

Nantwich Choral Society

From the Bavarian Highlands

Edward Elgar

Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma)

Edward Elgar

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast

Samuel Coleridge Taylor

Peter Kirk, tenor

The Northern Concordia Orchestra

John Naylor, conductor

Nantwich Civic Hall

Sunday 23rd March 2014, 3.30 pm

Welcome

As chairman of the Nantwich Choral Society, it is with very great pleasure that I welcome you to this afternoon's concert of all English music in Nantwich Civic Hall. We return to the Civic Hall after our last concert here in 2012; again a concert of all English music which was much enjoyed. We are delighted to be joined today by the fully professional Northern Concordia Orchestra and its leader Andrew Long. The choir and orchestra will join together for two works - Songs from the Bavarian Highlands by Edward Elgar, and Hiawatha's Wedding Feast by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor - and we will all enjoy listening to the orchestra playing Elgar's Enigma Variations, surely one of the most popular works of all time. An afternoon full of choral and orchestral colour.

The Nantwich Choral Society is now in its 41st season of performing choral works. From humble beginnings in 1972 the Local Authority evening class has now become one of the leading and distinguished choirs in the North West with 100+ mixed choral voices. Under the inspirational baton of our Music Director John Naylor and our accomplished accompanist Simon Russell we strive to keep the choral tradition alive by singing great choral works and by having a varied and expanding repertoire of music, some familiar and some less so. We enjoy a fine choral reputation and excellent critique of our performances in the Nantwich and wider Cheshire area.

In November 2013 we opened the season by performing Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with orchestra, a work at one time more often performed than Handel's now greater known work the *Messiah*. We had a successful educational Singing Day at Malpas parish church and a Come and Sing of Brahms' *Requiem* in Nantwich parish church attracting 170 fellow enthusiasts to enjoy the rehearsals and evening performance. We look forward to rounding off the season with our final summer concert of contemporary choral music.

The resources required to stage these performances are considerable and we wish to acknowledge the receipt of legacies, sponsorships, grants and donations which help us to maintain and develop our musical standards, for without such generosity it would not be possible for our choral society to have the opportunity of taking part in, or for our audience to listen to, these wonderful choral works.

Elizabeth Lea

Acknowledgements

Nantwich Choral Society gratefully acknowledges help and support during the recent past from The Arts Council, the Harding Trust, Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council, Barclays Bank and the advertisers in our programmes.

From the Bavarian Highlands

1. The Dance

Come and hasten to the dancing,
Merry eyes will soon be glancing,
Ha! my heart upbounds!
Come and dance a merry measure,
Quaff the bright brown ale my treasure,
Hark! what joyous sounds!

Sweet-heart come, on let us haste,
On, on, no time let us waste
With my heart I love thee
Dance, dance, for rest we disdain
Turn twirl and spin round again,
With my arm I hold thee!

Down the path the lights are gleaming,
Friendly faces gladly beaming
Welcome us with song.
Dancing makes the heart grow lighter,
Makes the world and life grow brighter
As we dance along!

2. False Love

Now we hear the Spring's sweet voice
Singing gladly through the world;
Bidding all the earth rejoice.

All is merry in the field,
Flowers grow amidst the grass,
Blossoms blue, red, white they yield.

As I seek my maiden true,
Sings the little lark on high
Fain to send her praises due.

As I climb and reach her door,
Ah! I see a rival there,
So farewell! for evermore.

Ever true was I to thee,
Never grieved or vexed thee, love,
False, oh! false, art thou of me.

Now amid the forest green,
Far from cruel eyes that mock
Will I dwell unloved, unseen.

3. Lullaby

Sleep, my son, oh! slumber softly,
While thy mother watches o'er thee,
Nothing can affright or harm thee.
Oh! sleep, my son.

Far-away
Zithers play,
Dancing gay
Calls to-day.

Vainly play
Zithers gay!
Here I stay
All the day.

Happily
Guarding thee,
Peacefully
Watching thee.

Sleep, my son,
oh! slumber softly,
While thy mother watches o'er thee,
Oh! sleep, my son.

4. Aspiration

Over the heights the snow lies deep,
Sunk is the land in peaceful sleep;
Here by the house of God we pray,
Lead, Lord, our souls to-day.

Shielding, like the silent snow,
Fall his mercies here below.

Calmly then, like the snow-bound land,
Rest we in his protecting hand;
Bowing, we wait his mighty will:
Lead, Lord, and guide us still.

5. On the alm¹

A mellow bell peals near,
It has so sweet a sound;
I know a maiden dear
With voice as full and round.

A sunlight alm shines clear,
With clover blossoms sweet;
There dwells my maiden dear
And there my love I meet.

There flying with no fear
The swallows pass all day,
And fast, my maiden dear,
Sees chamois haste away.

I cannot linger here,
I cannot wait below;
To seek my maiden dear,
I, to the alm must go.

The mountain's call I hear,
And up the height I bound;
I know my maiden dear
Will mark my *Juchhé* sound.

Rejoicing come I here
My flaxen-haired sweet-heart;
I love thee maiden dear,
Nay! bid me not depart!

6. The Marksmen

Come from the mountain side,
Come from the valleys wide,
See, how we muster strong,
Tramping along!

Rifle on shoulder sling,
Powder and bullets bring,
Manly in mind and heart,
Play we our part.

Sure be each eye to-day,
Steady each hand must stay
If in the trial we,
Victors would be!

Sharp is the crack! 'tis done!
Lost is the chance, or won;
Right in the gold is it?
Huzza! the hit!

The sun will sink and light the west
And touch the peaks with crimson glow;
Then shadows fill the vale with rest
While the stars look peace on all below.

In triumph then we take away,
And with our prizes homeward wend;
Through meadows sweet with new-
mown hay,
A song exultant will we send.

¹ A high mountain pasture

VARIATIONS ON AN ORIGINAL THEME (ENIGMA)

INTERVAL

HIAWATHA'S WEDDING-FEAST

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,
How the handsome Yenadizze
Danced at Hiawatha's wedding;
How the gentle Chibiabos,
He the sweetest of musicians,
Sang his songs of love and longing;
How Iagoo, the great boaster,
He the marvellous story-teller,
Told his tales of strange adventure,
That the feast might be more joyous,
That the time might pass more gayly,
And the guests be more contented.

Sumptuous was the feast Nokomis
Made at Hiawatha's wedding;
All the bowls were made of bass-wood,
White and polished very smoothly,
All the spoons of horn of bison,
Black and polished very smoothly.
She had sent through all the village
Messengers with wands of willow,
As a sign of invitation,
As a token of the feasting;
And the wedding guests assembled,
Clad in all their richest raiment,
Robes of fur and belts of wampum,
Splendid with their paint and plumage,
Beautiful with beads and tassels.

First they ate the sturgeon, Nahma,
And the pike, the Maskenozha,
Caught and cooked by old Nokomis;
Then on pemican they feasted,
Pemican and buffalo marrow,
Haunch of deer and hump of bison,
Yellow cakes of the Mondamin,

And the wild rice of the river.
But the gracious Hiawatha,
And the lovely Laughing Water,
And the careful old Nokomis,
Tasted not the food before them,
Only waited on the others,
Only served their guests in silence.

And when all the guests had finished,
Old Nokomis, brisk and busy,
From an ample pouch of otter,
Filled the red stone pipes for smoking
With tobacco from the South-land,
Mixed with bark of the red willow,
And with herbs and leaves of fragrance.
Then she said, "O Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Dance for us your merry dances,
Dance the Beggar's Dance to please us,
That the feast may be more joyous,
That the time may pass more gayly,
And our guests be more contented!"

Then the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,
He the idle Yenadizze,
He the merry mischief-maker,
Whom the people called the Storm-Fool,
Rose among the guests assembled.
Skilled was he in sports and pastimes,
In the merry dance of snow-shoes,
In the play of quoits and ball-play;
Skilled was he in games of hazard,
In all games of skill and hazard,
Pugasaing, the Bowl and Counters,
Kuntassoo, the Game of Plum-stones.
Though the warriors called him Faint-Heart,

Called him coward, Shaugodaya,
Idler, gambler, Yenadizze,
Little heeded he their jesting,
Little cared he for their insults,
For the women and the maidens
Loved the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis.

He was dressed in shirt of doe-skin,
White and soft, and fringed with ermine,
All inwrought with beads of wampum;
He was dressed in deer-skin leggings,
Fringed with hedgehog quills and ermine,
And in moccasins of buck-skin,
Thick with quills and beads embroidered.
On his head were plumes of swan's down,
On his heels were tails of foxes,
In one hand a fan of feathers,
And a pipe was in the other.
Barred with streaks of red and yellow,
Streaks of blue and bright vermilion,
Shone the face of Pau-Puk-Keewis.
From his forehead fell his tresses,
Smooth, and parted like a woman's,
Shining bright with oil, and plaited,
Hung with braids of scented grasses,
As among the guests assembled,
To the sound of flutes and singing,
To the sound of drums and voices,
Rose the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,
And began his mystic dances.

First he danced a solemn measure,
Very slow in step and gesture,
In and out among the pine-trees,
Through the shadows and the sunshine,
Treading softly like a panther.
Then more swiftly and still swifter,
Whirling, spinning round in circles,
Leaping o'er the guests assembled,
Eddying round and round the wigwam,
Till the leaves went whirling with him,
Till the dust and wind together
Swept in eddies round about him.
Then along the sandy margin

Of the lake, the Big-Sea-Water,
On he sped with frenzied gestures,
Stamped upon the sand, and tossed it
Wildly in the air around him;
Till the wind became a whirlwind,
Till the sand was blown and sifted
Like great snowdrifts o'er the landscape,
Heaping all the shores with Sand Dunes,
Sand Hills of the Nagow Wudjoo!

Thus the merry Pau-Puk-Keewis
Danced his Beggar's Dance to please
them,
And, returning, sat down laughing
There among the guests assembled,
Sat and fanned himself serenely
With his fan of turkey-feathers.

Then they said to Chibiabos,
To the friend of Hiawatha,
To the sweetest of all singers,
To the best of all musicians,
"Sing to us, O Chibiabos!
Songs of love and songs of longing,
That the feast may be more joyous,
That the time may pass more gayly,
And our guests be more contented!"

And the gentle Chibiabos
Sang in accents sweet and tender,
Sang in tones of deep emotion,
Songs of love and songs of longing;
Looking still at Hiawatha,
Looking at fair Laughing Water,
Sang he softly, sang in this wise:

"Onaway! Awake, beloved!
Thou the wild-flower of the forest!
Thou the wild-bird of the prairie!
Thou with eyes so soft and fawn-like!
"If thou only lookest at me,
I am happy, I am happy,
As the lilies of the prairie,
When they feel the dew upon them!"

"Sweet thy breath is as the fragrance
Of the wild-flowers in the morning,
As their fragrance is at evening,
In the Moon when leaves are falling.

"Does not all the blood within me
Leap to meet thee, leap to meet thee,
As the springs to meet the sunshine,
In the Moon when nights are brightest?
"Onaway! my heart sings to thee,
Sings with joy when thou art near me,
As the sighing, singing branches
In the pleasant Moon of Strawberries!

"When thou art not pleased, beloved,
Then my heart is sad and darkened,
As the shining river darkens
When the clouds drop shadows on it!
"When thou smilest, my beloved,
Then my troubled heart is brightened,
As in sunshine gleam the ripples
That the cold wind makes in rivers.

"Smiles the earth, and smile the waters,
Smile the cloudless skies above us,
But I lose the way of smiling
When thou art no longer near me!
"I myself, myself! behold me!
Blood of my beating heart, behold me!
O awake, awake, beloved!
Onaway! awake, beloved!"

Thus the gentle Chibiabos
Sang his song of love and longing;
And lagoo, the great boaster,
He the marvellous story-teller,
He the friend of old Nokomis,
Jealous of the sweet musician,
Jealous of the applause they gave him,
Saw in all the eyes around him,
Saw in all their looks and gestures,
That the wedding guests assembled
Longed to hear his pleasant stories,
His immeasurable falsehoods.

Very boastful was lagoo;
Never heard he an adventure
But himself had met a greater;
Never any deed of daring
But himself had done a bolder;
Never any marvellous story
But himself could tell a stranger.
Would you listen to his boasting,
Would you only give him credence,
No one ever shot an arrow
Half so far and high as he had;
Ever caught so many fishes,
Ever killed so many reindeer,
Ever trapped so many beaver!
None could run so fast as he could
None could dive so deep as he could,
None could swim so far as he could;
None had made so many journeys,
None had seen so many wonders,
As this wonderful lagoo,
As this marvellous story-teller!

Thus his name became a by-word
And a jest among the people;
And whene'er a boastful hunter
Praised his own address too highly,
Or a warrior, home returning,
Talked too much of his achievements,
All his hearers cried, "lagoo!
Here's lagoo come among us!"

He it was who carved the cradle
Of the little Hiawatha,
Carved its framework out of linden,
Bound it strong with reindeer sinews;
He it was who taught him later
How to make his bows and arrows,
How to make the bows of ash-tree,
And the arrows of the oak-tree.

So among the guests assembled
At my Hiawatha's wedding
Sat lagoo, old and ugly,

Sat the marvellous story-teller.
And they said, "O good lagoo,
Tell us now a tale of wonder,
Tell us of some strange adventure,
That the feast may be more joyous,
That the time may pass more gayly,
And our guests be more contented!"

And lagoo answered straightway,
"You shall hear a tale of wonder,
You shall hear the strange adventures
Of Osseo, the Magician,
From the Evening Star descended."

Such was Hiawatha's Wedding,
Thus the wedding-banquet ended,

And the wedding-guests departed.
Leaving Hiawatha happy
With the night and Minnehaha.

*[Pemican: deer or buffalo meat, dried and
pounded.]*

Mondamin: Indian corn

*Nagow Wudjoo: sand dunes of Lake
Superior*

Onaway: Awake!]

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands (1895)

In 1889 Elgar married Alice Roberts, nine years his senior and daughter of a Major General and a published novelist of some independent means. In the 1890s they spent a succession of holidays in Southern Bavaria. Mostly they stayed at Garmisch (where Richard Strauss later built a villa) in a guest house owned by the expatriate Slingsby Bethells who became the dedicatees of this work. The holidays were arranged by Mary Frances ('Minnie') Baker, sister of William Meath Baker who is pictured in the fourth Enigma Variation, and who subsequently became stepmother of Dora Penny, (Dorabella of the tenth variation).

In those days, Garmisch had not developed into the bustling resort it is today and evening entertainment was sparse and unsophisticated. The Elgars spent a number of evenings in local hostelrys where doubtlessly Alice's fluent German was helpful. During the evenings they drank while watching displays of folk dances of the region and during the day they walked and admired the Alpine scenery.

Both activities fired their imagination. On returning from their 1894 holiday, and despite having already embarked on the composition of *King Olaf*, Elgar began work setting to music six poems Alice had written in the style of Bavarian folksongs. Up to this point, Elgar had achieved only limited recognition and frequently suffered from bitter self-doubt and depression but Alice stood by him the entire time, her unfailing confidence restoring his confidence.

Alice's words and Elgar's music were original parodies of the Bavarian style, not translations or transliterations of genuine folksongs. Elgar's keenness for larger expression led him to interrelate and develop musical themes from one song to the next. Here is an early expression of his great ability through variations and developments to expand his music from the simplest beginnings to integrated and eventually complex works.

The first number *The Dance*, in hearty and accelerating Ländler time, recalls Sonnenbichl, a mountain resort that greeted the visitors with excellent beer and irresistible dance: it combines a spirited waltzing theme with a more relaxed central section akin to a fireside rest inside the tavern. The second, *False Love*, hails from Wamberg and depicts a sad idyll of faithlessness in young love. The first half of this song is in Elgar's serene pastoral idiom, the second half more poignant in its account of the unhappy discovery (although one cannot help thinking that the young man abandons his suit rather too abruptly and easily).

The third number, *Lullaby*, had its genesis in the village of Hammersbach. For alto voices, this poignant cradle song tells of a young mother who hears the strains of dance music from afar but resists it to see her child off to slumber. The solemn and spiritual *Aspiration*, which follows is the sole scene in 4/4 time (not 3/4) and likewise the Elgars' sole excursion in these scenes into heavenly matters, the Baroque chapel of St. Anton being its inspiration.

Triple time and human experience return for the final two scenes. *On the Alm* (True Love) is for men's chorus and depicts an Alpine tryst, with a young suitor making a steep ascent up the Alm – (a Bavarian peak) to prove his love.

The set closes with the hearty and jovial *The Marksmen*. This final movement is altogether more complex and pointed in its description of the Murnau shooting club in which the successful shooters claim the affections of the village maidens as their reward. Within it are some of the early stirrings of Elgar's 'nobilmente' style.

This music might not, as one biographer has said, sound much like the mature Elgar, but it does highlight the composer's developing ability to expand his creations from simple, minimal origins while maintaining a feeling of pleasing unity across the individual movements of a single work. Equally importantly, this was one of the first real commercial successes Elgar enjoyed – a real collaboration between husband and wife.

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

Variations on an Original Theme ('Enigma') (1898–9)

Like most overnight successes, Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations was the result of years of hard work. Elgar was 42 years old when he completed the Variations and, despite bitter disappointments and frustrations he had by then steadily built up a reputation, first provincially, then at a national level. In particular, a series of cantatas of increasing size had revealed Elgar's brilliant orchestration and growing mastery of large forms. In the Enigma Variations that mastery was demonstrated on a symphonic scale through the time-honoured form of Theme and Variations, inviting comparisons with the greatest classical masters. But it was Elgar's uniquely personal approach to the form that gave the 'Enigma' Variations its initial novelty and lasting appeal.

Elgar himself recalled how the work came to be conceived on the evening of 21 October 1898:

"After a long day's fiddle teaching in Malvern, I came home very tired. Dinner being over, my dear wife said to me, 'Edward, you look like a good cigar,' and having lighted it, I sat down at the piano. In a little while, soothed and feeling rested, I began to play, and suddenly my wife interrupted by saying, 'Edward, that's a good tune.' I awoke from the dream: 'Eh! Tune, what tune!' and she said, 'Play it again, I like that tune.' I played and strummed, and played, and then she exclaimed, 'That's the tune.' And that tune is the theme of the Variations."

Elgar dedicated the piece to "my friends pictured within" and in the score each variation is prefaced with either a nickname or initials as a clue to the identity of the friend depicted. In common with painted portraits of the time, Elgar's musical portraits depict their subjects at two levels. Each movement conveys a general impression of its subject's personality; in addition, most of them contain a musical reference to a specific characteristic or event, such as Dorabella's stutter, Winifred Norbury's laugh, or the walk in the woods with Jaeger.

The sections of the piece are as follows.

Theme (Enigma: Andante)

The theme consists of two contrasting melodic fragments, the first one the main theme:



The main theme is played by the first violins at the beginning. It is played for a second time, with a slightly different accompaniment, after the second melody has been introduced by the woodwinds. Both fragments are further developed in the following variations. The theme leads into Variation 1 without a pause.

Variation I (L'istesso tempo) "C.A.E."

Caroline Alice Elgar, Elgar's wife. The variation contains repetitions of a four-note melodic fragment which Elgar reportedly whistled whenever arriving home to his wife. In 'My Friends Pictured Within' Elgar wrote, "The variation is really a prolongation of the theme with what I wished to be romantic and delicate additions; those who knew C.A.E. will understand this reference to one whose life was a romantic and delicate inspiration".

Variation II (Allegro) "H.D.S-P."

Elgar wrote, "Hew David Steuart-Powell was a well-known amateur pianist and a great player of chamber music. He was associated with B.G.N. (cello) and the composer (violin) for many years in this playing. His characteristic diatonic run over the keys before beginning to play is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver passages; these should suggest a Toccata, but chromatic beyond H.D.S-P.'s liking".

Variation III (Allegretto) "R.B.T."

Richard Baxter Townshend, Oxford don and author of the "Tenderfoot" series of books. The Variation has a reference to R.B.T.'s presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals- the low voice flying off occasionally into "soprano" timbre. Brother-in-law of W.M.B. depicted in Variation IV.

Variation IV (Allegro di molto) "W.M.B."

William Meath Baker, squire of Hasfield, Gloucestershire and benefactor of several public buildings in Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, brother-in-law of R.B.T. depicted in Variation III, and (step) uncle of Dora Penny in Variation X. He "expressed himself somewhat energetically". This is the shortest of the variations.

Variation V (Moderato) "R.P.A."

Richard Penrose Arnold, the son of the poet Matthew Arnold, and himself an amateur pianist. This variation leads into the next without pause.

Variation VI (Andantino) "Ysobel"

Isabel Fitton, a viola pupil of Elgar. The variation begins with the viola section playing three notes on different strings (switching between the second and fourth strings without

hitting the third), as if to imitate Fitton's string crossing etudes. The melody of this variation is played by the violas, ending on the three notes played by solo viola.

Variation VII (Presto) "Troyte"

Arthur Troyte Griffith, an architect. The variation good-naturedly mimics his enthusiastic incompetence on the piano. It also refers to a specific memory of a day on which Griffith and Elgar were walking and got caught in a thunder-storm. The pair ran for it, and took refuge in the Norbury House, to which the next theme refers.

Variation VIII (Allegretto) "W.N."

Winifred Norbury, a friend Elgar regarded as particularly easy-going, hence the relatively relaxed atmosphere. The theme also refers to the Norbury House, which Elgar was fond of. At the end a single violin note is held over into the next variation.

Variation IX (Adagio) "Nimrod"

Augustus J. Jaeger was employed as music editor by the London publisher Novello & Co. For a long time he was a close friend of Elgar, giving him useful advice, but also severe criticism, something Elgar greatly appreciated. Remarkably, Elgar later related on several occasions how Jaeger had encouraged him as an artist and had stimulated him to continue composing despite setbacks. The name of the variation refers to Nimrod, an Old Testament patriarch described as "a mighty hunter before the Lord" – the name *Jäger* being German for hunter.

Variation X (Intermezzo: Allegretto) "Dorabella"

Dora Penny, a friend whose stutter is depicted by the woodwinds. Dora, later Mrs Richard Powell, was the daughter of Canon Alfred Penny, of Lichfield and stepdaughter of Mary, the sister of William Meath Baker, inspiration for Variation IV. This variation features a melody for solo viola.

Variation XI (Allegro di molto) "G.R.S."

George Robertson Sinclair, the energetic organist of Hereford Cathedral. In the words of Elgar: 'The variation, however, has nothing to do with organs or cathedrals, or, except remotely, with G.R.S. The first few bars were suggested by his great bulldog, Dan (a well-known character) falling down the steep bank into the River Wye (bar 1); his paddling upstream to find a landing place (bars 2 and 3); and his rejoicing bark on landing (second half of bar 5). G.R.S. said, "Set that to music." I did; here it is.'

Variation XII (Andante) "B.G.N."

Basil G. Nevinston, a well-known cellist, who gets a cello melody for his variation. The variation is introduced and concluded by a solo cello. Later, Nevinston inspired Elgar to write his Cello Concerto. This variation leads into the next without pause.

Variation XIII (Romanza: Moderato) " * * * "

Lady Mary Lygon was a personal friend of Elgar and his wife, promoter of the Madresfield Music Festivals and interested in Elgar's music. In 1899, when the Variations were being finished, Elgar wrote to Lady Mary Lygon to ask permission to use her initials, but as she and her brother were on the point of leaving for Australia (he had been appointed Governor of New South Wales) and there was not time for a reply Elgar used "****" instead. Appropriately, Elgar included in the variation a quotation from Felix Mendelssohn's concert overture *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*. This is first played by a clarinet, later quietly by trumpets and trombones, and is included within quotation marks in the score. At intervals the timpani create a sound reminiscent of a ship's engines by means of hard sticks, or, traditionally, coins.

Variation XIV (Finale: Allegro Presto) "E.D.U."

Elgar himself, nicknamed *Edu* by his wife, from the German version *Eduard*. The themes from two variations are echoed: "Nimrod" and "C.A.E.", referring to Jaeger and Elgar's wife Alice, "two great influences on the life and art of the composer", as Elgar wrote in 1927. Elgar called these references "entirely fitting to the intention of the piece".

The first performance of Elgar's '*Enigma*' Variations took place at St James's Hall London on 19 June 1899, conducted by Hans Richter. It was Elgar's most ambitious orchestral work to date and a further performance in Düsseldorf in 1901 went on to establish him as a composer of international importance: Richard Strauss declared that "Here for the first time is an English composer who has something to say".

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912)

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast, Op.30 No.1

Edward Elgar was invited to write a work for the Three Choirs Festival in 1898. He demurred, and referred Herbert Brewer, the Gloucester Cathedral organist to Coleridge-Taylor as "far and away the cleverest fellow amongst the younger men." The editor at Novello of both the two composers was Augustus Jaeger, who told Elgar that Coleridge-Taylor was a 'genius'.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was the son of a West African doctor who had married an English girl. However the reluctance of Croydon patients to patronise the black Dr Taylor's practice resulted in its financial failure and he returned to Sierra Leone, leaving his wife and child behind. Samuel's grandfather discovered and fostered the child's musical talent which was developed by his uncle and the patronage of local musicians. His church choirmaster generously paid for him to study at the Royal College of Music in 1890, first as a violinist and pianist and then as a composer under Charles Villiers Stanford.

The result of Elgar's recommendation was the *Ballade in A minor* which Coleridge-Taylor conducted himself at Gloucester and shortly afterwards at Crystal Palace: these performances greatly enhanced his reputation as one of the coming men. Still aged only 23, his next composition was *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*.

Longfellow wrote *The Song of Hiawatha* in trochaic tetrameter, the same metre as the Finnish epic *Kalevala* which he had learned during a Scandinavian stay in 1835. It purports to tell the story of some of the indigenous North American Indians, but whilst it incorporates strands of folk lore, the content is probably more a product of Longfellow's imagination than historical accuracy. Nevertheless, the poem became immensely popular and tens of thousands of copies were sold. Coleridge-Taylor is said to have been attracted to the text of *Hiawatha* by the strangeness and euphony of the Indian names and words. Like his hero Dvorák, he was clearly interested in the culture of the native Americans, an ethnic interest which later extended to a mission on behalf of the music of the black people of America and Africa.

The first performance, conducted by Stanford, was given on November 11th 1898 in a temporary concert hall at the RCM known as the 'Tin Tabernacle'. Word went round that something special was afoot and there was tremendous demand for tickets: many were disappointed, although room was found for Sir Arthur Sullivan and Sir Hubert Parry. The packed audience witnessed a first performance which Parry later described as "one of the most remarkable events in modern English musical history. *Hiawatha* started in a career which established it as one of the most beloved works of modern English music."

Some 102 years after the composer's death it is now difficult to believe that *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* was once as popular with British choral societies as *Elijah* and *Israel in Egypt*, second only in that respect to *Messiah*. Its success after its sensational first performance in 1898 was such that Coleridge-Taylor was persuaded to write two more choral works on the same theme, *The Death of Minnehaha* in 1899 and *Hiawatha's Departure* in 1900, together with a *Song of Hiawatha* Overture. Although the two sequel cantatas proved less popular than *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, they were prominent in the repertoire until the beginning of the Second World War. Indeed, between 1928 and 1939 all three of them were performed annually in a spectacular ballet version at the Royal Albert Hall with a huge chorus and as many as 200 dancers. The first ballet performance was conducted in 1924 by the composer's son, Hiawatha Coleridge-Taylor. Malcolm Sargent regularly conducted *Hiawatha* festivals in the Royal Albert Hall full of singers dressed up in their own Indian costumes until war brought such performances to an end.

The selected text falls into one of the time honoured structures of speech making: Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you've told them!

1. You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis

In the bouncing trochaic rhythms of Longfellow's verse (a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed) the chorus introduces the celebrated entertainers of the guests at the wedding feast. These are Pau-Puk-Keewis the dancer, Chibiabos the singer and Iagoo the story-teller. All three names are uttered on the rising fifth which opens the work on flute and trumpet and which is one of the principal motifs, along with the primitive rhythms emphasised by drum strokes used by the composer to set his exotic scene.

The "gracious Hiawatha" and his bride the "lovely Laughing Water" (Minnehaha), are mentioned at the beginning but without the distinctive rising fifth: strangely, they are almost ignored by both poet and composer at their own wedding and receive no particular attention. Behind the

whole proceedings is Nokomis, Hiawatha's grandmother who is responsible for the wedding feast: she even catches the pike before cooking it!

2. Then the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis

The character who is given the most attention is Pau-Puk-Keewis, the central figure of the next three sections. Calling on him to dance for them, the chorus introduces him as "the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis", applying the ritual rising fifth.

3. He was dress'd in shirt of doe-skin

After a change of metre from the hitherto prevailing 4/4 to a lilting 6/8 on woodwind and pizzicato strings, sopranos and altos open the description of his colourful appearance and his extravagant clothing. He doesn't care that the warriors despise him as an idler, gambler and coward because all the women love him.

4. First he danc'd a solemn measure

Then his "mystic dance" begins in 3/4 time, slowly at first, as recounted by basses and tenors, but then getting gradually quicker until the climactic point at which he creates a whirlwind. The orchestra prolongs the excitement before, at the urgent behest of trombones, the tempo broadens and Pau-Puk-Keewis grandly sits down.

5. Then said they to Chibiabos

A handsomely orchestrated recall of material from the opening of the work leads to the next section in which the chorus, accompanied by woodwind and harp but later without accompaniment, urge Chibiabos to sing for them.

6. Onaway! Awake, beloved!

After a gentle introduction by oboe and muted strings, Chibiabos sings "Onaway! Awake, Beloved", tenderly extolling the virtues of Minnehaha, Hiawatha's bride. This aria was once so popular that every tenor had to have it in his repertoire. Resourcefully sustained by sensitively accomplished changes of harmony, it is certainly an exceptional lyrical inspiration.

7. Thus the gentle Chibiabos

The following choral section, "Thus the gentle Chibiabos", picks up the story again as a transition to the next section.

8. Very boastful was lagoo

This is a many-sided choral characterisation of the "old and ugly" lagoo, a friend of Nokomis and a great boaster. As a bassoon entry indicates on a mention of "his immeasurable falsehoods" it is not without comedy and, as it progresses, not without brightly orchestrated joy in his legendary boastfulness and not without affection either. He brags that no one ran faster, no one was a better hunter: but he did carve Hiawatha's cradle and taught him to make his first bow.

However, apart from a mention of Osseo the magician we do not get to hear his story, since the orchestra has already made a grandly *fff* reference back to the opening of the work, suggesting that the feast is near its end.

9. Such was Hiawatha's wedding

This is the closing chorus: the guests depart, leaving Hiawatha happy with his bride. The work draws to a close with a 24 bar orchestral postlude starting pianissimo and ending with a mighty climax, the orchestra making a last recall of the opening bars with the rising fifths on flute and trumpet as before.

Coleridge-Taylor became an overnight sensation after the premiere of this work. He produced a huge number of compositions, but the fees were low, the royalty system didn't exist, and he had to work prodigiously hard to support his family. He composed, conducted, adjudicated, taught and travelled extensively in the UK, North America and in Europe. Sadly, like Mendelssohn before him, he died at an early age (37) worn out by over-work after succumbing to pneumonia.

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast sold hundreds of thousands of copies, but Coleridge-Taylor had no conception of how successful it would become, as he had sold it outright for the sum of 15 guineas. After his early death in 1912, the fact that he and his family received no royalties from what was one of the most successful and popular works written in the previous 50 years led in part to the formation of the Performing Rights Society. His widow received a pension of £100 from King George V.

He was buried at Wallington in Surrey and the inscription on his fine carved headstone includes a quotation from the composition *Hiawatha*, and words written by his close friend, the poet Alfred Noyes:

Too young to die
his great simplicity
his happy courage
in an alien world
his gentleness
made all that knew him
love him.

Nantwich Choral Society

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Jan Brown
Tracey Coleman
Glenda Colemere
Gail Corfield
Rita Davies
Ann Ferguson
Marlene Flannery
Kay Foster
Karen Grimwood
Margaret Harvey
Rosemary Jones
Bronwyn Kelly
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Sheila Luke
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Rachel Pentecost
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Jane Tyre
Barbara Waters
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Christine English
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Eileen Robertson
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Rachael Hendry
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Anne Nicol
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Marian Hay
Anne Mckay
Brenda Midgley
Janet Miller
Gwyneth Rollins
Joan Shaddick
Elizabeth Tilston
Margaret Whitehurst
Kathleen Willis

Tenor

Martyn Colley
Graham Harbage
Patrick Hay
Wal Kaye
Mike Moores
Barry Munslow

Richard Percival
Nigel Phipps
Nick Smith
Philip Trinder
Bill Vallance
Joe Watson
John Whittingham

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Adrian Cope
Paul Durant
Christopher Findlay
David Foster
Glyn Griffiths
Douglas Hollinshead
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	Mick Ardron		Colin Blamey
	Anthony Banks		
	Celia Goodwin	Bassoon	Hazel Barrett
Violin 2	Don Turnbull		Sally Holman
			James Thomas
	Julie Edwards	Horn	Andy Maher
	Judith Van Ingen		David Garbutt
	Juliet Leighton-Jones		Neil Grundy
	Therese Ohldin		Simon Dunkley
Viola	Sheila Taylor		
	Alison Loram		
		Trumpet	Jef Brothwell
			James Bulger
Cello	Katy Stables		Matt Palmer
	Aimee Johnson		
	Jaq Anthony	Trombone	Kieran Joy
	Tony Shorrocks		Beth Calderbank
			Mark Mcloughlan
Bass	Cathie Bunting		
	Zoe Long	Tuba	Ryan Breen
	Heather Bills		
Flute	Graham Morris	Tympani	Matt Green
Flute	Mike Escreet	Percussion	Andrea Vogler
	Esther Stewart		Ed Cervenka
			Charlie Ashby
	Conrad Marshall	Harp	
Flute	Nicky Hunter		
	Sarah Bull		Anna Christenson

PETER KIRK – Tenor

Peter Kirk began his vocal training in 2007 with Mezzo Soprano Ameal Gunson. Prior to this he read International Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, before basing himself in Florence where he studied Italian at the Istituto Italiano, Firenze. He was awarded a Masters in Vocal Performance with distinction from the Royal College of Music, London in 2012 and currently studies with Tim Evans-Jones as a member of the Royal College of Music International Opera School. At the RCM Peter has sung the roles of Gonzalve *L'heure Espagnol*, Gardefeu *La Vie Parisienne*, Lucano and 2nd Famigliari *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Don Basilio *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Silvio/Pasquin *Le Docteur Miracle*. In scenes he has sung the roles of Nemorino, Don Ottavio, Tom Rakewell, Lysander and Vasek.

During a year long period at Trinity College of Music, Peter sang the title role in *Albert Herring* and Vitaliano in Handel's opera *Giustino*. Elsewhere he has performed Lucano / 1st soldier / 2nd familiar *The Coronation of Poppea* & Tenor soloist *The Fairy Queen* for English Touring Opera, Hot Biscuit Slim *Paul Bunyan* and Tenor Actor in Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera* for British Youth Opera, and he created the role of the American Congressional Page in *Two Boys* at English National Opera in a co-production with the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

In concert format he has sung the roles of Acis in *Acis and Galatea* for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment conducted by the late Sir Charles Mackerras, Charlie in *Mahagonny Songspiel* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall and Colonel Fairfax *Yeoman of the Guard* for the premier of Oxford University Press' (OUP) new critical edition.

Elsewhere on the concert platform Peter's highlights have included Rossini's *Petite Messe Solenne* with Dortmund

Musikverein, Haydn's *Jahreszeiten* with Dortmund Philharmoniker, Handel's *Messiah* with Polski Chor Kammeralny Gdansk, and the Mozart *Requiem* with the New London Orchestra.

At RCM Peter is the Gisela Gledhill Vocal Scholar supported by a Douglas and Hilda Simmons Award and is also the winner of the Alfred Alexander Prize the Mario Lanza foundation award, and a recipient of the Josephine Baker Trust.

Future engagements include a contract with the Opera National du Rhin in Strasbourg for the 2014-2015 season performing a number of roles and Lurcanio and Odoardo in Handel's *Ariodante*, at the Festival d'Aix en Provence. Peter can also be seen throughout the U.K on the oratorio platform this year.

His performances have been critically praised for both attractive lyrical singing and accomplished acting:

Peter Kirk shone as Arthur Rimbaud, moving seamlessly between superb acting (it took a detailed reading of his biography to convince me that he hadn't been imported from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts) and mesmerizing song. (Bachtrack Feb 13).

Peter Kirk revealed a gorgeous young lyric tenor which made one wish he had a larger part than just Lucano. (capricciomusic.blogspot.co.uk Nov 12).

For further information please go to <http://about.me/pkirk>

JOHN NAYLOR – Conductor

As conductor, singer and organist, John combines extensive performance experience in world-class choirs with a lifelong passionate interest in choral music and its performance. Following a successful business career he now devotes most of his activities to conducting and choir

development. His original training was as a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge with the great Dr George Guest after keyboard studies with Conrad Eden at Durham Cathedral where he was a chorister, a music scholarship at Rossall School and singing studies with Wilfrid Brown and Lyndon van der Pump from The Royal College of Music.

He subsequently became a professional member of the Chapel Royal Choir of St Peter ad Vincula at H.M. Tower of London and The Monteverdi Choir and Louis Halsey Singers, appearing at The Proms, The South Bank, The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings. He has sung in the cathedral choirs of Carlisle, Christ Church Oxford and Chester where until recently he could still be occasionally spotted on the back row!

John has been Director of The Lydian Singers since founding the choir in 1980. They are now one of the leading chamber choirs in the North West and have performed extensively in the North West, Spain, France, Italy and in most of the cathedrals in Great Britain, often returning several times by invitation.

John was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has now conducted highly acclaimed performances of works in the mainstream choral repertoire including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Bach's *St John Passion* (in Chester Cathedral), and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* with Ensemble Vocal Arpège de Mâcon, Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *B minor Mass* with the 18th Century Concert Orchestra and in 2009 Haydn's *The Seasons* and *The Dream of Gerontius* in Chester Cathedral with the Northern Concordia Orchestra and in 2010 Handel *Coronation*

Anthems and the *Dettingen Te Deum* with the 18th Century Sinfonia.

John's conducting engagements in 2011 included several performances of *Messiah*, the first performance of *Even such is Time*, a new commissioned work by Andrew Mildinhall, three performances of Fauré's *Requiem*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solonelle*, Haydn's *Creation*, performances of Motets by Poulenc, Britten and Messaien, Blackburn and Liverpool Metropolitan cathedrals with The Lydian Singers, and a memorable performance of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with the Phoenix Singers and the English Sackbutt and Cornett Ensemble.

2012 included Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* and *The Lark Ascending* with the Northern Concordia Orchestra, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and *Vespers* in Macon and Nantwich, *Messiah* with The 18th Century Sinfonia, Coventry Cathedral with The Open University Chapel Choir and with the Lydian Singers and The Lydian Ensemble works by Buxtehude, Monteverdi and Mozart followed by Bangor and Lichfield cathedrals. In June he conducted the first performance of a new chamber orchestra version of Andrew Mildinhall's *Even Such is Time* with The Lydian Singers at The Lymm Festival.

2013 included Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Chester Cathedral with The 18th Century Sinfonia, Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* and Puccini's *Messe di Gloria* with Nantwich Choral Society, St Alban's, Peterborough and Coventry (Duruflé's *Requiem*) cathedrals with The Lydian Singers and Guildford Cathedral with The Open University Chapel Choir.

Plans for 2014 include Karl Jenkins' *The Peacemakers* with NCS, Exeter and Lichfield cathedrals with The Open University Chapel Choir, and a first performance of a new Andrew Mildinhall work at the summer Lymm Festival with The Lydian Singers.

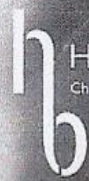
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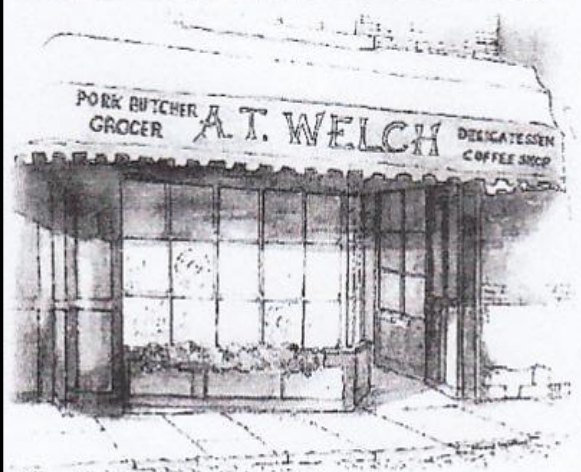


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Nantwich Choral Society – Future Events

28 June 2014 – St Mary's Nantwich
Highlights of English Church Music

4 October 2014 – St Mary's Acton
Singing Day

8 November 2014 – St Mary's Nantwich
Karl Jenkins: ***The Peacemakers***

20 December 2014 – St Mary's Nantwich
Family Christmas Concert

10 January 2015 – St Mary's Nantwich
Come and Sing
Rossini: ***Petite Messe Solonelle***

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