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**27th June 1998**  
Programme £1

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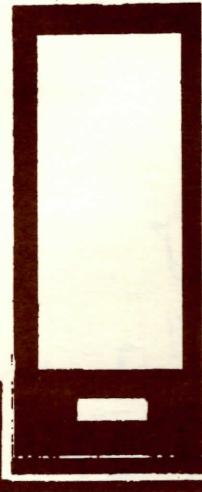
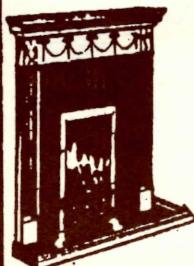
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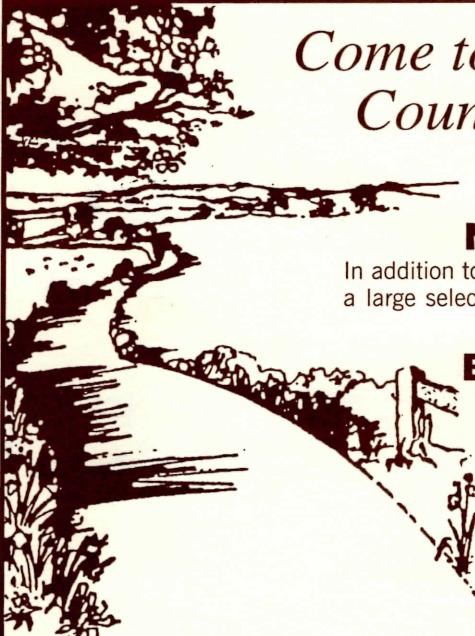
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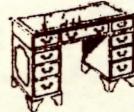
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## **Paul Willett**

Paul Willett studied the French Horn with Ifor James and gained his performance Diploma from the Royal College of Music at 16.

He read music at The Queen's College, Oxford, on scholarship, and now combines teaching and freelance playing. He has given solo recitals and performed concertos throughout the country. He was a member of The Five Winds for many years, a group which performed both at home and abroad, and also on BBC radio.

He is currently Head of Music at Fitzharrys School in Abingdon.

## **Mark Paine**

Mark Paine was educated at Solihull School, where he was a Music Scholar, and at Reading University where he gained an Honours Degree and Post Graduate Teaching Certificate.

He studied piano under John Barstow at the Royal College of Music, giving a number of solo recitals whilst at university. On the 'cello he studied under Martin Bochmann and was principal 'cellist in two University orchestras.

He has been Head of a Junior School, and has held the post of Director of Music in several schools. Currently at Sibford School, he will take up an appointment as Director of Music at Headington School, Oxford, next September.

Mark will be conducting Jonathan Arnold and the Sibford Choral Society in this evening's performance of the *Songs of the Fleet*.



## **Jonathan Arnold**

Born in 1969, Jonathan received his first vocal training from Henry Cummings whilst in the choir of Hereford Cathedral, before going to Oxford where he was an Academical Clerk in the choir of Magdalen College. From there he pursued his studies as a post-graduate at the Royal Academy of Music under Mark Wildman, Head of Vocal Studies.

Since leaving the Academy he has performed as a soloist with The London Sinfonia, the London Mozart Players, The Academy of Ancient Music, Les Arts Florissants, Collegium Vocale of Gent, The Gabrieli Consort, The Dunedin Consort and The London Bach Orchestra in works including the Bach Passions, *Magnificat, B minor Mass, Christmas Oratorio*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, Purcell Odes, and Monteverdi's *Vespers* of 1610 and *Christmas Vespers*. He has recently recorded the Purcell Odes: *Welcome to all the Pleasures* and *Ode to St. Cecilia* for Harmonia Mundi with Philippe Herreweghe.

He made his operatic début at the Bastille Opera House in Paris with Les Arts Florissants in 1994, playing the part of Corydon in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*. He also sang the same work in Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. He played Apollo and other rôles in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* with Kent Opera in a national tour including the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London; and the title rôle in Lampe's *The Dragon of Wantley* with Opera Restored. Other rôles include Don Alfonso in *Così fan Tutte*, Geronimo in *The Secret Marriage* by Cimarosa, and Azarius in *The Burning Fiery Furnace* by Britten for New Chamber Opera.

Jonathan is a member of the Clerk's Group, sings regularly with the Tallis Scholars and the Sixteen and is currently a pupil of Edward Brooks and Sir Donald McIntyre.

**John Ireland**  
**(1879-1962)**

**A London Overture**

The appeal of London to John Ireland resulted in this overture and in his *Three London Pieces* for piano. The piano pieces were composed in 1918-20 and the overture in 1936. In London he lived at Gunter Grove, Chelsea, and frequented the nearby Gunter Arms where he talked endlessly with friends and students over pints of Taylor-Walker ale.

Ireland studied in London at the Royal College of Music under Stanford and was professor of composition there himself from 1923-39. *A London Overture* was written during this period and was first performed at a BBC concert in December 1937.

The overture, originally sketched for brass band, commences with a slow introduction - a curious mixture of a loud upward rushing figure and a quiet motif played by pizzicato strings. Surely we are hearing London gradually coming to life at daybreak. The big city's irrepressibility then emerges in an *Allegro brioso* introducing a theme bursting with cockney cheek. It came to Ireland while travelling on a bus along Piccadilly when the conductor informed his passengers where they were by calling out "Pic-ca-dil-ly!". It undergoes considerable development and generates a lyrical variant first played by the violins. There is also a further happy melody introduced by the oboe, soon to be joined by the bassoon. In a quiet, slower middle interlude John Ireland takes refuge from London's turbulence, whose sounds are now heard from afar. However the *Allegro brioso* comes to the fore again, the previous themes are given a new treatment leading to the bustling conclusion worthy of the vitality of good old London town!

**Charles Villiers Stanford**  
**(1852-1924)**

**Songs of the Fleet**

1. Sailing at Dawn
2. The Song of the Sou'wester
3. The Middle Watch
4. The Little Admiral
5. Fare Well

Stanford was a dynamic Irish composer, conductor and teacher. His compositions are as varied as they are numerous, but he is best remembered for his fine songs. Plunket Green described "lilt, rhythm, sense of words, sense of atmosphere, musical imagery and illustration, directness of purpose and - guiding them all - imagination, humour and economy" as their qualities.

The *Songs of the Fleet*, with poems by Sir Henry Newbolt, were first performed at the 1910 Leeds Triennial Festival of which Stanford was conductor. The sonorous choral passages were apparently highly suitable to the atmosphere of the occasion.

As the climax of Fare Well approaches, the listener may recognise a quotation from *The Old Superb*, which is one of the *Songs of the Sea*, an earlier cycle of Newbolt settings.

❖  
**INTERVAL**

*Refreshments will be available*



**Ralph Vaughan Williams  
(1872-1958)**

**A London Symphony  
(Symphony no.2)**

Lento - allegro risoluto

Lento

Scherzo - (Nocturne) Allegro vivace

Andante con moto - maestoso all marcia - allegro - lento - epilogue

Parry, Stanford, Sullivan and, above all, Elgar were crucial figures in the English musical renaissance during the latter part of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century, though their efforts could not escape a strong German influence. It has been said that the first three composers spoke German with an English or Irish accent in their music while Elgar, who injected an Englishness into his music difficult to define, spoke English with a German accent. When Vaughan Williams arrived on the scene, he was to give a distinctive English voice to his music.

Vaughan Williams believed that art should be drawn from one's own native soil

and from the life of the community nourished by it; that the English composer should absorb the musical treasures of the nation and "raise them to the level of great art". In practising what he preached, and in common with Cecil Sharp of the Folk Song Society, founded in 1889, he duly got his hands dirty by conducting field trips into the hearts of Essex, Norfolk, Sussex, Wiltshire and Yorkshire in the very early years of this century. Thus it was the English folk songs he gathered that formed the mainspring of his musical personality and which found their way into his three *Norfolk Rhapsodies* and *In the Fen Country* (1904-6). He also looked to Purcell and Tudor polyphony when moulding his style.

Michael Kennedy, Vaughan Williams' biographer, writes that Vaughan Williams followed his nationalist creed most fully with *A London Symphony*. He began work on it in 1912; it was first performed in London in 1914 and then it underwent three revisions between then and the early 1930's. It was the most heavily revised of Vaughan Williams' symphonies and one of his firm favourites. Although born in Gloucestershire, Vaughan Williams lived in London at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, for many years and then felt entitled to call it a "Symphony by a Londoner". Various London landmarks appear in the work, which give it the character of a programme-symphony though it may also be listened to as abstract music.

*A London Symphony* seems to explore the character of the metropolis at three levels. The sheer power conveys the vastness of London. It probes behind anything to be seen or heard to evoke London's soul through mysterious whisperings. Do we not enter into the dreams, the hidden yearnings of its people spread throughout its boroughs? Then it paints pictures. Can we not see expanses of the winding Thames, parks, heaths and streets, at night, as day breaks and in the full blaze of daylight? Its third dimension is the objects and people who give it life. Cabs bustle through the streets, vendors cry their wares and cockneys live it up in the pubs and at the fairs. The folk melodies often sound as though they belong more to the countryside than to the city and tell us that only a generation or two separates many Londoners from their rural roots.

Vaughan Williams described the main mood of the first movement as "noise and scurry" though it starts quietly with an impression of London at daybreak. Harp and clarinet sound the Westminster Chimes before the full orchestra comes to life, presenting a flow of themes including a Hampstead Heath frolic by wind and brass. Tranquillity intervenes: mainly chamber music textures tell us we are in a park or church. In the splendid recapitulation previous motifs are turbulent-

combined to breathtaking effect as the life of a great city bears us along with it as if on a floodtide!

According to Vaughan Williams we are in Bloomsbury Square on a November afternoon in the slow movement. Wherever, if anywhere, we prefer it to be, it possesses a heart-easing beauty. At its core a girl cries plaintively, "Who'll buy my lavender?" as the jingles of a hansom cab pass her by.

"London lives at night too!" says the *Scherzo-Nocturne*. Fragments of theme and different rhythms scurry hither and thither and in the trio we pause at the boozer to be entertained by mouth-organ and accordian. Eventually the pleasure-seekers disperse and London dissolves into silence.

"Oh London, what are you?" Vaughan Williams seems to ask with a cry of anguish as the *Finale* begins. "Where are you going?", the sombre ensuing march seems to ask. This movement is no happy ending but creates a scene of conflict and even tragedy. Finally, in the *Epilogue*, preceded by the Westminster Chimes again, we float down the Thames with memories of old themes and leave London behind us to its destiny.

*Notes supplied by the Programme Note Bank of the NFMS  
Music Hire: Oxfordshire County Library*

*We are grateful to Banbury Charities and to the Ireland Trust for their contributions towards the expenses of this concert.*

Our next concert will be on  
21 November 1998  
in Deddington Church

the programme will include:  
Brahms' "Tragic" Overture  
Dvorak's "Water Goblin"  
and  
Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade"

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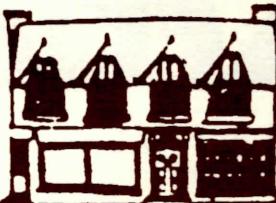
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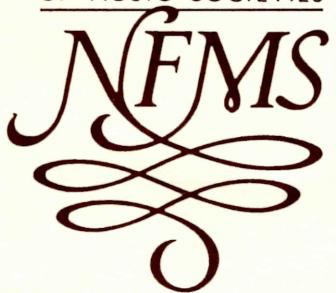
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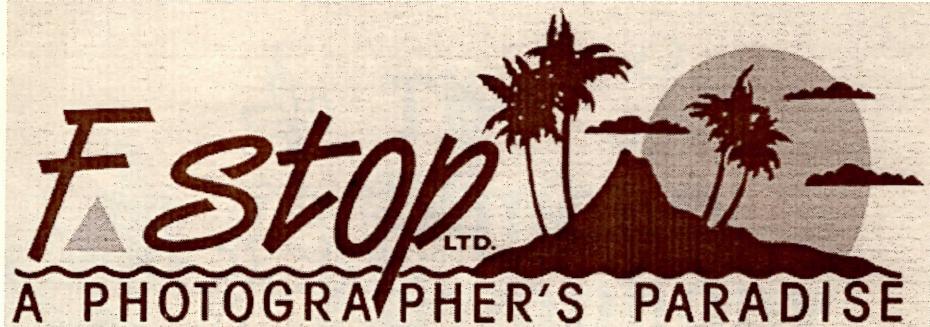
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