



Patric
STANDFORD

Symphony No. 1 'The Seasons'

Cello Concerto

Prelude to a Fantasy

Raphael Wallfisch, Cello

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

David Lloyd-Jones

Patric Stanford (1939-2014): Symphony No. 1 (The Seasons – An English Year)

Cello Concerto • Prelude to a Fantasy (The Naiades)

Patric Stanford was born into a modest working family in the South Yorkshire coalfield, only months before the onset of the Second World War. He showed an early curiosity for music of all kinds, most especially the rich variety of styles displayed by the BBC in its radio programmes; and when the unique Third Programme was launched in September 1946, Stanford was fortunate to live in a home in which enthusiasm for those rich evenings of music, drama and poetry was paramount. Over the next few years he was taken to live concerts in Sheffield, most often given by the Hallé Orchestra, though his keen ear did not neglect the artistry displayed by many radio-programme signature tunes, nor the masterly skill evident in the light music of Eric Coates, Robert Farnon, Charles Williams and others, from whose example he later acquired technical proficiency in orchestration.

Family circumstances eventually became difficult, and at the age of eleven the young Stanford was sent as a boarder to a Quaker school in Yorkshire, Ackworth, where he soon came under the benign and fruitful influence of Phillips Harris, a Science graduate from Oxford University who had frequently attended lectures there by the Austrian composer Egon Wellesz, and also ran with him a Contemporary Music Society. Although Harris was the school's Head of Sciences, it was with his support that Stanford discovered the Second Viennese School, and was guided through Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* and the challenges of Křenek's *Studies in Counterpoint* – an education only later to be balanced with Jeppesen's studies of Palestrina when he entered the Guildhall School of Music. After school he worked for a few years as a legal accountant before being called up for National Service, during which time he enjoyed working in the medical team of 617 Squadron at RAF Scampton, there to be reacquainted with Coates's *Dambusters March*, played every morning at 6 a.m. as a reveille!

When in due course Stanford entered the Guildhall School as a student in 1961, he was already far more

familiar with twentieth-century musical techniques than his contemporary composition students, and was thus well grounded to enter the new era of experimental music. At the Guildhall he studied with Edmund Rubbra, a gentle but formidable taskmaster, and with Raymond Jones, a film composer and former student of Benjamin Frankl who was an outstanding arranger and who later introduced Stanford into his own commercial environment, on a type of apprenticeship. A regular visitor to the School, though not a student, was Peter Maxwell Davies, who would hold court among his student admirers at a nearby pub.

Temperamentally, however, Stanford found he was not really comfortable with musical experiment, though Dartington International Summer School contemporaries Roger Smalley and David Bedford proved bright and stimulating musical foils. In 1964 he was awarded a Mendelssohn Scholarship, and arranged to continue his studies first in Venice with Gian Francesco Malipiero, with whom he was encouraged to 'simplify everything', and then with Witold Lutosławski, who was another to open up for him new sound worlds and technical processes. On returning home, which was now in London, he became the Orchestral Librarian for publishers J. & W. Chester before being invited to join the staff at the Guildhall School, where he remained, with an increasing workload, until 1980. During that fruitful period he gained several international awards for composition, among which were the Premio Città di Trieste (for his *First Symphony*), the Óscar Esplá prize in Spain, and the Committee of Solidarity Award of Skopje.

By 1980 Patric and his wife Sarah had three children, and he had been for three years Chairman of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain and had also become Chairman of the British Music Information Centre. The following year he left London for the North of England, to take up a post as Head of Music at Bretton Hall College, attached to Leeds University. In 1983 the city of Geneva presented him with the Ernest Ansermet Prize, and two years later the BBC commissioned his *Fifth Symphony* for

the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1993 he retired from full-time University teaching and devoted himself to a (theoretically) more relaxed schedule of teaching, composing and musical journalism. In 1997 his *Choral Symphony The Prayer of Saint Francis* received the principal honour in the City of Budapest International Composers' Award 'to the memory of Zoltán Kodály,' and was first performed and recorded there by the Hungarian Radio and Television Orchestra and Choir under Tamás Vásáry. To mark his seventieth birthday, the BBC Singers, conducted by Paul Brough, recorded all his unaccompanied choral works. Stanford's output, most of which is now in the catalogue of the Peters Edition group, covered a wide range from large-scale orchestral and choral music to a *cappella*, chamber and instrumental pieces.

John Talbot

A Personal Note

First symphonies are not always literally the first. There may be several attempts to take charge of this formidable challenge, through which a composer may, perhaps, find a reason to stop imitating others and hopefully discover a personal identity. Early endeavours are sometimes converted into less pretentious pieces or discarded, as my two premature trials were, leaving only a store of subliminal wisdom.

The second of these early attempts was composed under the guidance of Edmund Rubbra, with whom I was studying at the Guildhall School of Music in London. It was given a performance in the Great Hall there, generously prepared and conducted by Allen Percival, who was later to become the School's principal. The rehearsals were conducted not without considerable and invaluable practical criticism – painful at the time, but which has remained with me to this day. Like my first attempt, this one didn't really work. I then galloped through a further ten hectic years of professional composing, arranging and conducting before returning to the challenge, this time completing what I felt was a real

four-movement symphony deserving to be called a 'first'.

Completed in February 1972, the *First Symphony* took about a year to write, and grew out of a piece for strings conceived as a memorial to Sir John Barbirolli, the hero of Sheffield concerts I had attended regularly as a boy since the age of seven. I recall also Barbirolli's rehearsals, in which it was his habit to wander away from the rostrum while the orchestra continued playing, into the body of the hall from where he could gauge the broader effect. On one occasion he sat beside me and asked: 'Well young man, does it sound alright?' I forget both what music the Hallé was playing and much of our conversation – I was perhaps only ten years old, and he had just received his knighthood – but remember feeling extremely proud when he called back to the orchestra: 'This young man approves!'

The first movement of the *Symphony* came to me quickly, an ebullient and powerful portrayal of springtime, bursting with energy. It seemed an appropriate way of preceding the summer warmth of the second movement, which is for strings only and represents a strongly optimistic and dynamic memory of Barbirolli, who had left our British musical landscape in 1970.

Summer then explodes into autumn almost without a break. Creating the third movement involved trying to capture pictures in sound of the English autumnal mist, weak sunlight shimmering on beads of rain covering vast spider webs, the sighing of falling leaves, and evening lamplight reflected from damp pavements – the latter an image derived from J.B. Priestley's *Angel Pavement*.

The fourth and final movement, a 'Winter Epilogue', is a series of five variants built over a chorale theme originally intended for inclusion in my large-scale oratorio *Christus Requiem* – which I began writing as the symphony was entering its final stages – but which found its home in this finale. The movement, which depicts a winter that vigorously fights against the cold with bursts of energy, comes forcefully to rest on the E flat harmony with which the work began.

At last I felt I had made something that might be worthy of the title *First Symphony* – at least that was my personal judgement – and its achievement opened up the

road ahead as an incentive to try and do even better henceforth. I dedicated the work to my wife, who was so much a part of it.

My wife and I spent the summer of 1974 as guests of the Brahms-Gesellschaft in Baden-Baden, occupying the studio apartment of the house in Maximilianstrasse where Brahms spent his summer months between 1864 and 1873. Clara Schumann had lived close by. For me, the experience of living where Brahms had lived, and walking roads that were not so much changed from his time, was inspiring; and it was there that I completed the draft version of my *Cello Concerto*, written in homage to Brahms.

The *Cello Concerto* is built around the fifth movement of Brahms's *German Requiem*: the soprano solo 'Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit' ('You now are sorrowful...') – a movement inserted somewhat later into the main body of the work, and most probably prompted by the death of the composer's mother early in 1865. My third movement merges quotations from that movement of the *German Requiem* into its own texture – thereby linking it back to the opening of the first movement, with its powerfully repeated low B flats above which the cello weaves first a determined expanding melodic line, and then later a gentler, broadly ascending phrase which is a transformed anticipation of Brahms's soprano solo.

The central movement of the three is a scherzo, largely in animated *pianissimo*: a flight of midsummer madness which I imagine Mendelssohn might achieve more effectively were he still here, and which represents a favourite challenge of mine – to keep the pulse steady and the momentum airborne as long as possible!

The *Cello Concerto* is dedicated to Raphael Wallfisch, who gave the work its first BBC broadcast performance in March 1979 and now returns to a slightly revised score, over thirty years later, with unblemished commitment.

Taking up a challenge similar to that of the scherzo in the *Cello Concerto*, the *Prelude to a Fantasy* was originally a movement of my *Second Symphony* (1980), and was inspired by tales of the mythological Naiades: water nymphs, inhabitants of rivers, lakes, streams, mountain springs and fountains, the guardians of all sources of fresh water. (So believed the Greeks – and why not?) This image gave me reason to create a piece that kept its pulse going, avoiding any temptation to reduce speed or relax into leisurely reflection. For Naiades were immortal beings, minor deities, ever dancing and restless like children: they attended assemblies on Mount Olympus, and were the divine protectors of a city's water supply; but they also guarded young girls and watched over their safe passage into adulthood, as Apollo and the river-gods did for boys and youths. Although I have not always attributed such sources in my titles, the vivid world of mythological imagery has long held for me a fascination which I find continually stimulates my musical ideas.

The three orchestral pieces here are representative of a highly productive creative period in my life. It was also one in which I can barely remember having had enough time to compose, for we had three children and I maintained a full programme of teaching at the Guildhall School (I had been invited to join the staff in 1967) in addition to travelling regularly during the 1970s as a member of international juries in choral competitions in Hungary, France and Estonia – with commitments even further afield in Venezuela and New Zealand. It is therefore far less of a surprise to me than to others that I have now spent much of the last decade revising pieces which I consider worth keeping from this frenzied period.

Patric Standford, 2012

Raphael Wallfisch



Photo: Benjamin Ealovega

Kenneth Leighton. Britain's leading composers have worked closely with him, many having written works especially for him. These include Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, James MacMillan, John Metcalf, Paul Patterson, Robert Simpson, Robert Saxton, Roger Smalley, Giles Swayne, John Tavener and Adrian Williams. In 2014, he succeeded John McCabe as President of the British Music Society.

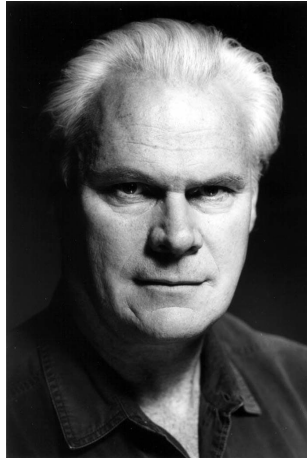
Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Photo: Tom Finnie

Sondergård as Principal Guest Conductor. 2012 also saw the appointments of two new Leaders, James Clark and Maya Iwabuchi. The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving two Diapasons d'Or de l'année awards for Symphonic Music (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY® Awards nominations over the last decade. Over 200 releases are available, including the complete symphonies of Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofiev (Järvi), Glazunov (Serebrier), Nielsen and Martinů (Thomson), Roussel (Denève) and the major orchestral works of Debussy (Denève). The RSNO is one of Scotland's National Performing Companies, supported by the Scottish Government. For more information, please see www.rso.org.uk.

David Lloyd-Jones



David Lloyd-Jones began his career in 1959 on the music staff of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, followed by conducting engagements for orchestral and choral concerts, opera, broadcasts and television studio opera productions. He has appeared at the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera and the Wexford, Cheltenham, Edinburgh and Leeds Festivals, and with the major British orchestras. In 1972 he was appointed Assistant Music Director at English National Opera, and there conducted an extensive repertory. In 1978 he founded a new opera company, Opera North, with its orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia, of which he became Artistic Director and Principal Conductor. During twelve seasons with the company he conducted fifty different new productions, with numerous orchestral concerts, and festival appearances in France and Germany. He has made many successful recordings, and has an active career in the concert-hall and opera-house that takes him to leading music centres throughout the world. His highly acclaimed cycle of Bax's symphonies and tone poems for Naxos (recipient of several *Gramophone* Editor's Choice accolades) was completed in the autumn of 2003, and he has since recorded the seven symphonies of C.V. Stanford, also for Naxos. In 2007 he was awarded the rare distinction of being made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society.



The **British Music Society** (Registered Charity No. 1043838), founded in 1979, brings together professional and amateur musicians, students and scholars, and music enthusiasts young and old from around the globe to promote, preserve and celebrate British music, pre-dominantly from the Twentieth century, both at home and abroad. Its extensive discography is now being re-issued by Naxos, bringing to a wider audience many highly-acclaimed performances, often world premières, of neglected British works. The Society's Historic label includes a number of famous vintage recordings by artists such as Noel Mewton-Wood and Walter Goehr.

In addition the Society produces a Journal, *British Music*, packed full of scholarly articles and reviews, as well as a regular e-newsletter for members. Our website lists forthcoming BMS events as well as performances of British music, and also provides a forum for discussion and debate.

www.britishmusicsociety.com

Patric Stanford wrote in a wide variety of forms, from large-scale orchestral and choral music to a *cappella*, chamber and instrumental pieces. While teaching at the Guildhall School of Music in London he won several major international composition prizes. The *First Symphony*, each movement of which is named after a season, grew from a string piece conceived as a memorial for the conductor Sir John Barbiroli. Dedicated to and premièred by the soloist on this recording, Raphael Wallfisch, the powerful *Cello Concerto* is built around a theme from the fifth movement, *Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit* (You now are sorrowful) of Brahms' *German Requiem*.



Patric
STANDFORD
(1939-2014)

Symphony No. 1

(The Seasons – An English Year) (1972)

33:02

1 1. Spring: Allegro deciso, risoluto

10:24

2 2. Summer: Adagietto

7:21

3 3. Autumn: Scherzo

5:33

4 4. Winter: Epilogue (Variations)

9:44

Cello Concerto (1974)*

27:18

5 1. Adagio, ma con moto

9:03

6 2. Molto vivace

8:14

7 3. Adagio, molto tranquillo

10:01

8 **Prelude to a Fantasy (The Naiades) (1980)**

9:35

***Raphael Wallfisch, Cello**

Royal Scottish National Orchestra • David Lloyd-Jones

Previously released on BMS

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