

= Imogen Holst =

Imogen Clare Holst CBE (12 April 1907 ? 9 March 1984) was an English composer , arranger , conductor , teacher and festival administrator . The only child of the composer Gustav Holst , she is particularly known for her educational work at Dartington Hall in the 1940s , and for her 20 years as joint artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival . In addition to composing music , she wrote composer biographies , much educational material , and several books on the life and works of her father .

From a young age , Imogen Holst showed precocious talent in composing and performance . After attending Eiothen School and St Paul 's Girls ' School , she entered the Royal College of Music , where she developed her skills as a conductor and won several prizes for composing . Unable for health reasons to follow her initial ambitions to be a pianist or a dancer , Imogen spent most of the 1930s teaching , and as a full @-@ time organiser for the English Folk Dance and Song Society . These duties reduced her compositional activities , although she made many arrangements of folksongs . After serving as an organiser for the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts at the start of the Second World War , in 1942 she began working at Dartington . In her nine years there she established Dartington as a major centre of music education and activity .

In the early 1950s Imogen became Benjamin Britten 's musical assistant , moved to Aldeburgh , and began helping with the organisation of the annual Aldeburgh Festival . In 1956 she became joint artistic director of the festival , and during the following 20 years helped it to a position of pre @-@ eminence in British musical life . In 1964 she gave up her work as Britten 's assistant , to resume her own compositional career and to concentrate on the preservation of her father 's musical legacy . Imogen 's own music is not widely known and has received little critical attention ; much of it is unpublished and unperformed . The first recordings dedicated to her works , issued in 2009 and 2012 , were warmly received by critics . She was appointed CBE in 1975 and received numerous academic honours . She died at Aldeburgh and is buried in the churchyard there .

= = Background = =

= = = Early life and family = = =

Imogen Holst was born on 12 April 1907 at 31 Grena Road , Richmond , a riverside town to the west of London . Her parents were Gustav Theodore Holst , an aspiring composer then working as a music teacher , and Isobel , née Harrison . The Holst family , of mixed Swedish , German and Latvian ancestry , had been in England since 1802 and had been musicians for several generations . Gustav followed this family tradition ; while studying at the Royal College of Music (RCM) , he met Isobel Harrison , who sang in one of the amateur choirs that he conducted . He was immediately attracted to her , and they were married on 22 July 1901 .

While attempting to establish himself as a composer , Gustav Holst worked first as an orchestral trombonist , and later as a teacher . In 1907 he held teaching posts at James Allen 's Girls ' School in Dulwich , and St Paul 's Girls ' School (SPGS) in Hammersmith , where he was director of music . He also taught evening classes at Morley College , an adult education centre in the Waterloo district of London . Shortly after Imogen 's birth the family moved from Richmond to a small house by the river in nearby Barnes , which they rented from a relative . Imogen 's main memories of this house were of her father working in his composing room on the top floor , which she was forbidden to visit , and of his efforts to teach her folk @-@ songs .

= = = Schooling = = =

Descriptions of Imogen as a small child indicate that she had blue eyes , fair hair , an oval face reminiscent of her father 's , and a rather prominent nose inherited from her mother . In 1912 , at the age of five , she joined the kindergarten class at the Froebel Institute , and remained at the school for five years . Holidays were often spent at the Holsts ' rented country cottage at Thaxted in Essex ,

where Gustav Holst began an annual Whitsun Festival in 1916 .

In 1917 Imogen began boarding at Eothen , a small , private school for girls in Caterham , where Jane Joseph , Holst 's star pupil from SPGS , taught music . A letter home , dated 17 July 1917 , tells of " compertishions [sic] , and ripping prizes , and strawberries and cream for tea " . At the school , Imogen studied piano with Eleanor Shuttleworth , violin with André Mangeot (described as " topping ") and theory with Jane Joseph (" ripping ") . Under Joseph 's tuition Imogen produced her first compositions ? three instrumental pieces and some Christmas carol tunes ? which she numbered as Ops . 1 , 2 , 3 and 4 . In the summer term of 1920 , she composed and choreographed a " Dance of the Nymphs and Shepherds " , which was performed at the school under her direction on 9 July .

Imogen left Eothen in December 1920 hoping to study under Ruby Ginner at the Ginner @-@ Mawer School of Dance and Drama , but was rejected as probably lacking the stamina for a dancing career . While studying at home under a governess for six months , at Whitsun 1921 she took part as a dancer in a production of Purcell 's semi @-@ opera from 1690 , Dioclesian , a version largely devised by Joseph .

In September 1921 Imogen became a boarder at St Paul 's Girls School . In July 1922 she performed a Bach Prelude and Fugue on the piano , for which Joseph praised her warmly , writing : " I think everyone enjoyed the Bach from beginning to end , they all made nice contented noises at the end of it " . Imogen 's SPGS years were generally happy and successful . In July 1923 she won the junior Alice Lupton piano prize , but her chances of distinction as a pianist were marred when she began to develop phlebitis in her left arm . Among other activities she became interested in folk music and dance , and in 1923 became a member of the English Folk Dance Society (EFDS) . In 1924 ? 25 , her final year at SPGS , Imogen founded a folk dance society in the school . At an end @-@ of @-@ term school concert late in July 1925 , she played Chopin 's étude in E major and gave the first performance of Gustav Holst 's Toccata .

= = = = Royal College of Music = = = =

Although destined like her father for the RCM , Imogen first spent a year studying composition with Herbert Howells and piano with Adine O 'Neill , while otherwise occupying herself with EFDS activities . She began at the RCM in September 1926 , studying piano with Kathleen Long , composition with George Dyson , and conducting under W. H. Reed . Her aptitude as a conductor was evident in December 1926 , when she led the college 's Third Orchestra in the opening movement of Mozart 's " Prague " Symphony . This and other performances on the podium led The Daily Telegraph to speculate that Imogen might eventually become the first woman to " establish a secure tenure of the conductor 's platform " .

In her second RCM year Imogen concentrated on composition , producing several chamber works including a violin sonata , an oboe quintet , and a suite for woodwind . She took her first steps towards personal independence when she moved from the family home to a bedsit near Kensington Gardens . In 1928 she went to Belgium with the EFDS , took an Italian holiday , and made an extended trip to Germany with a group known as " The Travelling Morrice " which promoted international understanding through music and dance . In October 1928 she won the RCM 's Cobbett prize for an original chamber composition , her Phantasy String Quartet , and shortly afterwards was awarded the Morley Scholarship for the " best all @-@ round student " . The quartet was broadcast by the BBC on 20 March 1929 , but for her , the achievement was overshadowed by the news that month of the premature death of her early mentor Jane Joseph .

In the winter of 1929 Imogen made her first visit to Canada and the United States , as part of an EFDS party . Back home , she worked on her RCM finals composition , a suite for brass band entitled The Unfortunate Traveller . Despite some apprehension on her part , the piece passed the examiners ' scrutiny and was played at the college 's end @-@ of @-@ year concert in July . Imogen gained her ARCM diploma , and learned also that she had been awarded an Octavia Travelling Scholarship which would enable her to study composition abroad .

= = Career = =

= = = European travels , 1930 ? 31 = = =

Imogen spent much of period between September 1930 and May 1931 travelling . A brief visit to Liège in September was followed immediately by a three @-@ month round trip , to Scandinavia , Germany , Austria and Hungary , returning to England via Prague , Dresden , Leipzig , Berlin and Amsterdam . Her " orgy of musical experiences " included a Mozart pilgrimage in Salzburg , performances of Der Rosenkavalier and Die Entführung aus dem Serail at the Vienna State Opera , Bach in Berlin and Mahler 's Seventh Symphony in Amsterdam . On 1 February 1932 she departed again , this time for Italy . After a two @-@ month tour Imogen came home with mixed views on Italian music @-@ making . She concluded that " the Italians are a nation of singers ... But music is a different language in that part of the world " . Back in London , she decided that despite her experiences , " if it is music one is wanting , there is no place like London . "

= = = Mainly teaching , 1931 ? 38 = = =

With her scholarship funds exhausted , Imogen needed a job , and in June 1931 took charge of music at the Citizen House arts and education centre in Bath . She disliked the disciplines imposed by an unsympathetic and unyielding superior , and she stayed only a few months . She then worked as a freelance conductor and accompanist before joining the staff of the EFDS early in 1932 . The organisation had by now expanded to become the " English Folk Dance and Song Society " (EFDSS) and was based in new headquarters at Cecil Sharp House . The duties , mainly teaching , were not full @-@ time , and she was able to take up part @-@ time teaching posts at her old school , Eothen , and at Roedean School . Although she composed little original music during these years , she made many instrumental and vocal arrangements of traditional folk melodies .

Gustav Holst 's health had been poor for years ; in the winter of 1933 ? 34 it deteriorated , and he died on 25 May 1934 . Imogen privately determined that she would protect her father 's musical legacy , and began working on his biography . Meanwhile her own music began to attract attention . Her carol arrangement " Nowell and Nowell " was performed in a 1934 Christmas concert in Chichester Cathedral , and the following year saw the premiere of her Concerto for Violin and Strings , with Elsie Avril as the soloist and Imogen conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra . In 1936 she paid a visit to Hollywood , where she stayed with her uncle (Gustav 's brother) , the actor Ernest Cossart . A highlight of this visit was a Wagner concert at the Hollywood Bowl , conducted by Otto Klemperer . Back in England , Imogen worked on recorder arrangements of music by the neglected 16th @-@ century composer Pelham Humphrey . These were published in 1936 to an enthusiastic critical reception . Her biography of her father was published in 1938 ; among several tributes , the composer Edmund Rubbra praised her for producing a book that was not " clouded by sentiment ... her biography is at once intimate and objective " .

= = = War : travelling for CEMA = = =

In 1938 Imogen decided to abandon amateur music @-@ making and teaching to concentrate on her own professional development . She resigned her EFDSS post while continuing to honour existing commitments to the organisation . She had given up her work at Roedean in 1936 ; at Easter 1939 she resigned from Eothen . In June 1939 she began a tour of Switzerland which included the Lucerne Festival . Towards the end of August , as war became increasingly likely , she broke off the trip and returned home .

After the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939 , Imogen worked for the Bloomsbury House Refugee Committee , which supported German and Austrian refugee musicians interned under emergency regulations . In January 1940 she accepted a position under a scheme organised by the Pilgrim Trust , to act as one of six " music travellers " , whose brief was to boost morale by

encouraging musical activities in rural communities . Imogen was assigned to cover the west of England , a huge area stretching from Oxfordshire to Cornwall . When the government set up the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) , responsibility for the music travellers passed to that body .

With little practical support from CEMA , Imogen 's organisational talents , according to her friend Ursula Vaughan Williams , " developed brilliantly " . According to Imogen 's account , her duties included conducting local brass bands , leading hymn @-@ singing practice (" fourteen very old women in hats sitting round the edge of a dark , empty hideous tin hut ") , and organising sing @-@ songs for evacuee children . She arranged performances by professional groups , and what she termed " drop @-@ in @-@ and @-@ sing " festivals in which anyone could join . Imogen also writes of " idyllic days " spent over cups of tea , discussing the hopes and dreams of would @-@ be music makers . Her compositional activity in these years was limited by time and pressures of work , but she produced two recorder trios ? the Offley and Deddington suites ? and made numerous arrangements for female voices of carols and traditional songs . By the summer of 1942 the workload and concomitant bureaucracy was such that she was exhausted , and in need of a lengthy rest .

= = = Dartington = = =

In 1938 , Imogen had visited Dartington Hall , a progressive school and crafts community near Totnes in Devon , which had been founded in 1925 by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst . In 1941 ? 42 , while travelling for CEMA in Devon and Cornwall , she was invited by the Elmhirsts to make her base at Dartington . In the summer of 1942 , while recuperating there , she was persuaded by Christopher Martin , the centre 's administrator , to resign her CEMA role and work at Dartington . He had in mind a music course , " the sort of thing that your father did in the old days at Morley College " . Beginning in 1943 , Imogen established a one @-@ year course , initially designed to train young women to organise amateur orchestras and musical events in rural communities . Gradually it developed into a more general musical education for a broader student intake . Under Imogen 's leadership the course quickly became the hub of a range of musical activities , including the foundation of an amateur orchestra : " Hardly any of us could play ... However bad we were , we went on " . Imogen 's teaching methods , heavily based on " learning by doing " and without formal examinations , at first disconcerted her students and puzzled the school inspectors , but eventually gained acceptance and respect . Rosamond Strode , a pupil at Dartington who later worked with Imogen at Aldeburgh , said of her approach : " She knew exactly how , and when , to push her victims in at the deep end , and she knew , also , that although they would flounder and splash about at first , it wouldn 't be long before ... they would be swimming easily while she beamed approval from the bank " .

In the conducive atmosphere of Dartington Imogen resumed serious composition , largely abandoned during the hectic CEMA years . In 1943 she completed a Serenade for flute , viola and bassoon , a Suite for String Orchestra , and a choral work , Three Psalms . All these works were performed at a Wigmore Hall concert on 14 June 1943 devoted to her music . Other compositions from the Dartington years included Theme and Variations for solo violin , String Trio No. 1 (premiered by the Dartington Hall String Trio at the National Gallery on 17 July 1944) , songs from the 16th @-@ century anthology Tottel 's Miscellany , an oboe concerto , and a string quartet . In October 1943 the composer Benjamin Britten and the tenor Peter Pears gave the first of several recitals at Dartington . A mutual respect and friendship developed between Britten and Imogen , strengthened by their shared love of neglected music from the Renaissance and Baroque eras .

From 1945 , while maintaining her commitment to Dartington , Imogen began to widen her musical activities . As well as editing and preparing scores for Britten , she promoted Dartington as the base for Britten 's new English Opera Group , although eventually Glyndebourne was preferred . In 1947 she encouraged the refugee violinist Norbert Brainin to form his own string quartet , and arranged its debut at Dartington , as the " Brainin Quartet " , on 13 July 1947 . Six months later , renamed the Amadeus Quartet , the group appeared at the Wigmore Hall , and went on to worldwide recognition .

In 1948 she began work on a critical study of her father 's music , a companion volume to her 1938 Holst biography . When this was published in 1951 , most critics praised its objectivity , one critic venturing that she had been " unnecessarily harsh " in her judgements .

Rising standards of achievement at Dartington enabled Imogen to organise performances of more demanding works , such as Bach 's Mass in B minor in July 1950 to honour the 200th anniversary of Bach 's death . Three years in preparation , this endeavour brought a tribute from one of the audience : " I don 't know , and can 't imagine what the music of heaven is like . But when we all get there , please God , if any conducting is still necessary I hope your services will be required and that I will be in the chorus " . By the middle of 1950 Imogen 's professional focus was changing . She had attended the first two Aldeburgh Festivals in 1948 and 1949 , and in 1950 accepted a commission to provide a choral work for performance at the 1951 festival . Sensing that it was time to leave Dartington , she gave a year 's notice , part of which was spent on sabbatical , studying Indian music at Rabindranath Tagore 's university in West Bengal . A fruit of this visit was her Ten Indian Folk Tunes for recorder . On 21 July 1951 her one @-@ act opera , Benedick and Beatrice , was performed at Dartington , to mark her departure .

= = = Aldeburgh = = =

Without definite plans for her future after Dartington , Imogen toured Europe , collecting music that she would later edit for performance , including madrigals by Carlo Gesualdo which she found " very exciting " . At home , although not formally employed by Britten , she worked with him on several projects , including a new performing version of Purcell 's Dido and Aeneas and the preparation of the vocal and full scores for Britten 's opera Billy Budd . Pears , who had observed Imogen 's overall contributions to musical life at Dartington , believed she could help Britten and the Aldeburgh Festival on a more formal basis , and shortly after the 1952 festival Britten invited her to come and work with him . She agreed , and in September 1952 moved to lodgings in Aldeburgh .

= = = = Assistant to Britten = = = =

When Imogen joined Britten , the financial arrangement was vague ; Britten paid her on a piecemeal basis rather than a regular salary , unaware that she had made over her rights to her father 's estate to her mother and had little money of her own . As a result , she lived very frugally in Aldeburgh , but her commitment to Britten overrode her own physical comfort . For the next dozen years her life was organised around the joint objectives of assisting Britten and developing the Aldeburgh Festival . Although she temporarily put her own compositional ambitions aside , she did not abandon all other activities . She made many choral and vocal arrangements , promoted her father 's music , and wrote books , articles and programme notes .

For the first 18 months of her association with Britten , Imogen kept a diary which , Grogan says , forms a record of her " unconditional belief in Britten 's achievement and status , and her absolute devotion to his work " . The first of Britten 's works to which she made a significant contribution was the opera Gloriana , scheduled to form part of the 1953 Coronation celebrations . The short timescale for the writing of the opera placed considerable pressure on the composer and his new assistant , strains that were dramatised 60 years later in a radio play , Imo and Ben . Imogen 's main task with Gloriana was to copy Britten 's pencil sketches and prepare the vocal and piano scores which the singers needed for rehearsals by February 1953 . Later she assisted him with the writing of the full orchestral score , and performed similar services with his next opera , The Turn of the Screw (1954) . When Britten was under pressure during the composition of his ballet The Prince of the Pagodas (1956) , Imogen accompanied him to Switzerland , to remain by his side as he completed the work . Imogen took great pleasure in her association with Britten 's opera for children , Noye 's Fludde (1957) , for which she showed Britten how to achieve a unique raindrop effect by hitting a row of china mugs with a wooden spoon . She and Britten combined to collect and publish music for the recorder , in a series published by Boosey and Hawkes (1954 ? 59) , and jointly wrote a popular introductory book , The Story of Music (1958) .

Imogen assisted Britten with all his major compositions until 1964 . At that point , conscious of time passing , she determined to give priority to the final securing of her father 's musical legacy , and to re @-@ establish her credentials as a composer . She relinquished her post as Britten 's assistant to Rosamund Strode , although she did not leave Aldeburgh or break with Britten , continuing her work with the Aldeburgh Festival for a further 13 years .

= = = = Artistic director = = = =

From the time of her arrival in Aldeburgh Imogen gave considerable support and assistance to the Aldeburgh Festival , as a conductor and , from 1953 , increasingly as a planner and organiser . In 1956 her position was formalised , and she joined Britten and Pears as one of the festival 's artistic directors , taking responsibility for programmes and performers . At the 1956 festival she fulfilled a long @-@ held ambition by arranging a performance of Gustav Holst 's opera Savitri , the first of several Holst works that she introduced to the festival . Savitri was offered as part of a double bill that included Imogen 's arrangement of John Blow 's 17th century opera Venus and Adonis . In 1957 she instituted late @-@ night concerts devoted to early music , and in 1962 she organised a series of evening concerts of Flemish music , in which she had more recently become interested . She also devised frequent programmes devoted to church music , for performance at Aldeburgh parish church . Since moving to Aldeburgh in 1952 , Imogen had lived in a series of lodgings and rented flats . In 1962 she moved to a small contemporary bungalow built for her in Church Walk , where she lived for the rest of her life .

In 1964 , after giving up her role as Britten 's assistant , Imogen began composing again , and in 1965 accepted commissions for two large @-@ scale works : The Sun 's Journey , a cantata for female voices , and the Trianon Suite , composed for the Trianon Youth Orchestra of Ipswich . In 1965 and 1966 she published two books , studies of Bach and Britten . The latter work caused ill feelings among several key figures in Britten 's earlier career with whom he had subsequently fallen out , such as his former librettists Eric Crozier and Ronald Duncan , whose contributions to Britten 's success were ignored in the book . Between 1966 and 1970 Imogen recorded a number of her father 's works with the Purcell Singers and the English Chamber Orchestra , under the Argo and Lyrita labels . Among these recordings was the Double Violin Concerto for which , forty years earlier , she had acted as the rehearsal pianist before the first performance .

Imogen had formed the Purcell Singers , a small semi @-@ professional choir , in October 1952 , largely at the instigation of Pears . From 1954 the choir became regular performers at the Aldeburgh Festival , with programmes ranging from rarely heard medieval music to 20th @-@ century works . Among choir members who later achieved individual distinction were the bass @-@ baritone John Shirley @-@ Quirk , the tenors Robert Tear and Philip Langridge , and the founder and conductor of the Heinrich Schütz Choir , Roger Norrington . Langridge remembered with particular pleasure a performance in Orford church of Thomas Tallis 's forty @-@ part motet Spem in alium , on 2 July 1963 . When she gave up the conductorship of the choir in 1967 , much of its musical mission , in particular its commitment to early music , was assumed by other groups , such as Norrington 's Schütz Choir and the Purcell Consort formed by the ex @-@ Purcell Singers chorister Grayston Burgess .

On 2 June 1967 Imogen shared the podium with Britten in the concert inaugurating the Aldeburgh Festival 's new home at the Snape Maltings . From 1972 Imogen was involved with the development of educational classes at the Maltings , which began with weekend singing classes and developed into the Britten @-@ Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies , with its own training orchestra . By this time Imogen 's performances at the festival had become increasingly rare , but in 1975 she conducted a concert of Gustav Holst 's brass band music , held outdoors at Framlingham Castle . A report of the event described an evening of " persistent drizzle ... until a diminutive figure in a special scarlet dress took the conductor 's baton . The band was transformed , and played Holst 's Suite as it has never been played before " .

Britten had been in poor health since undergoing heart surgery in 1973 , and on 4 December 1976 he died . Imogen was unsure that she could maintain a working relationship with Pears alone , and

on reaching the age of 70 decided she would retire as artistic director after the 1977 festival . That year she made her final festival appearance as a performer when she stood in for the indisposed conductor André Previn at the Snape Maltings Training Orchestra 's inaugural festival concert . On retirement , she accepted the honorary title of Artistic Director Emeritus .

= = Later career = =

Gustav Holst 's centenary was celebrated in 1974 , when Imogen published a revised biography in Faber 's " Great Composers " series and a Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst 's Music . The centenary was the occasion for the publication of the first volume of a facsimile edition of her father 's manuscripts , on which Imogen worked with the help of the composer Colin Matthews . Three more facsimile volumes followed in the years up to 1983 , at which point Imogen 's own failing health led to the abandonment of the project . As part of the 1974 centenary , Imogen negotiated performances of *Savitri* and *The Wandering Scholar* at Aldeburgh and Sadler 's Wells , and helped to arrange exhibitions of Holst 's life and works at Aldeburgh and the Royal Festival Hall .

Apart from her books concerned with her father 's life and works , Imogen continued to write on other aspects of music . In addition to numerous articles she published a short study of the Renaissance composer William Byrd (1972) and a handbook for conductors of amateur choirs (1973) . She continued to compose , usually short pieces but with occasional larger @-@ scale orchestral works such as the *Woodbridge Suite* (1970) and the *Deben Calendar* (1977) , the latter a series of twelve sketches depicting the River Deben in Suffolk at different phases of the year . Her last major composition was a String Quintet , written in 1982 and performed in October of that year by the Endellion Quartet , augmented by the cellist Steven Isserlis .

In April 1979 Imogen was present when the Queen Mother opened the new Britten ? Pears School building in Snape . The building included a new library ? the Gustav Holst Library ? to which Imogen had donated a large amount of material , including books which her father had used in his own teaching career . She had intended that , after 1977 , her retirement from the Aldeburgh Festival would be total , but she made an exception in 1980 when she organised a 70th birthday celebration concert for Pears .

= = Death = =

Shortly after the 1977 Aldeburgh Festival , Imogen became seriously ill with what she described as " a coronary angina " . Thereafter , angina was a recurrent problem , although she continued to work and fulfil engagements . By early 1984 the deterioration in her health was noticeable to her friends . She died at home of heart failure on 9 March 1984 and was buried in Aldeburgh churchyard five days later in a plot next to Britten 's . An obituary tribute in the magazine *Early Music* emphasised her long association with music in the Aldeburgh church , where she " [brought] iridescently to life facets of that tradition to which her own life had been dedicated and which she presented as a continuing source of strength and wonder " . Ursula Vaughan Williams wrote : " Imogen had something of the medieval scholar about her ... content with few creature comforts if there was enough music , enough work , enough books to fill her days . Indeed , she always filled her days , making twenty @-@ four hours contain what most of us need twice that time to do " .

In 2007 , Imogen 's centenary was recognised at Aldeburgh by several special events , including a recital in the parish church by the Navarra Quartet in which works by Purcell and Schubert were mixed with Imogen 's own *The Fall of the Leaf* for solo cello , and the String Quintet . The latter work was described by Andrew Clements in *The Guardian* as " genuinely memorable ... The set of variations with which the quintet ends dissolves into a series of bare solo lines , linking Holst 's music to her father 's " .

Imogen never married , though she enjoyed a number of romantic friendships , notably with the future poet Miles Tomalin , whom she met when she was a pupil at St Pauls . The two were close until 1929 , and exchanged poetry ; Tomalin married in 1931 . Many years after the relationship ended , Imogen admitted to Britten that she would have married Tomalin .

= = = Honours = = =

Imogen was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Music in 1966 . She was awarded honorary doctorates from the universities of Essex (1968) , Exeter (1969) , and Leeds (1983) . She was given honorary membership of the Royal Academy of Music in 1970 . In 1975 she was appointed a Companion of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) .

= = Music = =

Imogen Holst was a part @-@ time composer , intermittently productive within her extensive portfolio of musical activities . In her earlier years she was among a group of young British women composers ? Elizabeth Maconchy and Elisabeth Lutyens were others ? whose music was regularly performed and broadcast . According to a later critic , her Mass in A of 1927 showed " confident and imaginative layering of voices , building to a satisfying Agnus Dei " . However , for long periods in her subsequent career Imogen barely composed at all . After the RCM , her most active years as a composer were at Dartington in the 1940s and the " post @-@ Britten " period after 1964 . Her output of compositions , arrangements and edited music is extensive but has received only limited critical attention . Much of it is unpublished and has usually been neglected after its initial performance .

The oeuvre comprises instrumental , vocal , orchestral and choral music . Early in her compositional career Imogen was primarily influenced , as Gustav Holst 's daughter , by what the analyst Christopher Tinker terms " her natural and inescapable relationship with the English musical establishment " , and by her close personal relationship with her father . Some of her first compositions reflect the pastoralism of Ralph Vaughan Williams , who taught her at the RCM . In her teaching and EFDSS years during the 1930s she became known for her folksong arrangements but composed little music herself . The personal style that emerged in the 1940s incorporated her affinity with folksong and dance , her intense interest in English music of the 16th and 17th centuries , and her taste for innovation . In her 1930 suite for solo viola , she had begun experimenting with scale patterns ; by the 1940s she was incorporating her own six- and eight @-@ note scales into her chamber music and occasionally into choral works such as the Five Songs (1944) . This experimentation reappears in later works ; in *Hallo My Fancy* (1972) a new scale is introduced for each verse , while the choir provides free harmonisation to a solo voice . In *Homage to William Morris* (1984) , among her final works , Tinker notes her use of dissonance " to add strength to the musical articulation of the text " . By contrast , the String Quintet of 1982 , the work which Imogen herself thought made her " a real composer " , is characterised by the warmth of its harmonies .

Much of Imogen 's choral music was written for amateur performance . Critics have observed a clear distinction in quality between these pieces and the choral works written for professional choirs , particularly those for women 's voices . These latter pieces , says Tinker , incorporate her best work as an original composer . Record companies were slow in recognising Imogen 's commercial potential , and not until 2009 was a CD issued devoted entirely to her music ? a selection of her works for strings . The Guardian 's reviewer welcomed the recording : " [T] here is a great deal of English music of far less worth that is frequently praised to the skies " . In 2012 a selection of her choral music , sung by the Clare College Choir , was recorded by Harmonia Mundi . One review of this recording picks out *Welcome Joy* and *Welcome Sorrow* , written for female voices with harp accompaniment , as " [giving] an insight into her own , softly nuanced , pioneering voice " . Another mentions the " Three Psalms " setting , where " inner rhythms are underscored by the subtle string ostinatos pulsing beneath " .

= = Published texts = =

Publication details refer to the book 's first UK publication .

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Imogen Holst also wrote numerous articles , pamphlets , essays , introductions and programme notes during the period 1935 ? 1984 .