's *Shepherd Fennel's Dance*. Cyril's and Grainger's scores had been 'the profoundest influences at the most impressionable period' of his life, Balfour confessed in a letter to Percy. That year Grainger wrote to Quilter enquiring whether he would go with him to hear Scott's *Ode to Great Men* at Norwich in September.¹¹⁶ He urged: 'It seems to me so important for composers of the same generation to boast each other, appear in togetherness & hear each other's works together.' In November, from Sweden, Percy was asking Quilter for tickets for two nights of his opera *Julia*, which was to be presented in December at Covent Garden.¹¹⁷ 'I am asking Cyril to come with us one night', he added. Scott went and thought it a 'winner'.¹¹⁸

After World War 2 for about two and a half years Ella Grainger gave Cyril the use of a cottage in Pevensey Bay, in Sussex, and in October 1946 Gardiner saw him there for the last time. He wrote to Percy: 'I enjoyed seeing Cyril at Pevensey. I took a friend with me, and Cyril gave him some pills & five-finger exercises. He recommended me to take molasses out of a Silo.'¹¹⁹ In his last years Grainger devoted much energy towards his Museum, in which he amassed a treasure trove of exhibits principally of the Frankfurt Group – their correspondence, their music and even such things as samples of their clothing, pressing all his friends for contributions

¹¹⁶ 24 September 1936, Basil Maine, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Heathcote Statham conducting.

¹¹⁷ British Music Drama Opera Co. Ltd, London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Albert Coates.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Scott to Quilter, 4 December 1936, quoted in Langfield, *Roger Quilter: His Life and Music*, p. 91.

¹¹⁹ Letter from Gardiner to Grainger, 27 December 1946. Gardiner–Grainger correspondence in the Grainger Museum.

to his 'hoard-house'. To meet one particular request, Cyril even had a suit specially made to match an old photo for a display in the Museum.¹²⁰ As one last act of kindness, Ella Grainger wrote out Cyril's Second String Quartet, which was published by Elkin in 1957, in her own neat manuscript, a task that took three months. 'There I was', she wrote to Scott from New York in October 1957:

unskilled, pushing an unwilling steel nib onto a glazed paper, the India ink drying on the nib before it reached the paper ... But I was glad to sit at it as much as I could, away from the hurly burly of too much housekeeping and such. Now it is over I miss it. There were some beautiful passages in it, too, that from time to time Percy played on the piano in order to find out if we were Origh about some of the chords. And the swirl of melody in the last movement was enchanting.

The quartet was 'Dedicated to Percy and Ella Grainger'. Writing to Scott in August 1954, Grainger had described it as 'a stunning work'.

O'Neill was the first of the Group to die, on 3 March 1934, aged fifty-eight. Gardiner was next, on 28 June 1950, aged seventy-two. Quilter, suffering at the end from mental illness, died on 21 September 1953 at seventy-five. Percy and Cyril, each with their own individual approaches to health, whether it be vigorous exercise or health cures, outlived the others, with Percy dying from cancer on 20 February 1961 aged seventy-eight, and Cyril living to the fine age of ninety-one, dying on 31 December 1970.

It was once a commonplace for people to say that the days of their youth or their school days were the happiest of their lives; for Cyril Scott this may well have been true of his time at Frankfurt. The love he showed for 'this beautiful city' and the pleasure he had in revisiting it; the deep affection he had for two of his professors, which had showed in the sorrow of their parting;¹²¹ the excitement of recognition as a composer which came his way in those early years; and, perhaps above all, the strong lasting friendships that began at this time – all these brought a happiness that he was probably never to find again. No doubt with much feeling and Presidential pride – and no little humour – he might have claimed: 'Ich bin ein Frankfurter.'

¹²⁰ See illustrations in my *H. Balfour Gardiner* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 215.

¹²¹ 'There were tears in [Knorr's] eyes when he bade me farewell'; and, 'I suffered acutely when I came to take leave of Herr Uzielli'. Both *Bone of Contention*, p. 67.

Cyril Scott, Debussy and Stravinsky

RICHARD PRICE

SCOTT'S REPUTATION

DURING the heyday of his fame, between 1905 and 1925, Cyril Scott enjoyed an international reputation as a musical modernist, to a greater extent than any of his English contemporaries. Throughout his lifetime he was probably better known, and certainly more highly esteemed, abroad, particularly in France and Germany, than in his own country. This situation arose in the first place from personal contacts. His composition teacher at Frankfurt, Iwan Knorr, was greatly respected, and continued to speak with admiration and affection for his one-time student.¹ Scott also enjoyed the friendship and patronage of the poet Stefan George, a major figure in German literature, and to whose influence was due the premiere of Scott's First Symphony, at Darmstadt in 1900. Meanwhile, in Austria he benefited from the admiration of Alma Mahler (the wife, then widow, of the great composer), who greatly admired the Violin Sonata of 1908 and secured performances of some of his orchestral works in Vienna.² Of Scott's friendship with his French contemporaries Debussy and Ravel I shall speak below.

In England, in contrast, his major works were largely forgotten after their not very frequent premieres. But this was balanced by the popularity of his short piano pieces among those who took an interest in the latest musical developments.³ These pieces had the great advantage that most of them were easy to play, while the piano pieces being written at this time by Debussy and Ravel were too difficult for amateur pianists.⁴ Scott's piano music is likely to have played a major role in popularising the 'new harmony' that (with the political help of World War 1) brought to an end the dominance of English musical life by nineteenth-century German Romanticism. But though this emphasis on Scott the modernist stimulated interest in his music while he was still a member of the *avant-garde*, it did his standing no good when, from the

¹ It was due to the influence partly of Knorr and partly of his fellow student Percy Grainger that Scott was so early put on the path of musical innovation. In contrast, his London contemporaries Vaughan Williams and John Ireland developed their distinctive idioms more slowly, since they were held back by their teacher, Charles Villiers Stanford, who thought that the language of music had reached its final perfection with Brahms.

² See Scott, *Bone of Contention* (Aquarian Press, 1969), pp. 76 and 136–7.

³ Gerald Cumberland, a noted journalist of the period and a keen champion of musical modernism, tells in his *Set Down in Malice* (Grant Richards, 1919), p. 262: 'In pre-war days I very rarely let a week go by without playing something of his.'

⁴ Note a remark made to Scott by the wife of George Bernard Shaw: 'G. B. S. spends most of his free evenings playing your things. He *can* play them!' – as narrated in Cyril Scott, *My Years of Indiscretion* (Mills & Boon, 1924), p. 232.

mid-1920s, musical fashions changed drastically. Scott's music now sounded dated. Those with an interest in modern music turned their gaze elsewhere, to newer gods.

Particularly damaging to Scott's reputation was the sobriquet he had acquired of the 'English Debussy'. For one thing, Debussy's standing was not at all as high a century ago as it is today. He was looked upon as an eccentric with an exquisite but limited personal style, whose work lay outside the main tradition of European music, of which Richard Strauss was seen as the leading living representative. Debussy, moreover, died in 1918, and his later works were generally regarded as evidence of decline – a view that Scott himself shared and which has only been rejected under the influence of Messiaen, Boulez and others since World War 2. If the title the 'English Debussy' was originally no more than a piece of pigeon-holing by people who knew little about Debussy and still less about Scott, it came to typify Scott as a marginal figure, belonging to a now-closed chapter in the history of music, and more of an imitator than an innovator. The relation of Scott to Debussy, both the man and the music, requires our close attention.

SCOTT AND DEBUSSY

We know from Scott's autobiographical writings (*My Years of Indiscretion* and *Bone of Contention*) that he and Debussy were acquaintances throughout the decade preceding World War 1. In this period Scott spent much of the year touring abroad, and when in Paris he was regularly Debussy's guest. Debussy was shy and taciturn, and Scott was careful what he said to him, and which of his own works he played to him – notably (as he tells us) the Violin Sonata, the (First) Piano Sonata, and the *Deuxième suite*, which, indeed, he dedicated to the older man. Debussy was impressed by the free-flowing arabesques and interweaving lines so typical of Scott's music, and agreed to write some words of judicious praise for the use of Scott's publishers. These run as follows:⁵

Cyril Scott is one of the rarest artists of the present generation. His rhythmical experiments, his technique, even his style of writing, may at first sight appear strange and disconcerting. Inflexible severity, however, compels him to carry out to the full his particular system of esthetics, and his only.

The music unfolds itself somewhat after the manner of those Javanese rhapsodies which, instead of being confined within traditional forms, are the outcome of imagination displaying itself in innumerable arabesques. And the incessantly changing aspects of the inner melody are an intoxication for the ear – are, in fact, irresistible. All these qualities are more than sufficient to justify confidence in this musician, so exceptionally equipped, although quite young.

Debussy's insistence that Scott's 'system of esthetics' was 'his only' is important evidence that the great man himself did not consider Scott his disciple.⁶ Indeed, the

⁵ I take them from the cover of *Handelian Rhapsody*, published in 1909.

⁶ See too *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 103: Debussy told Scott (in the early 1910s) that their styles were quite different.

degree of his influence on Scott has often been exaggerated.⁷ It is clear from what Scott wrote about Debussy in his autobiographical writings, and also in his *Music: Its Secret Influence throughout the Ages*, that he respected, but did not worship, the older man, whose music he found delicate and refined to excess.⁸ And like other English composers of his generation, such as John Ireland, he was unaffected by what seem to us now to be the most significant aspects of Debussy's style: his eschewing of romantic rhetoric, his intricate counterpoint (even when writing for the piano) and his innovations in musical structure. What impressed everyone at the time, and what influenced so many younger composers, was Debussy's harmony, partly its seductive and exotic atmosphere, but still more its 'non-functional' character – its use of modulations to create atmosphere, as local points of colour, rather than to serve musical structure (or so it was perceived at the time).

Two forms of non-traditional modulation were particularly noted in Debussy's music and adopted by his imitators. One was the prominence in many of his works of chromatic modulation, where adjacent chords or bars are in unrelated keys and movement from one to another depends on semitonal shifts with a single note or two remaining unchanged as an anchor. Frequent use of this device within the same piece or movement serves to destroy the sense of a home key to which return can be expected. Ex. 2.1 provides an example from Debussy's *Cloches à travers les feuilles* (*Images* for Piano II, 1, of 1907). Scott used this same device with his typical verve and lack of restraint in his early maturity. The effect in his First Piano Sonata (1909) is of excessive restlessness. But in the works that followed, he often swings backwards and forwards between two or three unrelated harmonies, creating a mesmeric effect of near-stasis. One example comes in *The Garden of Soul-Sympathy* (*Poems* for piano, 2), where there is alternation between three harmonies, with B as the note that links them (Ex. 2.2). This is the classic manner of the works that won Scott renown as a leading modernist in the 1910s. At the same time, the rhythm of Scott's music was equally innovative. There are many pages of Scott where every bar has a different length, and there is no sense of a constant rhythmic pulse. This combination of fluid harmony and fluid rhythm produces music that surges and ebbs in a continuous flow, typically reserving cadential resolution to the very end of a work or movement.⁹

A different form of modulation, though similar in its disruptive effect on the sense of a key, is the shifting of every note of a complex chord up or down the same interval. This was already familiar from the use of pure whole-tone harmony, as in Dargomyzhsky's *The Stone Guest* of 1872; indeed, in whole-tone harmony no other form of modulation is possible. The effect is monotonous, and it requires subtle and varying textures to preserve musical interest (as is achieved in Debussy's *Preludes* I, 2, *Voiles*). It is when the harmony is more complex that this device becomes truly

⁷ For instance, by Cecil Gray in his *A Survey of Contemporary Music* (Humphrey Milford, 1924), p. 251: 'Cyril Scott provides us with imitation Debussy.' Yet Gray was one of the most perceptive critics of his day.

⁸ See *My Years of Indiscretion*, p. 105; *Bone of Contention*, pp. 127–8; and *Music: Its Secret Influence throughout the Ages*, expanded edition (Rider & Co., 1950), pp. 78–82.

⁹ For perceptive comment on this aspect of Scott's music see Sarah Collins, *The Aesthetic Life of Cyril Scott* (Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 183–91.

Ex. 2.1 Debussy, *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, bars 14–19*expressif e doucement appuyé*

First system of the musical score, bars 14–19. The right hand plays a sustained chord (F#4, C5) with a fermata. The left hand plays a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Fingerings '5' are indicated above the right hand notes.

Second system of the musical score, bars 14–19. The right hand continues with the sustained chord. The left hand accompaniment continues. The time signature changes to 2/4 at the end of the system.

Third system of the musical score, bars 14–19. The right hand has a whole note chord (Bb4, F5) with a fermata. The left hand accompaniment continues. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb, F) and the time signature is 4/4. The dynamic marking *pp* is present.

Fourth system of the musical score, bars 14–19. The right hand has a whole note chord (Bb4, F5) with a fermata. The left hand accompaniment continues. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb, F) and the time signature is 4/4. The dynamic marking *pp* and the instruction *Cédez* are present.