

siderable length in this book, and the disproportion between its intrinsic value and that ascribed to it throughout the book eventually makes the 'three column approach' appear rather absurd.

Apart from these faults, the general reader will find the examples quoted in detail of some interest, even if he is unable to accept anthropological investigation as such a general remedy for African complaints as Malinowski suggests. There are many over-simplifications which give themselves away in the course of the work, as when at one point he says that 'the pre-European situation (of the tribal chief) implied absolute sovereignty,—complete and undivided power, the right to carry on war and slave raids and to control the wealth of the tribe', while admitting elsewhere that, in recognizing the chief without recognizing other sources of authority within the tribe, early European administration helped to destroy some of the important checks which the old system imposed on his power. As propaganda the book may be of some value, and one may suppose that, had Malinowski had the opportunity of writing the whole himself in the form of a book, some more considerable anthropological interest would have attached to it. As it stands, it attempts to cover the same theoretical ground as a recent book by Godfrey and Monica Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, but does so in a more superficial way. This is to be expected, perhaps, where an attempt to persuade a general audience conflicts with a feeling of obligation to contribute towards the development of sociological theory.

R. G. LIENHARDT.

## BRITISH COUNCIL RECORDINGS

PURCELL: *Dido and Aeneas* (Philharmonia String Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert, with Joan Hammond, Isobel Baillie, Edith Coates, Dennis Noble, Gladys Ripley, Sylvia Patriss). H.M.V. under auspices of British Council.

An adequate modern recording of this central English classic was overdue; and this one should meet with an enthusiastic reception. It is not perfect by a long way; my set at least suffers from a mechanical defect which blurs the high notes (on several gramophones electrical and acoustic, all normally excellent); and the spirit of the performance perhaps lacks the intimacy appropriate to baroque chamber opera, despite a superbly witch-like performance by Edith Coates and the convincingly authentic sound of Boris Ord's continuo playing. Nonetheless to listen to these records is a most moving and satisfying experience; when we have absorbed them we shall understand much more about not only Purcell, but

about contemporary English music too, and about the problems with which English composers were faced after the breakdown of our musical continuity.

To my mind the most interesting aspect of these records is the modification which they suggest in the British Council's attitude to recorded music. Previously they have recorded only contemporary works, which is understandable since their aim was primarily to publicize British music of our own time, to show how alive our musical culture now is. But it seems to me equally important to stress the fact that we have a musical past as good as anyone else's and, at one of the greatest periods in musical history, perhaps better than most. The notion that the English aren't (or weren't until recently) particularly musical is the result of the barbarous popular conception of musical culture as something which appertains exclusively to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries during which period it is certainly true that we had, mainly for social and economic reasons, virtually no significant music. But as a more civilized notion of the evolution of musical culture slowly develops (there are plenty of signs of it), and as the sixteenth century in particular becomes reinstated, it is surely not too much to hope that the relatively vast public which at least pays lip-service to Shakespeare might (*given the opportunity*) come to see that we have in Byrd, Gibbons, Bull, Dowland and Tallis—to mention only the supreme names—composers who are a complementary phenomenon to Shakespeare and, in the case of Byrd at least, a composer of Shakespearean (or Bachian or Beethovenian) stature.

Here surely is an opportunity for the British Council. Our great music of the Shakespearean period is still known only to specialists or anyway to people of specialized interests because the average 'concert-goer' never gets an opportunity to hear it. Of course I know the orchestral-music fan has an initial prejudice against sixteenth century polyphony and all it entails; but how can you expect to change this except by giving him opportunities to hear the music? I can testify from personal experience in adult education work that a class of very 'average' orchestral-concert-goers can find, say, the Byrd Five Part Mass and the big pavaues and galliards of Bull and Gibbons intensely moving and a revolutionary experience in the hint which they offer of different musical horizons. I've had to repeat the Byrd Mass several times; and have been unable to fulfil the demand for more simply owing to the lack of adequate recordings. It is indeed scandalous that the Decca recording of the Byrd Mass is the only good modern recording of the *great* works of the period in the catalogues. Cannot the British Council give us a substantial album of Byrd (say the Great Service, some Latin motets, the Four Part Mass, and the magnificent Six Part String Fantasia which is so beautifully played by the Jacques String Orchestra); an album of Gibbons (the Big Service, an anthem or two, the pavaues and galliards for virginals and, if a suitable instrument could be found, the Four Part Fantasia and the Fancy in Gamutt Flat for organ); a volume

of instrumental music by Bull (again the big works for virginals and organ—the Walsingham variations, Queen Elizabeth's Pavane, the 'sinfoniae' pavaues, and the profound A minor *In nomine*); a selection from Dowland's *Pilgrime's Solace* (if an adequate lutenist can be found); Tallis's *Lamentations*; Taverner's *Western Wynde* Mass; and a selection of the most serious and important string music of Ferrabosco, William Lawes and Jenkins?

The remarkable success of Decca's records of the Byrd Five Part Mass seems to suggest that a series of records such as those suggested above (and they're no more than a start) needn't be commercially a failure. But even if a little money were lost on them it would be worth it, considering that they would offer to thousands of people their first opportunity to hear some of the greatest music that any country has produced, and to gain some idea of what the English musical tradition really stands for. Even if they weren't a popular success (though I believe they, relatively, would be) and were regarded more as an educational venture, they could, if used in adult education work and in schools over the whole country, in a few years make a difference to the general level of musical literacy and cultivation which would be of the utmost benefit not only to the 'public' but to all composers working in England to-day. There are only two provisos: the music selected *must* be the big works, the representative (but tragically unknown) ones; for the idea one gets of our great music from the few tiny 'charming' snippets that are normally played is about comparable with the notion one would have of Mozart if one knew him only by the divertimenti he wrote when he was eighteen, rather than by the G Minor Quintet or Symphony; and the performances *must* be both authentic (scholarly) *and of competent virtuosity*.

BERLIOZ: *Harold in Italy* (played by Boston Symphony Orchestra with William Primrose, viola, conducted by Koussevitzky). H.M.V.

These records are (the cliché is for once justifiable) terrific, the most exciting recording that has come my way since Decca's version of the Byrd Five Part Mass. Put on the fugato opening of *Harold* and listen. It isn't only that the music is so electrically original: what is remarkable is the extraordinary tautness of the draughtsmanship, the linear conception, the lyrical vitality which is at once copious and astringent. It is utterly unlike any representative nineteenth century music, melodic in impetus, pure in texture and harmony and without, anywhere, a vestige of padding; and nothing could be more essentially musical in structure and evolution (however literary the programme). Or listen to the Pilgrims' March, so apparently simple, yet always doing the unexpected thing at the ends of the phrases, always demanding the alertest response; or to the brigands whose 'frenzy' is

disciplined by such classical lucidity of texture and such subtlety of formalization. Put this movement beside even such a fine work as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and it is the Stravinsky that sounds old-fashioned; the whole of the bridge passage at the beginning of the movement and the miraculous reminiscence of the Pilgrims' song towards the end are imaginative conceptions which could occur only to the very highest type of genius. And my conviction is strengthened that Berlioz is immeasurably the greatest composer since Beethoven—that he belongs indeed alongside Beethoven, the mature Mozart, Bach, Monteverdi, Lasso, Josquin and Byrd. We need more recordings of Berlioz's big, later works (the only Berlioz work widely known, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, is after all his *first* representative work, written at the age of twenty-six), notably the *Te Deum*, more of *L'Enfance du Christ*, and above all the *Grande Messe des Morts*, to my mind his greatest work (though I've never heard *Les Troyens*), and one of the supreme things in European music. An admirable French recording of the Mass already exists (the B.B.C. broadcast some of it a few months back); cannot we have an English pressing?

W.H.M.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Job*, a Masque for Dancing (B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult. H.M.V.).

BLISS: Ballet Suite; *Miracle in the Gorbals* (Royal Opera House Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert. Columbia).

RAWSTHORNE: Overture; *Street Scene* (Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert. H.M.V.).

POULENC: *Le Bestiaire* and *Montparnasse* (Bernac and Poulenc. H.M.V.).

The recording of Vaughan Williams's *Job* which I've so often pleaded for in these pages has come at last, and it's worth waiting for. Perhaps, now we've had a chance to get to know the records of the D Major Symphony, *Job* seems, by comparison with that more recent and 'classically' great work, not quite as independent of the stage business as one had remembered it as being. But it contains superb things (particularly the Sons of the Morning) and the music as a whole is built on a Blakean scale; one doesn't need to say more to indicate that, as well as a key work in the English tradition, it is one of the great achievements of contemporary music. Performance and recording are excellent.

*Miracle in the Gorbals*, like much of Bliss's most successful music, is sheer melodrama, but as such highly effective. The general impression is more relaxed than *Checkmate*; it hasn't the earlier ballet's acidulated venom and economy, and has (for the young lovers) passages of an amiably Tchaikovian *allure* and even

one hunk of pure Gershwin; the scene of the killing is itself much less blood-curdling than the comparable one in *Checkmate*. Taking it all round it is music of charm and devilish competence; and it has Bliss's habitual instinct for physical movement. In his own genre, none of our composers can rival him.

Alan Rawsthorne has the admirable ability to compose 'light' and film music which fulfils its required function without calling for any sacrifice of the idiom's integrity; no-one would think of calling *Street Scene* (which was intended as a 'popular' piece) highbrow, while at the same time one can never have any doubt about it being Rawsthorne. It's a brilliantly written, emotionally fresh piece; though I hope the British Council's choice of it does not mean that they have passed by Rawsthorne's most representative and important works, the *Piano Concerto* and the *Symphonic Studies*. They both ought to be recorded.

Of the two Poulenc songs *Le Bestiaire* group was written when the composer was nineteen or twenty, the other one quite recently; and one can't say that he's got much wiser in the last twenty-five years. Indeed there's nothing in the relatively lush juicy drawing-room music of his later years to come up to the tender Satiean purity of his very first work (one many mention in particular 'La Carpe' from the *Bestiaire songs*). Nonetheless the drawing-room music is excellent of its kind (it's directly in the tradition of Renaldo Hahn), and the songs are remarkable for their sensitiveness to the French language. Perhaps this is why the late songs are always melodically so much more interesting than the piano pieces.

But this record—and the others these artists have recently made in England—is chiefly notable for the performance. Although one wouldn't think of Poulenc as anything but a very little composer, and although Bernac's magnificent voice perhaps isn't *quite* what it used to be, yet the performances of these two seem to have generations of tradition and artistry behind them. Because the traditions of French culture have been relatively so continuous, they have a 'flair', a quality of civilization, which artists in this country find it difficult or impossible to attain to. To listen to them is an education of the spirit. The recording is both resonant and delicate.

W.H.M.

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