

A short while for dreaming
Choral works by Peter Warlock



Blossom Street
Hilary Campbell

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Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

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Hilary Campbell *director*

About Blossom Street:

'One of my favourite choirs'
David Mellor, Classic FM

*'It is some indication of the quality of the singers in
Blossom Street that all the solos are outstanding'*
Gramophone (about *Down by the Sea*)

1. As dew in Aprylle	[1:57]	14. I saw a fair maiden	[4:16]
2. The Night * (arr. Fred Tomlinson)	[2:00]	15. Ha'nacker Mill * (arr. Fred Tomlinson)	[2:16]
3. My Own Country * (arr. Fred Tomlinson)	[1:31]	16. One More River *	[1:44]
4. Benedicamus Domino	[1:22]	17. The Lady's Birthday	[2:44]
5. The Full Heart	[4:52]	18. A Cornish Carol	[1:22]
6. The Spring of the Year	[1:37]	19. The Rich Cavalcade	[2:52]
7. Yarmouth Fair (adapted by C. Armstong Gibbs)	[2:07]	20. Bethlehem Down	[4:24]
From <i>Three Dirges of Webster:</i>	[2:33]	Total playing time	[56:33]
8. Call for the Robin-Redbreast and the Wren *	[2:33]	<i>* world premiere recording</i>	
9. The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi	[4:50]		
10. The Bayley Berith the Bell Away *	[2:36]		
11. Corpus Christi	[4:27]		
12. A Cornish Christmas Carol	[4:45]		
13. Lullaby *	[1:36]		



Peter Warlock

A short while for dreaming: Choral works by Peter Warlock

Even if it were true that Peter Warlock's talent was exclusively miniaturist and lyrical, so for that matter has been that of many of the greatest in the history of every other art.

Cecil Gray *Peter Warlock: A Memoir of Philip Heseltine* (1934)

Despite mainly being known for composing stunning and evocative songs for voice and piano, as well as being one of the most troubled personalities from this period of music, Peter Warlock – the *nom de plume* of Philip Heseltine (1894-1930) – also wrote a regular output of choral works throughout his short active career. While some of Warlock's better-known choral works remain firmly in the repertoire, there is a rich oeuvre of miniatures that have become unjustly neglected and perhaps only seldom heard. The most striking quality of this select collection of works is the impressive consistency of excellence that is found throughout. Also evident is Warlock's well-documented gift for compacted yet expressive and beautiful works that often contain more music of exceptional calibre than more substantial offerings from other composers.

Warlock's earliest choral work, *The Full Heart*,

can also be counted as one of the most radical of all of his compositions in this genre and dates from 1916. In August of that year Warlock wrote to his friend, the poet Robert Nichols (1893-1944), whom he had met while a student at Oxford, 'I have set your beautiful "Alone on the shore" for 8 part chorus'. Warlock revised the work some years later in 1921, but already visible is an immense propensity for realising every nuance of a text in an incredibly condensed form, always with a sense of indulgence. The work itself is dedicated to 'the immortal memory of the Prince of Venosa', Carlo Gesualdo, and is a clear tribute to the man whose works he was determined to revive through scholarly research, performances and new editions. Warlock mirrors the chromatic deeply unconventional style of Gesualdo's works from centuries earlier. Despite Warlock's own thoughts of *The Full Heart* as an early work – '[...] musically it is not as good as the three Webster dirges' – there is already a level of harmonic sophistication, exploration and experimentation that colours many of his later works.

Known mostly now for his ubiquitous carols, Warlock's first seasonal works were completed in 1918 – *A Cornish Christmas Carol*, *A Cornish Carol*, *As Dew in Aprylle* and *Benedicamus Domino*. The two Cornish Carols

– A *Cornish Carol* (or *Kan Kernow*) and *A Cornish Christmas Carol* (or *Kan Nadelik*) were originally written to texts in Cornish by Henry Jenner (1848-1934), who had led the revival of the regional language. The inspiration for these two particular carols had come during an extended stay with D.H. Lawrence in Cornwall, and the setting of these texts reflects his intense interest at this point in the ongoing resurgence of the Cornish tongue. In April 1918, Warlock wrote to Cecil Gray: ‘I am writing with great enthusiasm two Cornish hymns: it is probably the first time the old language has ever been musicked deliberately [...] but it is wonderful for singing purposes, containing many sounds almost unknown in English.’ While Warlock’s overriding preference was for them to be performed in Cornish, they are latterly and more frequently to be heard in their English translations. The texts for both *Benedicamus Domino* and *As dew in Aprylle* are from the Sloane MS. 2593, a collection of mediaeval poems and carols assembled in the fifteenth century and held in the British Library. The two works are quite contrasting with some similarities – while both are homophonic in nature, *As dew in Aprylle* is spritely and light, while *Benedicamus Domino* is fuller in texture and more exultant.

Composed in 1919, and scored for alto and tenor solos and double chorus, *Corpus Christi* was considered by Warlock as one of his strongest works in the genre. It is dedicated to the former Dean of Christ Church and Bishop of Oxford, Dr Thomas Strong (1861-1944), who had encouraged both him and William Walton as young composers. It was sometimes mistaken for an arrangement of a folk-tune and Warlock found himself correcting people on this; writing to his former piano teacher at Eton, Colin Taylor, he said ‘[...] it is not founded on an old tune as you seem to think – though I may have misunderstood your reference to the tune as “a great find”. Such as it is, it is my own.’

The *Three Dirges of Webster* were composed between 1923 and 1925 and contained three texts from the plays of John Webster: *All the flowers of the spring*, *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* (‘Hark, now everything is still’) and *Call for the Robin-Redbreast and the Wren*. In a letter to Colin Taylor in December 1925, Warlock wrote that the 4-part female chorus setting of *Call for the Robin-Redbreast and the Wren* was ‘[...] dedicated to you, the more appropriately because your delightful Madonna songs were the first examples I ever saw of good music for this rather

troublesome combination.’ In the same letter he also refers to ‘[...] “Hark, now everything is still” – that grisly poem from “The Duchess of Malfi”’. These two particular works contain some of Warlock’s darkest writing, particularly in *The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi* – Cecil Gray noted that they were ‘[...] probably the gloomiest and grisliest music that even Philip Heseltine ever wrote, which is saying a good deal’.

Both composed in 1925, *The Lady’s Birthday* and *One More River* couldn’t be in more stark contrast to the *Three Dirges of Webster*. These two uproarious part songs are part of a set of *Three Sociable Songs* – along with *The Toper’s Song* (although all published separately) – and are arrangements of well-known melodies, scored similarly for baritone solo, men’s voices and piano. *One More River* also exists in an alternative version for baritone solo and unison chorus, although Warlock personally thought ‘Male-voices-with-piano is a bad combination’. (Warlock’s intention was to create an orchestral version, but this version was never realised.) *The Lady’s Birthday*, contains the dedication ‘A song sung by Mr Platt at Sadler’s Wells and arranged (at least 150 years later) for Mr. Goss and the Cathedral Male-voice Quartet by Peter Warlock at Eynsford on Derby Day 1925’,

referring to the renowned baritone John Goss (1891-1953) and his colleagues from Westminster Cathedral Choir who made the earliest recording of *The Lady’s Birthday*. Also from 1925 is *The Spring of the Year*, a setting of a text by the Scottish poet Allan Cunningham (1784-1842). Wistful in nature, and one of Warlock’s shortest choral pieces, *The Spring of the Year* is tinged with sadness and the subject of death.

The hauntingly beautiful *Bethlehem Down* of 1927 is probably the best known work of Warlock’s entire output, and was one of a number of texts that Warlock set to music by one of his closest friends, Bruce Blunt (1899-1957), which included the songs *The Fox* and *The Cricketers of Hambledon*. Warlock wrote to Blunt in September 1927 declaring ‘I have set your carol to music, and if you like it, we might have a monumental carouse on the proceeds!’ Warlock himself couldn’t possibly have imagined the eventual widespread and immense popularity of this particular festive staple. Composed in the same year is another strophic carol, *I saw a fair maiden*. It sees Warlock’s return to the Sloane MS. 2593 for a gentle lullaby that is much simpler in character, with none of the foreboding contained in the more emotive *Bethlehem Down*. As one of his later choral works, *The Rich Cavalcade* was written



Hilary Campbell

in 1928 to a text by the English poet Frank Kendon (1893-1959). It displays typically sumptuous harmony in a through-composed setting.

The Bayley Berith the *Bell Away* and *Lullaby*, both scored for upper voices with piano accompaniment, were 1928 arrangements of two of Warlock's earliest published songs of the same titles. Warlock was experiencing difficult times and made these particular arrangements in an attempt to bolster his flagging income. Originally penned in 1918-19, Warlock wrote *The Bayley Berith* in November 1928:

"'The Bayley'" is an extract from a long poem from a manuscript in the British Museum. The whole has been printed in one of the German philological publications [...] For me the charm of the fragment lies precisely in the fact that it means nothing, but suggests the loveliest images with a verbal music that foreshadows the procedure of the French symbolists of the nineteenth century.'

A number of Warlock's choral works also exist as songs for voice and piano and often the music translates well between the two formats. Warlock scholar Fred Tomlinson has provided further choral works adapted from Warlock's songs, with his 1994 adaptations of Warlock's *Three Belloc Settings* (*Ha'nacker Mill*, *The Night* and *My Own Country*) included in this collection.

(Tomlinson also provides the English translation for *Kan Kernow* (*A Cornish Carol*)). Originally composed in 1927 these three settings of poems by the French-born but British-based Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) are among Warlock's finest songs each capturing perfectly the mood of the text – the uneasy melancholy of *Ha'nacker Mill*, the sentimental wistfulness of *My Own Country* and the hushed stillness of the dark in *The Night*.

Originally written in 1924 as a song for voice and piano, *Yarmouth Fair* is an arrangement of a Norfolk folk-tune to words by Hal Collins, Warlock's housekeeper in the Eynsford cottage that he shared with the composer Ernest Moeran (1894-1950). It was Moeran who had originally collected the song used in this arrangement with its original text about a magpie, which was sung to him in a pub in Cley-next-the-Sea. Some years following Warlock's death the composer C. Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960) made two arrangements of *Yarmouth Fair*, as a two-part song and also as this cheerful four-part version.

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Texts and translations

(excluding texts in copyright)

1. As dew in Aprylle

I syng of a mayden
That is makèles
Kyng of allé kynges
To here sone che ches.

He cam al so stylle
Ther his moder was,
As dew in Aprylle
Thatfallyt on the gras.

He cam al so stylle
To his moderes bowr
As dew in Aprille
That fallyt on the flour.

He cam al so styлле
Ther his moder lay
As dew in Aprille
That fallyt on the spray.

Moder and maydyn
Was never non but che;
Wel may swych a lady
Godes moder be.

From Sloane MS. 2593

2. The Night & 3. My Own Country

Texts by Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)

4. Benedicamus Domino

Procedenti puero
Eya, nobis annus est!
Virginis ex utero
Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

Sine viri semine
Eya, nobis annus est!
Natus est de virgine
Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

Sine viri copia
Eya, nobis annus est!
Natus est ex Maria
Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

In hoc festo determino
Eya, nobis annus est!
Benedicamus Domino!
Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

*A boy comes forth,
Eya, this is our time,
From the womb of a virgin.
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.*

*Without the seed of a man
Eya, this is our time,
He is born of a virgin.
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.*

*Without the means of a man,
Eya, this is our time,
He is born of Mary
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.*

*On this appointed feast,
Eya, this is our time,
Let us bless the Lord.
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.*

From Sloane MS. 2593 (Temp. Henry VI)

5. The Full Heart

Text by Robert Nichols (1893-1944)

6. The Spring of the Year
Gone were but the winter cold,
And gone were but the snow,
I could sleep in the wild woods
Where primroses blow.

Cold's the snow at my head
And cold at my feet;
And the fingers of death's at my e'en,
Closing them to sleep.

Let none tell my father,
Or my mother so dear;
I'll meet them both in Heaven
At the spring of the year.

Allan Cunningham (1784 - 1842)

7. Yarmouth Fair

(adapted by C. Armstrong Gibbs)

As I rode down to Yarmouth fair
The birds they sang 'Good-day, good-day,'
And the birds they sang 'Good-day!'

O, I spied a maid with golden hair
A-walking along my way
A tidy little maid so trim and fair,
And the birds they sang 'Good-day, good-day,'
And the birds they sang 'Good-day!'

I said: 'My dear, will you ride with me?'
And the birds they sang 'Go on, go on!'
And the birds they sang 'Go on!'

She didn't say 'yes' and she didn't say 'no',
And the birds they sang 'Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!'
And the birds they sang 'Heigh-ho!'

I lifted her right on to my mare,
Olight as a feather was she,
I'd never set eyes on a girl so fair,
So I kiss'd her bravely
I kiss'd her one, two, three,
O, I kiss'd her one, two, three.

Then on we rode to Yarmouth fair
Past feild and green hedgerow,
And in our hearts no fret nor care,
And the birds they sang 'Hullo, hullo!'
And the birds they sang 'Hullo, hullo!'

At the fair the fun was fast and free,
And the birds they sang 'Hurray, hurray!'
And the birds they sang 'Hurray!'

Yarmouth Fair (cont.)

The band struck up a lively air
On fiddle and fife and drum.
The maid and me we made a pair,
And we danced to kingdom come, Ho-ho!
And we danced to kingdom come.

The lads and lasses cheer'd us on,
My bonny maid and me,
We danced till stars were in the sky,
And the birds they sang 'Good-bye! good-bye!'
And the birds they sang 'Good-bye!'

Hal Collins (d. 1929)

8. Call for the Robin-Redbreast and the Wren

Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

Call unto his fun'ral dole
The ant, the fieldmouse, and the mole,

To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And (when gay tombs are robbed) sustain no harm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

John Webster (c.1580 - c.1634)

9. The Shrouding of the Duchess of Malfi

Hark, now ev'rything is still,
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill,
Call upon our dame aloud
And bid her quickly don her shroud.

Much you had of land and rent;
Your length in clay's now competent:
A long war disturb'd your mind;
Here your perfect peace is sign'd.

Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?
Sin their conception, their birth weeping,
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death a hideous storm of terror.

Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,
And (the foul fiend more to check)
A crucifix let bless your neck.

'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan and come away,
Come away, come away, come, come away.

John Webster

10. The Bayley Berith the Bell Away

The maidens came when I was in my mother's bow'r.
I had all that I would.
The bailey beareth the bell away,
The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.

The silver is white,
Red is the gold,
The robes they lay in fold.
The bailey beareth the bell away,
The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.

And through the glass window shines the sun.
How should I love and I so young?
The bailey beareth the bell away,
The lily, the lily, the rose I lay.

Anon

11. Corpus Christi

Luly, lullay, luly, lullay,
The faucon hath borne my make away.
He bare him up, he bare him down,
He bare him into an orchard brown.

In that orchard there was a hall,
That was hanged with purple and pall.
And in that hall there was a bed:
It was hanged with gold so red.

And in that bed there lithe a knight,
His woundès bleeding day and night.
By that bedside there kneeleth a may,
And she weepeth night and day.

By that bedside there standeth a stone:
Corpus Christi written there-on.
Lully lullay, lully lullay!

Anon

12. A Cornish Christmas Carol

In dark December when winter was bleak,
Christ Jesus was born of a Virgin meek.
He came for to save this world from sin,
From death and damnation mankind to win.

To watching shepherds the angels sang;
This was their song and lustily it rang:
"All glory to God who in Heaven is King,
And peace on earth to ev'rything."

By star's light guided with shining flame,
Three wise men, kings and druids, came.
They bowed and knelt in that cowpwn,
And Mary's dear baby worshipp'd then.

Now like those kings from the far-off land,
We too by the manger adoring shall stand.
At Holy Eucharist we shall behold Him,
Bread and wine made flesh, in our hearts let us
enfold Him.

May God this Cornwall of our defend
From Tamar river to far Land's End
And keep in our hearts ever undefiled
True love for God's Mother and her sweet Child.

Yuletide blessing now light on you,
The blessing of God and of His Son too,
And blessing of Mary, the maid without wrong.
This is the end of all my song.

Henry Jenner (1848 - 1934)

Translated by Trelawney Dayrell Reed

13. Lullaby

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise.
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock a lulla, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you:
You are care, and care must keep you.
Sleep pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock a lulla, lullaby.

Thomas Dekker (c.1572 - 1632)

14. I saw a fair maiden

I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing:
She lulled a little child, a sweetè lording.

Lullay, mine liking, my dear son, my sweeting,
Lullay, my dear heart, mine own dear darling.

That same lord is He that made allè thing,
Of allè lordis He is lord, of allè kingès King.

There was mickle melody at that child'ës birth,
All that were in Heaven's bliss they made
mickle mirth.

Angelys bright they sang that night and saiden
to that child:
"Blessed be thou and so be she that is both
meek and mild."

Pray we now to that Child, and to his mother dear,
Grant them His blessing that now maken cheer,

From Sloane MS. 2593

15. Ha'nacker Mill

Text by Hilaire Belloc

16. One More River

The animals came in two by two,
Vive la compagnie!
The centipede with the kangaroo,
Vive la compagnie!
One more river, and that's the river of Jordan,
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

The animals came in three by three,
Vive la compagnie!
The elephant on the back of the flea,
Vive la compagnie!
One more river, and that's the river of Jordan,
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

The animals came in four by four,
Vive la compagnie!
The camel, he got stuck in the door,
Vive la compagnie!
One more river, and that's the river of Jordan,
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

The animals came in five by five,
Vive la compagnie!
The missing link was the last to arrive,
Vive la compagnie!
One more river, and that's the river of Jordan,
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

The animals came in six by six,
Vive la compagnie!
The monkey, he was up to his tricks,
Vive la compagnie!
One more river, and that's the river of Jordan,
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

Then the door was shut and it started to rain,
Vive la compagnie!
If you want any more you must sing it again,
Vive la compagnie!
One more river, and that's the river of Jordan,
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

Anon

17. The Lady's Birthday

Four and twenty drummers all in a row,
And there was a tantarra rara,
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday,
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty tabors and pipes all in a row
And there was whif and dub, whif and dub and
tantarra rara,
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty women all in a row,
And there was tittle tattle and twice prittle
prattle,
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty singing men all in a row
And there was fa la la la la la,
Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty fencing masters all in a row,
And there was this and that and down to the
legs clap, sir,
And cut 'em off and fa la la la
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday,
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty Parliament men all in a row,
And there was Loyalty and Reason
Without a word of Treason,
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday
Therefore we kept holiday,
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty landlords all in a row,
And there was: Time please, gentlemen,
finish your drinks, now come along please gents,
long past time,
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday,
And all went to be merry.

Four and twenty Dutchmen all in a row,
And there was Alter malter Vantor Dyken,
Skapen Ropen, De Hogue, Van Rottyck, Van
Tonsick, De Brille, Van Boerstick, Van Foerstick
and Soatrag Van Hogan, herien Van Donick,
'Cause 'twas my lady's birthday,
Therefore we kept holiday,
And all went to be merry.

Anon

18. A Cornish Carol

Christ, Michael and Mary,
Send thy blessings now we pray.
Grant us New Year jollity
And a glad Nativity.
Then be joyful this glad day.

Henry Jenner
Translated by Fred Tomlinson

19. The Rich Cavalcade

Text by Frank Kendon (1893-1959)

20. Bethlehem Down

Text by Bruce Blunt (1899-1957)



Blossom Street

Blossom Street is a vibrant chamber choir comprising some of the UK's best young singers which performs regularly on TV and radio as well as on the concert platform, and has released two critically acclaimed CDs. Directed by Hilary Campbell, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, the group was formed in 2003, while the singers were undergraduates at the University of York.

In 2005, Blossom Street filmed a medley of Christmas carols for BBC2, which was broadcast during the snooker final, and since then has performed nationwide and beyond. They sang to Prince Charles on ITV1 as part of his 60th birthday celebrations, and in 2009 gave their debut in Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of the Voicelab series. The group filmed for the TNT Show on Channel 4 and a social media campaign for Clintons Cards, made adverts for sky+, HBO and Channel 5, and recorded two shows of the Sunday Half Hour for BBC Radio 2. They broadcast quarterly for the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4.

On the concert platform, the group has performed at many of the major London venues including Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square and St James Piccadilly, and further afield at places like the Royal Palace, Madrid. Their CD, 'Sleep, Holy Babe', was

released in 2011, tracks from which featured on Radio 3's 'The Choir' and on Classic FM. They have performed on Radio 3's 'In Tune', and their disc was announced as 'Christmas CD of the Year 2011' on David Mellor's New CD Show, Classic FM. It received several 5 star reviews. In 2013, their second disc, 'Down by the Sea', a compilation of *a cappella* choral folk songs, many of which are premiere recordings, was released, again to critical acclaim.

www.blossomstreetsingers.com

'At the risk of prejudicing any latecomers and with 2013 barely half gone, I declare this release to be my choral album of the year. I'd be stupefied if anything stronger comes long. Five stars'
Norman Lebrecht on *Down By The Sea*

Hilary Campbell

Hilary Campbell is a freelance musician based in London, and is the Musical Director of the Music Makers of London and Choral Director at Blackheath Conservatoire. She is the founder and director of Blossom Street, a guest conductor with BBC Radio 4's BBC Daily Service Singers, conductor of several office choirs, including the winners of BBC2's *Sing While You Work*, P&O Choir, and Assistant Conductor of Barts Choir. Hilary gained a Distinction for an MMus in Choral Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music with Patrick Russill, where as part of her course she was privileged to work with professional choirs including the BBC Singers and Cardinal's Musick. She also gained a Distinction for her MA in Vocal Studies at the University of York, and undertook an Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in singing at Trinity College of Music. Following her studies, she returned to the Royal Academy as the Meaker Fellow 2012-13, the first choral conductor to have been thus honoured. Hilary is also a published and award winning composer.

Soprano

Claire Boulter
Lucy de Butts *⁵
Felicity Davies
Eleanor Martin *¹²
Rebecca Ramsey
Charlotte Richardson

Alto

Felicity Buckland
Iris Korfker
Kate Telfer
Phillipa Thomas *¹¹
Lizzie Foyle
Elly Hunter Smith

Tenor

Sam Corkin
Richard Hansen
Dale Harris
Robert Jenkins *¹¹

Bass

Rene Bloice-Sanders *¹⁷
William Derrick
Dario Dugandzic *¹⁶
Andrew Fellowes
Sean Webster

Piano

Benedict Lewis-Smith

**soloist & track number*

The Peter Warlock Society

Peter Warlock (Philip Heseltine) died in 1930. At that time he was a significant figure in the world of British music, not only as a composer, a scholar and early music revivalist, but also as an extraordinary personality. Today, his magnetism is as potent as ever. Interest in him increases as his compositions, colourful life, and extensive literary and musical writings become better known. This wasn't always the case. Thirty years after Warlock's death, his published music was rapidly going out of print and his name had all but disappeared from the contemporary music scene. One man, Patrick Mills, reflected on how vitally important it would be to preserve Warlock's work, and to keep the colourful 'world of Warlock' alive. Accordingly in 1963, Patrick founded the Peter Warlock Society and, with several like-minded acquaintances, determined the Society's remit, which would be to promote performance of Warlock's music, to encourage the production of commercially available recordings, to research further into his music and life and, in due course, to publish all of Warlock's writings and music. It was an ambitious task. However, after 50 years the Peter Warlock Society has realised much of Patrick's initial vision.

The remit of the Society now is to continue to support concerts, recordings and research. It publishes a journal, still affectionately called the Newsletter, twice a year. It contains fascinating and illuminating articles on Warlock, his world and his music. These are based on new research and it is extraordinary how much Warlock related information, also of relevance to our knowledge and understanding of early-twentieth-Century British music, is still being unearthed. The journal also carries reviews of concerts, events, CDs and books, indeed anything that has a Warlock connection. As such, the Newsletter, as well as being of general interest, is a significant source of information for all scholars of British music.

In less than two decades Warlock wrote around 120 songs, 24 part-songs, a dozen items of vocal chamber music, half a dozen instrumental works and made around 600 transcriptions of early music, some of them vast undertakings. His writing – books, articles, prefaces, reviews, and programme notes – amount to c.300,000 words. Copies of all these items are kept in the Society's Hire Library and are freely available to bona fide scholars and musicians without charge, although donations are welcomed.

Every year the Society invites one of the

UK's colleges of music to put on a 'Peter Warlock Birthday Concert'. This enables music students up and down the country to have direct practical experience of performing and engaging with Warlock's music and it is always pleasing to hear those involved say how much they appreciate having been introduced to his music.

The Peter Warlock Society continues to work steadily to increase knowledge of Warlock's work and to support performances and recording projects. We are delighted to have been able to support this recording of Warlock's choral music by Blossom Street. If you would like to know more about the Society, please contact

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Acknowledgements

Blossom Street is extremely grateful for the support of the following organisations, without whose help this recording would not have been possible:

The Hobson Charity
The Peter Warlock Society
The Winship Foundation
The Really Useful Group
The Ben Samuel Trust

The group is also very grateful to St James Church, Sussex Gardens in Paddington, where the recording took place.



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Recorded in St James' Church, Sussex Gardens, London on 7-10 November 2013

Producer, engineer & editor: Adam Binks

Assistant engineer: Steven Binks

Recorded at 24-bit / 96kHz resolution

Cover image: *Supermoon* (2013) by Cedric Thornton

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