

Benjamin Burrows

1891 - 1966

Life and Music of the Leicester Composer

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Preface

The original intention of this book was to produce an account of ninety-three songs by the Leicester composer, Benjamin Burrows, written between 1927 and 1929. As work proceeded, it became clear that to consider the songs in isolation from the composer's life and other works would not be very informative to readers, since nothing had been previously written about him save for an article of mine in *Luciad*¹, the student magazine of University College, Leicester, in May 1950. Moreover, though the songs represent Burrows's greatest creative achievement, many other compositions of his deserve attention. The book was, therefore, expanded to survey the composer's life and total output.

It is unfortunate that this book was not started until twelve years after Burrows's death. Many of his contemporaries and close associates had then died and their memories with them. Written material, other than the composer's MSS was scarce: much of it, including his highly-organised files of solutions for his pupils of examination questions set by the universities of Belfast, Durham and London and the British music schools, had been destroyed or dispersed when he died. The key figure involved in the series of ninety-three songs, Jane Corbett, née Vowles, died in 1973. Between February 1969 and October 1972, there was a constant correspondence between her and me, but, apart from occasional - and general - comments, nothing of great personal significance about her time as a student of Burrows. Her sudden death on 18 January 1973 occurred before my interest in Burrows had crystallised into a decision to write about him.

If the picture of the man that emerges seems shadowy, that is mainly because of the uneventful nature of his life. There are the significant dates that mark any mortal's progress from birth to death but, uncommonly, the intervening years are singularly devoid of the kind of incident upon which biographers thrive. His adventures were of the mind and rarely communicated verbally to others: they emerge most vividly in his compositions, his occasional writings, his even more occasional water-colour miniatures and, in a large measure, in his mechanical inventions.

In addition to the research and editing that went into the writing of this book, two offshoots are worthy of separate mention. There is in existence a compilation of the ninety-three Jane Vowles songs in photocopies of the twenty-one that were published and hand copies - and, subsequently computer-generated copies - of the rest. There are four

¹ This fact also explains the lack of a bibliography. Such books as were relevant are included in footnotes.

copies of this volume².

On 27 February 1978 Secondly, a public lecture-recital (see Appendix III) was given in the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery and repeated in a modified form on 11 July 1978 at the University of Evansville, Indiana. The Leicester lecture was recorded by BBC Radio Leicester and subsequently relayed in three instalments.

Subsequent developments have included further lectures on the composer and his music, publication of some of his music, and a book and article on his songs, and the issue of recordings of his music. These are described more fully in Chapter Six and listed in Appendix I.

Acknowledgement is due to many correspondents who supplied memories of Burrows, especially to Harold Barton, Arthur Kirkby and William Lovelock whose written accounts were invaluable. The debt to Burrows's son, Benjamin H. Burrows, and to his sister, the late Grace Lee, for their time and active interest is considerable, as it is also to Geoffrey Corbett, Elsie Cox, Charles Goodger, Jack Griffin and Eric Jordan for MSS, photographs and written matter. Ben and Jack Griffin also undertook the exacting task of proof-reading the final draft of the original thesis for which I am extremely grateful.

The support and encouragement of George Gray, a long-time friend of the composer, was unflagging during my research, and the advice of my erstwhile colleague, Ronald Reah, inestimable. Lastly, my sincere thanks go to Trevor Hold, whose vast knowledge of and mutual interest in the period around which my writing centred, were a happy and fruitful inspiration.

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² For their locations, see the Catalogue, Appendix I.

CHAPTER ONE

A Brief Biography

MUSIC TEACHER DIES

With such anonymity the Leicester Mercury of Saturday, 29 January 1966, headlined the death of Dr Benjamin Burrows, one of the city's most brilliant luminaries. Burrows was indeed a music teacher, but, as the statements recorded in Appendix II reveal, he was, as well as being a brilliant organist and composer, without peer in the teaching of musical theory throughout the country. Though his music is mentioned in the all-too-brief newspaper article, there is little indication of its variety and originality. The Leicester Mercury cannot be unduly censured for the scant attention it paid to Burrows's passing. A shy, reticent man, he would have disclaimed the plaudits due to him. So often in life he brushed off, with some embarrassment, any tribute to his unique talents and shunned public recognition of his erudition and originality. His entire life was passed in relative obscurity which he did little to disperse. To hide his gifts from the world did not seem to disturb him. His pleasures outside music were in his hobbies - precision engineering, horology, microscopy and painting - and it was in such quiet pastimes as walking, golf, billiards and pipe-smoking that he found relaxation.

Burrows was born on 20 October 1891 at 12, College Street, a quiet road off the busier thoroughfare of Conduit Street, Leicester, and there spent the first years of his life. His father, Benjamin Harper Burrows, was a music teacher whose principal instrument was the violin, though he was also an accomplished viola-player and, later in his life, cellist. His mother, Elizabeth Burrows, was also musical, an excellent pianist, to whom Ben paid regular weekly visits after she moved from Leicester to settle in Loughborough, some ten miles away. On 29 June 1893, a daughter, Grace, was born. Throughout their lives she was devoted to her brother, Ben, and even at 87, just before her own death, despite near-blindness and failing powers she continued her efforts to further the cause of his music.

Ben was a pupil at Alderman Newton's Boys' School and, showing exceptional scientific promise, was one of a select number of pupils who were removed to one of the special Science schools which existed at that time in Leicester. Later, as a result of the weakening of a muscle in his left eye, he was withdrawn, as his sister recalled, and taught by a private tutor. This eye-muscle weakness caused the condition known as divergent

strabismus, in which one eye turns outwards. About this defect, Ben was, naturally, sensitive and it may well have increased his innate shyness. Later in life the left eye was permanently closed. In some of his casual and humorous writings, he would, after Beachcomber, refer to himself as "Dr Strabismus of Utrecht, whom God preserve", revealing that wry sense of humour that so often delighted his friends.

Musical studies continued intensively and, at fifteen, Ben was winner of the Deacon prize, a coveted local award for young musicians. His organ teacher at this time was H. B. Ellis, organist and choirmaster of St Mary's (now Mary de Castro). A story told to Ian Imlay, one of his last pupils, indicates Ben's sense of humour. His ability to write a psalm chant in the time it took for the organ bellows to empty (and, as apprentice to Ellis, it was one of his tasks to pump the organ) was a source of amused satisfaction to him. It is also an early example of the prodigious speed and fluency at composition that was a mark of his superiority as an examination student and for which he was so admired - and envied - by his pupils and colleagues.

His organ teacher, Ellis, was a genial and kindly man who had conducted the Leicester Amateur Vocal Society since 1879. When this developed into the Leicester Philharmonic in 1886, he was chosen, in competition with two other distinguished men, Charles Hancock and Harry Lohr, as conductor. Thus he was the first man to direct the fortunes of what was to become one of Leicester's longest-established and finest musical institutions. He held this position until his death in 1910.

When Ellis died, Burrows was appointed his successor as organist and choirmaster of St Mary's despite some opposition to his youthfulness by certain of the church councillors. Charles Goodger, a member of the choir at that time, described difficulties with discipline over the choirboys that the young, inexperienced Burrows suffered, difficulties no doubt increased by his eye defect. Charles also told how, on occasions when Ben played for choral performances at St John's, Clarendon Park Road, he would go with him to "carry the beat", an essential concomitant of music-making in those churches where the organist is out of visual contact with the conductor, a situation that prevails today in St John's, as one discovered at the 1986 recording of Burrows's Five Psalms! A copy of a photograph of Burrows in his uniform during the 1914-18 war¹ was sent to Charles Goodger with the wry comment:

Here's a curio! B.B.

In July 1912, two years after his appointment to St Mary's,

¹ See illustrations

Burrows took the Associate of the Royal College of Organists examination and won the Lafontaine prize. The following January he was equally successful in the Fellowship exam, gaining the Turpin prize. The brevity of the gap between the two achievements leaves no doubt about his supreme talents as an organist. Indeed, there were apparently ideas of his taking up a career as a concert artist at this time. This in view of his nature and reaction against public approbation, was probably more of an enthusiastic parental vision than a practical course of action and his studies were to develop along more academic lines.

Even so, it may be that a concert he gave in the De Montfort Hall on 23 October 1914 may have been by way of a try-out for such a career. The reviewer in the Leicester Mercury of the following evening, alongside grim reports of the developing conflict between Germany and Britain and her allies, writes that the attendance was:

remarkably good considering the weather. In his programme, Ben Burrows included an example of advanced modern organ music in Karg-Elert's Harmonies du soir and a fine example of English composers' work was presented in Harwood's Dithyramb.

The anonymous reviewer goes on to say that one of the most interesting items on the programme was the first performance of a new song by Mr Burrows:

Jesu, meek and gentle... a very well-conceived and melodious composition... exceedingly well-received.

This song has not been found in its original form but is probably, in a revised form, the first of a set of three anthems for choir (1933). It is an early indication of the direction Burrows's musical energies were to take. By this time, he was a student of composition with that redoubtable theorist, Charles Kitson. With characteristic speed he quickly assimilated principles of harmony, counterpoint and orchestration as his early, carefully-preserved student works demonstrate. Kitson can surely have had no student who so clearly grasped his precepts. It was inevitable that he should eventually declare that Burrows had no further need of him as a teacher. But before this realistic and generous recognition of his pupil's keen musical perception, Kitson guided him over the hurdles of B. and D. Mus. (London) in 1913 and 1921. It was in the latter examination that Burrows amazed the examiners by offering two solutions to the eight-part questions (See Appendix III - memories by William Lovelock).

As early as 1914, Burrows had embarked upon his teaching career

and Clifford Twigger, a noted Leicester industrialist, expressed pride at being his first pupil. The two remained lifelong friends and further examples of their comradeship are referred to later.

Though mainly engaged in composing exercises for Kitson, many of Burrows's piano pieces from this time were published between 1913 and 1925. Nocturne appears to be the first and was issued in 1913 by the publishing house, Donajowski. Subsequently, Burrows was taken up by the better-known firm, Augener. A correspondent, Cecil Hemsley, of St Augustine's Priory, Modderpoort, Orange Free State, recalls that the blind organist, Alfred Hollins, a guest of Burrows while in Leicester to give a recital in the De Montfort Hall heard the composer play his *Four Lyrics* and decided to include them, (or, possibly, one of them) as an encore at his recital the same evening. Hemsley also recalls Burrows himself giving a recital in St Mary's, ending with Franck's *Pièce Héroïque* in 1915.

The eight-year interval between Burrows's B. Mus. and D. Mus. degrees is attributable to his national service in the Kite Balloon Section of the Army. It was in 1917 that he became a private and served his time at Orford Ness in Suffolk. During his War Service, Ben made the acquaintance of a violinist, a fellow-soldier, Fred Tomlinson. For him he wrote his satirical Second Concert Piece, subtitled, *March of the Kite-Ballooners*. Any serviceman who has experienced the regular frustrations of forces life will identify with the drily-written programme with which the work is prefaced².

While at Orford Ness, Ben was to continue and develop an even more significant friendship with Doris Katharine Hayes who had been a violin student of his sister's, living in her home in Highfield Street, Leicester. After returning to civilian life, he regularly visited her on his motor-cycle at her home in Thetford. They were married in St Cuthbert's Church, Thetford, on 6 September 1921 and their only child, Benjamin Hayes Burrows, was born on 30 March 1925. During their forty-five years of marriage, Doris was a constant support to her husband and it was no doubt she who would often persuade him, a pronounced workaholic, into taking those vacations that were so essential for the refreshment of his life; vacations usually spent on the East coast at resorts such as Cromer or Skegness. The author remembers her lively personality with pleasure from the occasions he met her, especially at her home where she received him with kindness and warm hospitality. Her son, Ben, adds these comments to make the picture more complete:

*... she had a strong positive side to her
personality, a lot of common sense, and fearlessly*

² See Chapter II

denounced humbug. At home she provided the fun that was often lacking in father. She was very interested in people; father used to tell her about his pupils and she would discuss them as if she knew them personally... they complemented each other; there was genuine mutual affection... There was also loyalty and tolerance on both sides; she had much to put up with from his stubbornness and, during his final protracted illness she looked after him well and without complaint, often getting very little sleep for several nights at a stretch...

After returning to civilian life, Burrows resumed his work as a music teacher in Leicester. He was organist at the annual speechday of his old school, Alderman Newton's, in the De Montfort Hall - a fact recalled by John Reymes-King, a pupil of Ben's and of the school, later to become a professor of music at the University of Massachusetts. In 1923 Burrows resigned from his position at St Mary's where he had returned after army service. Apart from a brief period as organist at Leicester Cathedral from the beginning of May 1927, after the incumbent Charles Hancock died on 6th February, until August 1927 when Dr Gordon Slater assumed Hancock's position, he did not resume this type of work until his appointment to Victoria Road Church in 1929.

National recognition as a composer gradually came. His music had been published as early as 1915. Reviews appeared in Musical Times from 1922 on. In April of that year a regular reviewer of piano music, G.G., describes Burrows's *Twelve Studies* as gracefully written and declares that they will afford pleasure as well as profit to the young pianist. This modest praise was typical of several comments made by this reviewer of Burrows's piano music between 1922 and 1926. On the early songs composed for Jane Vowles, the comments of T.A. in the July 1928 issue are more specific. He notes Burrows as a capable songwriter and describes Bartholomew (Curwen 1928) as an unusual and well-written song. The Dusty Miller (Cramer) is also well-written and uncommon and should be effective. In December 1928 he speaks of the steady, competent but uninspired setting of *The Oaks of Glencree* and regards the composer as seen to better advantage in a far more imaginative treatment of *I am Raftery*.

In November 1926 Jane Vowles came to start theory lessons with Burrows. A letter of 10 November includes in the postscript these nostalgic words³:

³ JV to BBD - a series of letters from Jane to the author

Nov. 10 is the day when Ben and I had just met - I still have his first letter, which begins "Dear Madam"! - dated Nov. 9.

This formality was a cause of ironic humour to Jane, for she had written, prior to this letter, of the intensity of the relationship that had developed between them. Not until after Burrows's death did the author meet Jane, and this episode in the composer's life came as a surprise. In the course of writing, however, it was their friendship that became the most significant factor: the one which accounted for the high quality of the music of the central period (1927 - 1934) of Ben's creative life as a composer.

At 35, married and with a one-year old son, Burrows seemed to have settled into the routine life of a provincial music teacher and probably felt little need to disturb it. Those lifetime habits of walking to his studio each morning at eight o'clock, working a full day and walking back home late in the evening, had already been formed. Into this cosy security burst the lively and intelligent Jane, a gifted and intelligent singer, avid in her search for information about contemporary music. In this respect she represented a keen contrast to Ben's wife who, despite her violin studies with Grace Burrows and her general interest in her husband's life as a musician, was not herself especially musical and, as events were to prove, took little interest in Ben's "modern" compositions. On March 1 1927, four months after their first meeting, Ben wrote for Jane the first of the ninety-three songs that were to occupy him to the exclusion of all other compositions until she left Leicester in 1929.

The choice of poetry for these songs outlines the growing intensity of their relationship. Some of the poems, as is known from a series of notes written by Ben to Jane and preserved by her, were from volumes which she gave him. She it was who apparently introduced him to much new music of the day. Delius, Warlock, van Dieren and many others are mentioned in the notes. There is reference to poets too, Sacheverell Sitwell among them. It becomes apparent that, during her two years with the composer, Jane shook this quiet, reticent man out of his domesticity and fanned into full blaze the creative powers that had so far been but a warm glow.

As well as the notes, there are other writings of Ben's which he sent to Jane that have survived: hers to him, save for one or two copies of literary efforts which she kept, have been destroyed. Much of this material is more relevant to Chapter III. Here, a brief examination of their more general writings is appropriate for the light they shed on their characters and the milieu in which they lived.

Ben's own writing - and it was an occupation that he was given to

sporadically throughout his life - tends to be less descriptive than Jane's, more philosophic in content. There is also an abundance of that quiet humour which typified him. A written interchange between the two indicates how Ben encouraged Jane to express herself in writing - no doubt as part of her general musical education - and helped her by his own written comments. Jane wrote him an account of a conversation with a man on a bus journey in which he had told her about his life. Her remarks about the man's story give indications of the way in which her political thought was to develop: she became a Communist in later life and regularly wrote opera criticism for the Morning Star. Her account runs:

When this man dies I don't suppose anybody outside his immediate relations and family will remember him at all. As far as I could gather he had done nothing off his own bat but had just done what he was obliged to do all his life. No hobby - when I asked him about the painting [he had done as a boy] he said he never did any now. Just a decent sort - doing nothing more than live.

Ben, in a rambling passage which hardly reveals him at his logical best, at least exemplifies his ingrained conservatism and philosophic resignation:

No of course nobody will (remember him) any more than people remember anyone else. But we shan't worry about that. Mankind seems to me a sort of turning and leaving affair where each successive generation climbs on the preceding. I know three generations - my great grandfather - manager of an elastic web factory whose workmen gave him a silver loving cup out of respect, my grandfather, who I admire tremendously and who did no public work and my father who did. No one remembers the first two except the family and no one will remember the third outside the family when his contemporaries have disappeared. But there is no need to worry for it's the natural state of affairs. Jack Ketch is remembered and so is Henry VIII and a few more villains. Let's hope we escape that sort of memory!

Burrows's brand of humour is evoked in this passage from a little cameo entitled Mr Spooner about a man with whom he had negotiated the (abortive) purchase of some watches:

Up came Spooner, slowly along the passage and into the room and laboriously into a chair. Produced a paper parcel. Opened it !!!

There appeared before an astonished eye [It will be recalled that Burrows had the use of only one eye] eight watches all cheap stuff of the kind in vogue with the Navigators fifty years ago... It transpired that Mr Spooner bought and paid for these watches and his speech was after this style:

"I didn't give thirty shillings for them; I didn't give twenty-seven shillings for them; I didn't give twenty-five shillings for them..."

He (the composer) getting rather warm: "What did you give for them?"

Mr Spooner. "I gave him twenty-one shillings for them."

There is only one comment in the correspondence from Ben to Jane that approaches any overt expression of his feelings for her and that is considered more fully in the context of the song, *Lines*, to which it relates, in Chapter III. In combination with the very discreet references Jane made to the author, it makes clear that their relationship remained an affair of the mind. Neither was prepared to flout that behaviour socially acceptable to their families. Jane's parents took the only course they could and insisted she abandon her studies and association with Ben. She, not surprisingly, obeyed them and left Leicester to continue music at the Royal College of Music. She never again saw Ben and only resumed her friendship with his sister, Grace, in later years in London.

One other event of these years helps to paint the picture of Benjamin Burrows, the musician. On Wednesday, 5 December 1928, he was the organ soloist in a concert given by the Leicester Symphony Orchestra. His contribution to the programme was a Handel Concerto in B flat. The Leicester Mail critic wrote in his review of the performance:

Vaughan Williams's overture The Wasps was disappointingly ordinary. It was written in 1908, and bears traces of much experimenting. From this work it was rather too sudden a jump to Handel's Organ Concerto in B flat, the solo part of which was very ably played by Dr Ben Burrows. His performance was such as to rouse the audience to demand an encore.

And his colleague of the Leicester Mercury:

The only encore of the evening followed the organ concerto in B flat of Handel, in which Dr Ben Burrows delighted with his part of the work. The three movements were given with complete cohesion between organist and orchestra. Dr Burrows added a delightful

solo, an excerpt of Purcell.

In his home city, Burrows was becoming a well-established musician, noted for his brilliance as an organist, as the previous quotations verify. But even earlier, the University College of Leicester had recognised his growing reputation as a teacher and appointed him to their faculty in 1924. This was the fifth year of the College's existence and Burrows was one of four additional staff engaged for music; another of them was his sister, Grace Lee. Grace's musical activities in Leicester were numerous and distinguished. In his biography of Malcolm Sargent⁴. Charles Reid *Malcolm Sargent* - Charles Reid (Hamilton, 1968) p. 70. describes her when she led Sargent's orchestra in Leicester as a remarkable young woman who...later was to help him mobilize the Leicester Symphony Orchestra and lead that as well.

At the time of their appointments, the lecturer in charge was Dr E. Markham Lee. He was responsible for piano, organ and theoretical studies, while Burrows shared the organ teaching. The prospectus for 1925-6 states:

Students of the organ have the privilege of lessons being given on the organ in the De Montfort Hall, kindly granted by the Committee of the City Council.

James Ching joined the department in 1926 and shared with Burrows the teaching of all the theory from Elementary to Advanced Harmony, Counterpoint and the Musical Appreciation Class. The 1927-8 prospectus gives no indication of who was then in charge of the department. James Ching's name, however, has replaced that of E. Markham Lee at the head of the list and he is not indicated as teaching any of his previous work, all of which is listed as taught by Burrows. By 1929, Burrows seems to have taken over the leadership. Dr Gordon Slater, organist of Leicester Cathedral, who was to become a close friend of Burrows, has also been appointed.

George C. Gray, Slater's successor at the Cathedral, appears in the 1931 prospectus, taking over the solo voice and choral training. He too was to become an equally close friend of Burrows and a regular musical associate. The 1932-3 prospectus indicates that James Ching had now left the department. From here on there is a gap in the records until the 1946-7 prospectus in which the department had shrunk to two lecturers, Burrows and Gray, who share all the teaching. String tuition and history have disappeared from the prospectus.

⁴ *Malcolm Sargent* - Charles Reid (Hamilton 1968 p. 70)

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Ben Burrows, a great patriot, chose to help the war effort by working in the factory of his friend, Clifford Twigger, who had converted his type-setting business into a plant for making flanges for tanks. The delivery van bore the slogan *Speed the Tanks*. Later, Burrows was sub-contracted to the firm of Gents, also of Leicester, to repair ships' chronometers, a task which he undertook in his small garden workshop. His inventive genius was again displayed in a design of a process to recondition micrometers, essential equipment in his war work. This process he described in a pamphlet published in 1944 by the Bodnant Press. What sense his regular subscribers, mainly musicians, made of the technical language, one can only guess:

...hold the spindle in a V-block with its face flush, and lap on a cast iron plate. Replace the spindle in frame, and lap the anvil true to it using cast iron slips.

Perhaps this highly-specialised material did not form part of the regular series of publications his subscribers received!

Yet another Burrows invention was an adjustable spirit level for use in the installation of machinery. Written evidence of his engineering skill is available in articles he wrote for the *Model Engineer*⁵.

By the 1940's the small Bodnant Press had assumed great importance in Burrows's life. Its administration must have added many hours to an already full week. With limited help he prepared stencils of his publications, ran the organisation of subscribers he had acquired and duplicated the copies on a hand-operated Gestetner.

The press was turning out an average of five or six items each month, listed and summarised by Burrows in a monthly circular to the subscribers. In Number 13 he notes:

This issue will be noteworthy for the fact that decorated title pages appear for the first time.

There is also a review in this number of Burrows's Four Choral Preludes, of which H. L. Barnes, a familiar Leicestershire musician, writes:

Dr Burrows's essays do not suffer by comparison, [with Parry] but rather show to advantage in their freshness of treatment and

⁵ *Screw-Cutting in a plain lathe*: *Model Engineer and Electrician*, 5.25;
Two disc-cutters: *The Model Engineer and Light Machinery Review*, 2.26;
A built-up milling machine: *The Model Engineer and L.M.R.*, 5.28

harmonic liveliness... all organists will enjoy the sparkling toccata on Leoni. In this prelude, admirers of the French school will find the continental brilliance and clarity without the bleak morbidity which characterises so much music from over the water.

In 1942, the Leicestershire Reference Library joined the subscription list and received copies of Bodnant Press publications. It is here that one may find the most comprehensive stock of the material for teaching that Burrows produced, and the music, both his own and that of his pupils and friends, that he published. One additional issue worth mention is a set of five pieces for harpsichord that Burrows found in a Leicester bookshop and considered worth preserving. There are also in the archives, known as the Leicestershire Collection, letters from Burrows to the librarian, Mr G. K. Wilkie, one of which expresses the great pleasure and encouragement he anticipated from the support of the City Library.

At the most vigorous period of its existence, the Bodnant Press was quite widely known. Apart from the publicity it received from the network of postal students to whom the teaching material was sent, its editions were sold by the London Music Shop, Dale Forty's of Birmingham, Piggott and Co. of Dublin and, locally, by Russell and Son of Leicester. Reviews of Bodnant Press publications include this from the Irish School Weekly about Burrows's monographs *Nine Lessons in Elementary Harmony* and *Florid Counterpoint*:

The many excellent educational texts written by Dr B. Burrows of Leicester, have already received high praise from discerning teachers of music in Dublin. These two books cover the Intermediate Course very adequately indeed, and their style is so clear and lucid that pupils will have no difficulty in passing this examination after a year's study.

Nine Lessons in Elementary Harmony, a concise book on harmony up to the dominant 7th chord, has gained quite a reputation in England, where the author is recognised as one of the leading authorities in his subjects.

And of the same monograph, reviewed above, the more widely-read Music Teacher and Piano Student said:

As an example of 'multum in parvo' this book would be hard to beat.

In a matter of twenty pages, the whole of the material of Harmony needed for such examinations as the LRAM or TCL Diploma is

covered well... There is not one word of 'padding' from beginning to end, and those who make use of this book - they should be many - must realise that every single sentence contains information of the greatest importance. The student is expected to read carefully and to use his reasoning powers to some effect ... Altogether a book to be most strongly recommended.

One is not surprised at the limited social life for which Burrows had time, occupied as he was for almost twelve hours of every working day. Not that he would have wished it otherwise. Conviviality, gregariousness, the give and take of sociable conversation were all as extraneous to his nature as they were integral to that of his wife, Doris. His son, Ben, describes how on their family vacations, usually in some small hotel in an east coast resort, his father would sit, quietly absorbed in a book amidst a roomful of vacationers engaged in lively discussion.

Neil Sutherland, a friend of the Burrows family writes⁶:

Neil Sutherland to BBD, letter of 29 November 1978.

As far as 'incidents' go, what are there? They are more images of his personality than specific things he did. I remember with delight his unique ability to decide when to go from a social situation and carry it through then and there, without fuss or ceremony, or giving offence.

Those without a sense of humour might, I suppose take offence. He used to say "I've got to go now. Goodbye." - and walk out!

This was a very un-middle-class, un-English characteristic. I loved it.

He was very much 'his own man', decisive, positive. He also seemed to a young adolescent mind, a solitary man, a loner.

Beryl Kidd, secretary to Burrows for about ten years in the 1950's, recalls his kindness as a man and consideration as an employer. During this time she, herself a musician, learnt much from Burrows in the course of her work, which involved helping him to prepare his teaching monographs. She expresses amazement at the contrast between his simple presentation of the basic principles of theory as compared with the verbiage of many textbooks. Her suggestion that the combination of musician and precision engineer accounted for the lucidity of his teaching is borne out by the testimony of many others. His pupils, including

⁶ Neil Sutherland to BBD - letter of 29 November 1978

members of the overseas forces, were widespread and Burrows kept a map in his studio with flags locating those in Australia, Canada, Germany, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, India, Malaya, South America and South Africa.

It is incredible how many in posts of great musical responsibility were students of Ben Burrows. In Appendix II are comments from some of them as a permanent testimony to his unique achievements in examination coaching. His last advertisement in the Musical Times lists his successes. Among them are 24 D Mus, 56 B Mus and 104 FRCO. These statistics need no comment.

Those students who received personal tuition from Ben Burrows witnessed at first hand the efficiency of his highly systematic approach. The files he built up over the years included his workings, not only of final examination papers, but even of exercises from his own and others' textbooks. The books of his pupil, William Lovelock, were used to amplify his own brief monographs where this was required. The style is immediately recognisable as an expansion of Burrows's own and the teaching techniques stem from the books of Charles Kitson, Burrows's own teacher. With relatively - and typically - few words, Ben would correct one's own efforts and rework them with a rapidity that could be, at the moment, demoralising. But to have studied on a direct basis with him was to have come into contact with an intellect of such power and versatility as one could expect to encounter only seldom. Another distinct benefit the personal student had over the correspondent was Ben's physical presence to decipher for the perplexed reader his handwriting, a constant problem for those at a distance. He was not a little irritated by people's inability to read his writing though a glance at any example of it would convince one that he had little cause for irritation!

His encouragement to students was generous and sympathetic. To any who attempted composition, he would recommend an abandonment of many of the techniques he taught for examination purposes. Though involved life-long in diploma and degree coaching, he fully realised the sterility that such an occupation could lead to: possibly after the 1927-35 period of his own composing career he never really escaped from it himself. He was at one time approached - or considered applying - to examine for the University of London but felt that he would rather be on the side of the student! Perhaps there was also a certain psychological resistance to the amount of commuting to and from London that would have been required. Examinations were something of a game to him and it was with almost boyish delight that he would study various examination papers as they were issued and crack them. He complained once with reference to the new M.Mus.R.C.M. degree, which started about 1950, of the difficulty of obtaining specimens of the papers so as to

penetrate their inner mysteries.

Among the personal effects considered worthy of preservation after his death is a bound copy of the Bodnant Press pamphlet, *The Story of a Song*, by Stanley M. Whelan. A written message appears on the flyleaf of the little volume:

To Dr Burrows with happy recollections of a famous occasion. From Stanley M. Whelan, January 1951

The famous occasion was a visit made by Ben to the Liverpool Playhouse, the culmination of a series of events recounted in a cutting from the Liverpool Post of 4 January 1951, also included in the commemorative volume. In 1920, on a cycling holiday in Wales, Whelan, one rainy evening, discovered the manuscript of a song in a C.T.C. hostel in Bettws-y-Coed, where he was staying. The song was *Music, when soft voices die*, dated 9 August 1914, and Whelan wrote out a copy for himself. For the next thirty years, during which the song took on for the discoverer a very personal character, he would often ponder who the composer might have been - perhaps a young man killed in the 1914-18 war? And then, in 1950, a friend, Reg Hatfield, introduced him to a recent Bodnant Press publication, a folk song suite for piano duet, *Under the Rose*, by B. Burrows. Delighted, he wrote to the Bodnant Press and discovered that the composer was indeed the same as his songwriter. He was even more delighted when Burrows decided to publish the song, hoping that it would pass muster as a youthful effort. At the same time he published Whelan's account of the events.

The composer was invited to the Liverpool Playhouse to see a production of *The Tinder Box* by Nicholas Stuart Gray. During the interval, Ronald Settle, the Musical Director, and Joan Ovens played folk-song settings by Burrows, commended to them by Whelan. In November 1954, they played more of Ben's settings, including *Three Irish Airs* (1952) which seemed suitable for the evening's play, *Home is the Hero*, by Walter Macken.

This visit to a play was, of course, incidental to the episode arising from Whelan's new contact with Burrows and quite exceptional. Ben had little time for the theatre, cinema or even concerts. He almost never went to hear music. It is surely another reason why his own music showed so little development after the 1930s, so relatively unaffected as he was by contemporary musical developments. Confirmation from his son, his sister, and friends of his almost total absorption in his work and hobbies is abundant. Many express surprise that he avoided concerts. He read a great deal of music, having that rare capacity to hear a total score, and no doubt preferred his own mental realisation to many that he might have

been subjected to at concerts, In any case, his quiet nature recoiled from the social ambience in which they would be held.

In March 1950, he visited the University (still then a College of London), apparently for the first time since the 1920s! This was at the request of the author to perform with him seven of his folk song settings for two pianos in a Staff-Student concert. The few students reading Music at the University students attended Burrows's studio for individual theory lessons in a part-time arrangement between him and the University - the only link that he had retained with the institution in whose early development he had played such an active part. Even this link was broken with the establishment of a School of Music at the, now, autonomous University in 1957, though for a concert given as part of a summer vacation for overseas students, he was invited to write some music. He produced his *Woodwind Quintet*. The newly-appointed Director of Music, Dennis Mulgan, an oboist, had, on his arrival, at the University, formed the Leicester Wind Players who gave the first performance.

One other incident of Burrows's later years is significant, for it marks a break of that long silence from song composition that Burrows had maintained since the last of his Jane Vowles songs in 1929. It would be pleasing to record that this song of 1953, a setting of a poem, *Were I the wind*, by a friend, Arthur Welburn, marked a return to to the best of the earlier songs. Sadly, it does not, even though Burrows considered it worth issuing from the Bodnant Press. The poem is a pleasing enough conceit but it lacks originality. Apparently Elgar had agreed many years earlier to set it, but did not. Burrows's treatment is attractive and shows some of his old cunning in the varied treatment of the accompaniments that match the personification of wind, rain and night, but it cannot stand with the best of the Jane Vowles songs. She herself, when introduced to the song by the author, expressed the opinion that it could not compare with so many of those fine songs that he wrote for her, and, even allowing for personal prejudice, one would not dispute the view.

In 1956, Ben Burrows resigned his position at Victoria Road Church. His departure was a cause of sadness to the choir and church members who had come to know, respect and love him. The minister, the Reverend Arthur Kirkby, invited Ben to choose the hymns for his last Sunday services and his selection is worth recording:

MORNING: Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh

(Stowe)

Jesus, high in glory (the children's hymn)

As pants the hart for cooling streams (Tate and Brady)

Through all the changing scenes of life (Tate and Brady)

EVENING: The God of Abraham praise (Thomas Olivers)

Psalm 16 (Dr Burrows's own chant)
My soul, there is a country (Vaughan)
Father in high heaven dwelling (George Rawson)

Arthur Kirkby does not specify the tunes but it is unlikely that Burrows, with his respect for tradition, would depart from those associated with the words. Dr Kirkby treasures a book which Ben gave him on leaving the church. It is Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology and is inscribed In memory of a happy association. Dr Kirkby offers his memoirs in the same way⁷. At a ceremony to mark his departure, Burrows was presented by the choir with a handsomely-bound copy of that work which is a lasting tribute to his long association with them, his own Five Psalms.

Ben Burrows had a multitude of friends but there were few who could claim to have known him intimately. His was a nature that protected its privacy; that was loth to display itself in the least way. To meet him was to be powerfully impressed, paradoxically, by his modesty. One recalls him standing in the dinginess of his north-facing Edwardian studio, in 2, University Road. The room was unlit by sun and shrouded by high hedges. Shelves of bound volumes, from which a long array of back numbers of Punch stands out vividly in the author's memory, lined the walls. Of less than medium height, Dr Burrows had a deep forehead, the depth emphasized by his receding grey hair. His closed left eye caused a momentary shock that was soon dispelled by his quiet, gentle and friendly manner.

It was with sadness and regret for loss of further opportunities of meeting with him, that his friends heard of his death on 28 January 1966. One learnt subsequently of his persistence during months of pain in carrying on with his work, even walking, as he had done for forty years, the two miles to his studio for as long as he possibly could. Some weeks after his death, a group of his friends met, under the chairmanship of George Gray, and arranged a memorial concert of his music for 29 October 1966⁸. The programme devised for that concert was performed by ex-pupils or close friends, and his sister, Grace, ended the programme with his Violin Sonata. As the gay exuberance of its coda died away, all remembered with gratitude and affection a masterly musician and much-loved man.

⁷ Letter from AK to BBD, 16 June 1977

⁸ See Appendix III for the programme details

But by 1910, much greater skill has been acquired. A composer of Burrows's musicality could not fail, even without instruction, to make rapid technical advances. Consider the imitative introduction and, later in the same song, a more subtle use of harmony, though still of traditional flavour.



Ex 4 *White Rose*



Ex 5 *Ibid.*

Not only had experience brought more assurance to his musical style, but, as three partsongs of 1911 show, his appreciation of poetry is also growing. The treatment of cadences may still be over-cosy but, certainly in *Fain would I change that note*, Burrows writes a song that is as worthy of performance as many of that era.

In *Low-sighing winds*, written in 1915, by which time Burrows had begun his studies with Kitson, confidence and flexibility have arrived, notably in his accompaniments. Burrows had written a great deal of piano and orchestral music for Kitson and it is worth observing how his style had benefited from these exercises. Bolder harmonic strokes, greater independence of melody and a free-ranging line declare an emergent personality, less reliant on convention.

A musical score for a piano introduction in 3/4 time, key of D minor. The right hand features a melody with lyrics: "Blend your evening songs". The left hand features a bass line. The piece concludes with a final cadence in both hands.

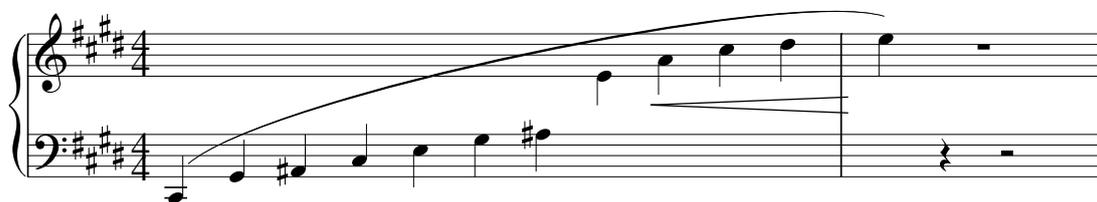
Ex. 6 *Low-sighing winds*

Three songs published by Augener in 1917 claim attention as forerunners of the Jane Vowles series, Burrows's most personal and lasting achievement as a composer. The first two, *O Gentle Moon*,

(incorrectly entitled *O gentle morn* by Augener) and *O Happy Lark*, both to poems by Shelley and Tennyson, are short (nineteen bars each); the third, *There is sweet music here*, from Tennyson's *The Lotos-eaters*, is more substantial.

Strangely, though written four years earlier than the other two, it is the most effective. *O Gentle Moon* contains a device similar to one found frequently in the Jane Vowles series. This is the incorporation into a 4/4 time, bars of irregular length which he clearly intended to be freely interpreted - nothing more than a slow arpeggio. Where this device appears in the third bar from the end, as well as implying the same rhythmic freedom, Burrows introduces a whole-tone scale (Exs 7, 8).

Piano



Ex 7 O Gentle Moon



Ex 8 Ibid.



Ex 9 There is sweet music here

The harmonic world of *O Happy Lark* is akin to that of Somervell's *Maud* cycle, an interesting coincidence since Tennyson is the poet of both. In the third song of the set, Burrows's response to the words is deeper. How aptly the tender three-bar introduction leads into a setting of a poem about the healing power of sweet music. It is instructive to observe Burrows's self-criticism in a comparison of his 1912 version with

the published one. A two-bar link in the original merely marks time, whereas in the published version he has composed a link which makes an additional comment. The composer also places a low-lying tonic chord at the end which does not appear in the earlier version (Exs 9, 10).

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line consists of a few notes: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5, followed by a two-bar rest. The piano accompaniment is in the right hand, starting with a series of chords and moving towards a low-lying tonic chord (F#4, A4, C5) at the end. The left hand provides a bass line with some chords and a final tonic chord. The lyrics 'in a gleam - ing pass.' are written under the vocal line.

Ex 10 *Ibid.*

The Piano Music

Many of the first traceable MSS of Burrows's piano music, dating from c. 1912, are composition exercises for his teacher, Charles Kitson. Comments written on the scores, some by Burrows, some by Kitson, reveal something of his development as a student. One appeared in print as early as 1913 : *Nocturne in F sharp* (Donajowski) pre-dating the substantial body of Burrows's piano music published by Augener from 1915 onwards. It is an attractive ternary-form piece, comparable in style to many of the Augener pieces, and significant primarily as being Burrows's first published piano piece.

In *Piece*, dated November 1912, and later published as *Summer Night*, (Augener 1922), Burrows writes:

Playing with few notes cf. *Till Eule[n]spiegel*

At the end of the piece he appends three motifs representing night, stillness and the touches of sweet harmony that indicate his experiments. Note the Shakespearean source - typical inspiration for him at this time with leitmotifs, drawn from the Wagner-Strauss tradition.

Another piece of 21 August 1913, pencil-titled *Idyll*, and later published by Augener in 1922 as *The Brookside*, receives Kitson's comment:

Good. I like this but I think you must be careful not to get all your pieces alike in mood.

The piece is prefaced by Tennyson's lines from the *Choric Song* in *The Lotos-eaters*, words set in the third of the three songs mentioned

above:

*And in the stream the long-leafed flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.*

Many of the earlier pieces are of a tranquil nature - indeed, throughout his career, Burrows's music shows a prevailing tendency towards repose, a clear reflection of his own quiet disposition. Kitson's advice was useful in helping to develop a wider range of expression in his pupil's music.

In *Legend*, (September 1913) Burrows, wryly observing his growing facility at counterpoint, pencils in the margin:

Here's a pretty canon!

and at the end of the piece, Kitson comments:

This is really first-rate. I am much pleased with it.

The second of *Three Melodies* (October 1913), published by Augener in 1915 as *A June Night*, has beneath the date, Jan. 27th:

My arguments in favour of the passage marked A are:

- 1. It sounds right*
- 2. Is a chromatic extension of the cadence (after Chopin)*

A written duologue after the third of the same group runs:

Burrows. These are intended to be fairly simple pieces. But at the same time, are not written to "sell".

Kitson. I like them very much. I have no fault to find with them in any way.

Perhaps his teacher's comments prompted him to change his mind about the saleability of the pieces for they were published by Augener in 1915.

And finally, at the end of a lively *Allegro moderato*, Burrows writes:

Second theme is made out of first. Have been practising Debussy's Images lately

Interesting, and perhaps helpful as these comments are, it is recourse to the scores themselves that provides a more objective evaluation of his achievement. Kitson's praise of them seems total but it must be recognised that he was judging the music as composition exercises in a way that such an eminent theorist as he could hardly avoid. Music less adroit than these pieces may possess greater originality and character. The search for such qualities in them leads to disappointment. Analysis of the music will support Kitson's praise with respect to those skills of composition which he had taught Burrows : harmony, counterpoint and structure, the principles which form the core of traditional lessons have been mastered. It is in no way surprising that Burrows should have become heir to Kitson as a theorist and have gained such a worldwide reputation as a teacher whose success in the field of examination coaching was unparalleled.

He has also learnt to compound elements from the styles of earlier composers, mainly of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and frequently brings off a passage of deep emotional content or potent charm. Only when listening for a unique, unmistakable identity is one let down. Burrows's individuality had not yet emerged; would not, in fact, do so until much later. It must be admitted that the piano music written before the 1934 *Piano Sonata*, though helping to supply the demand for new music at a time when no parlour was complete without a piano, it did not significantly add to the development of piano literature. At best it contributed to that store of well-wrought works against which pianists may judge music of greater originality.

Many of these early pieces bear titles of a descriptive nature. The quotations which head many of them emphasize their romantic character. Burrows borrowed this practice from John Ireland, for whom he had a great admiration, though his own harmony has little of the originality of the older composer. It is conservative and leans heavily on the use of chromatic effects within a tonal framework. There is little evidence of the harmonic innovations from Impressionism - varied scale-forms and bi- and poly-tonality - having affected him. Shades of the Brahms-Parry-Stanford tradition haunt the music with, here and there, an echo of Elgar.

Burrows's antecedents are not difficult to trace and the cultural and religious background in which he grew to maturity exercised a powerful influence on his musical development. He was to a great extent a product of the organ-loft and the musical vocabulary he acquired owes much to the organ literature he so voraciously explored. The references to Strauss and Debussy on his MSS bear witness to his interest in new trends, but, though from time to time he borrowed gestures from these composers, his inability to escape from the strait-jacket into which his provincial situation had locked him, failed to give them fresh utterance.

Summer Night, the last of his *Six Country Idylls*, is that *Piece* of November 1912, referred to above. In it, Burrows uses motifs inspired by these lines from *The Merchant of Venice*:

*How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep on our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony*¹.

There is poetic atmosphere about this short work and Burrows's mastery of piano style since his first compositions of c. 1908 is obvious. Structurally the piece is well-organised and the musical strokes are made with confidence. It is, incidentally, one of the few of Burrows's forty-odd published early works that is not in ternary form. But, despite its skilful construction, the sound-world it inhabits is devoid of surprise; it is conventional when compared with piano music of the same era by Bax, Bridge and Ireland, not to mention such internationally-famed composers as Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Though Burrows was never to become a radical composer, he did, at a later stage, extend his harmonic palate to include sound-colours which show the influence, in primis, of Delius. This development grew out of the series of songs written for Jane Vowles between 1927 and 1929 and is considered more fully in Chapter Three.

Between 1915 and 1925, Burrows produced a steady stream of piano works which appeared in Augener's catalogue. From 1923 the pastoral titles are replaced by formal ones. There is an attractive *Jig* in 1920 which foreshadows this trend and proves to be his best piano piece up to that date. It was written for his mother, who, one recalls, was an excellent pianist. For the amount of material it uses, it is perhaps overlong². There are three basic themes: two have the rhythmic characteristics of the lively Irish dance of the title and the third, marked as from a distance, begins like a far-off bagpipe. Fresh and vital, the *Jig* has an exciting coda in which an expanding series of chords brings a pre-echo of that similarly al fresco piece, *Bank Holiday*, of E. J. Moeran, which appeared eight years later.

Of a set of *Twelve Studies*, prefaced with the quotation:

*Along the grass sweet airs are blown
Our way this day in Spring* - D. G. Rossetti

¹ Note the Shakespearean source - typical inspiration for him at this time

² Clare Costelloe, playing it at a Memorial Concert for Benjamin Burrows (See Appendix III) made two cuts: bars 134-151 and 220-238.

there is little to add to what has already been written in general terms. It is interesting, however, to see that, although Burrows has abandoned lyrical titles, he still depends to some extent on verbal stimuli for his pieces. Numbers 1 and 3 are, in any case, earlier pieces dating from March 1916. There is about many of them a simplicity of approach that Burrows came to adopt by the 1920s. The fifth is of special note in that he writes in the folk style he had chosen for *Jig*, a style that was to become very typical in his post-1930 compositions.

Four pieces, published by Augener in 1924, though they have no thematic connection, form an attractive group. *Prelude*, *Intermezzo*, *Romance* and *Scherzo* exemplify the composer's concern at that time with abstract rather than romantic content. It is impossible to date their composition exactly, but, judging by their form and harmonic vocabulary they were probably written after 1920. The simpler harmonic approach, observed in the *Twelve Studies*, can also be heard in these pieces. This was a welcome development; it cleared away some of the chromatic clichés that had become something of a mannerism in his earlier writing. When a return to greater use of chromaticism was made in the Jane Vowles songs, it was more the absorption by an experienced composer of devices introduced into music by Debussy and Impressionist music generally than the unsophisticated adoption of late-romantic traits.

An interesting episode in Burrows's life is brought to light by two works written in 1925 and 1926. They are ostensibly for piano - one of them (two short pieces) was so published by O.U.P. in 1925 as *Chimes*. In fact it was written for the celebrated carillon at Loughborough. A glance at the texture of Burrows's unpublished variations on *Walsingham*, suggest that these too were written for that instrument. In 1925, Burrows had a harmony student, Eric Jordan, later Emeritus Borough Carillonneur of Loughborough. On one occasion Jordan demonstrated the splendid 47-bell carillon to Burrows who, Jordan recalls, immediately set down the notes of his two pieces, *Chimes*. Jordan appreciated Burrows's grasp of carillon style and has often included *Chimes* in public concerts from the tower. There is a copy of a letter from Burrows to a Mr Taylor (clearly one of the Taylor bell-founders of Loughborough) among the notes written to Jane by Burrows. It is dated September 30. Following a conversation he had had with Taylor and, believing that they had strayed from the central issue of their discussion, he sets out certain views about writing music specifically for the carillon. These notes suggest that Burrows had been consulted by Taylor, as he frequently was by many, on musical aspects of work in progress; this is borne out by a reference in Chapter III from a note by Jane concerning the development of playing the carillon from paper rolls in the style of the pianola. Valuable in themselves, they also illustrate the analytic approach that Burrows, a

scientist of considerable insight, brought to bear on such matters:

1. *If (particular placing of notes in a chord) is to be carried further than one would do more or less by instinct, it would need a prolonged study of Bell listening (not playing). I do not think this is carried beyond a rough and ready method by my carillonneur.*
2. *Bass notes before time. This will be good under certain conditions; but I would not make a fixed rule to that effect.*
3. *Spreading of chords. If always done, this will result in a cramped and monotonous style. (Imagine a hymn tune moving in a procession of concords.*
4. *Repercussive effect - unless reserved for a few long notes (beginning of Ave Maria for instance) this will result as No. 3 and moreover put carillon in barrel organ class at once.*
5. *Vibration does not flow up one string and down another (on a Piano)*
6. *It is an obvious fact that length of slot in roll makes no difference to the effect (see also some notes I made on arranging, in an early letter)*
7. *If no break is discernible between single and double bells, there is no need to bother any further.*
8. *[This note is cancelled by the composer but runs: The danger is in pursuing refinements that actually matter very little at the expense of main requirements]*
9. *Actual comparisons with orchestra are out of place. Bell music has a style entirely its own.*

The textures of *Chimes* are thin, the themes suitably bell-like. These are developed less in structural terms than cumulatively. A constant preoccupation with the interval of a sixth confirms Burrows's awareness of the intrinsic quality of this interval in the language of bells.



Ex 11 Chimes



Ex 12 Chimes

This campanological cunning was to be demonstrated to more poetic effect in at least two of the Jane Vowles songs, *Bredon Hill* and *Heaven haven*. Though there is no positive proof that the variations on *Walsingham* referred to above, were written for carillon, the date and style of writing suggest strongly that they were. This sixteenth-century tune held a fascination for Burrows. He had already used it in the fourth of *Fancies* (Augener 1925) as he had another sixteenth-century tune, *Coranto Hooper*, in the fifth. It was to appear again in the second movement of his unfinished second string quartet of 1932.

Charles van den Borren describes *Walsingham* as having exquisite legendary charm³ and continues:

the implied modulation from minor to major which gives it its character is full of the unexpected.

This is exactly the type of special feature that interested Burrows; the 1941-55 series of folk-song settings seizes on exactly this sort of starting-point for musical exploration.

The Chamber Music

Since Burrows's early years were spent in a house where much chamber music was played, it is natural that he should have written examples for the medium. His early efforts include seven or eight pieces for piano trio, well-suited for all three instruments but standing in the same relationship to his later chamber works as do the abundant piano pieces to his later keyboard writing. They are the accomplished attempts of a budding talent and have little to add to the statements of such men as Parry or Stanford on whom they draw so freely in harmonic content, form and style. Red ink comments on a set of variations for string quartet show that, like the trios that preceded them, they are student works. They met with the same approval from Kitson as his piano pieces. As a teacher, Burrows recommended his students to keep their early efforts, the better to assess their progress. This he did himself and, recognising the relative value of these works compared with his later music, he would not have welcomed undue stress being placed upon them.

One piece of 1918, written while he was serving in the army at Orford Ness in Suffolk, has a certain personal interest. Surprisingly, in view of his defective eyesight, Burrows was conscripted during the 1914-18 war and served his time with the Kite Balloon section of the army. It was at Orford Ness that he formed a friendship with a violinist, Fred

³ *Sources of Keyboard Music in England* - Charles van den Borren (Novello, 1913)

Tomlinson, and wrote for him a work, later entitled *Second Concert Piece*, on the MS of which he wrote the following tongue-in-cheek summary:

Suggested title. Dance of the Kite-Ballooners

Programme

March to the balloon shed
Perhaps the balloon won't go up
The balloon certainly won't go up
A nice chat. Whistling.
Rumour that the balloon is going up.
A wash-out.
No. It's going up after all. Curses.
March of the balloon-riggers (fugue)
Wind getting up.
The balloon is not going out after all
But still some day "xxx!"

It is a light-hearted march based on a hearty theme which later promotes the brief, abortive fugue (the programme makes it clear that it could be nothing other than abortive!)



Ex. 13 Second Concert Study for Violin and Piano

and there is about the piece a wry humour which is a new and welcome element in the composer's music. His break from the somewhat sheltered, provincial life of Leicester seems to have effected a change in his style which had settled far too easily into a somewhat complacent, romantic vein. At Orford Ness, he also composed another work for violin and piano, *On shadowy waters*, which he dedicated to his sister, Grace. This, in his earlier style, has no great originality about it, though Augener accepted it into their catalogue in 1919. A later *Lament and Gigue* for viola and piano, also published by Augener, has much more to commend it. The *Lament*, a brief paragraph of twenty-five bars, is based upon a theme by P. C. Buck, according to a footnote on the published score. It has a suitably grave quality and, though in A minor, modulates freely and chromatically before coming to rest on an A major chord. The lively Irish

jig that follows recalls the vitality of the piano *Jig* of 1920, dedicated to the composer's mother. In the intervening years, Burrows has learnt to order his material more economically and so the interest is better maintained. There are two main themes, nicely contrasted in rhythm and ideally supported by figures which seem to whirl the dance along in ever-increasing excitement to its final cadence. Since the work is not precisely dated it is not possible to say whether the *Lament and Gigue* pre-dated the Jane Vowles songs or whether it was written concurrently.



Ex 14 Lament and Gigue



Ex 15 Lament and Gigue

Choral Works

In the year 1910 when Burrows was appointed organist and choirmaster of St Mary's, Leicester, two of his short anthems appeared: settings of v. 1 of Psalm 1 and vv. 1-2 of Psalm 143. The psalms were to be a regular source of inspiration to Burrows, culminating in his most substantial sacred work, *Five Psalms*, in the 1930's. Considering his use of open score in the first of these anthems, they were probably exercises for Kitson. In 1911 there are two versions of the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis*, the first unfinished, then nothing until January 1930, surprisingly because Burrows did not leave this post until 1923 and it was his custom to produce music for practical use.

Organ Works

Burrows's early organ works are not nearly as abundant as those for piano, nor are they musically exciting. Their significance lies in the weight they add to a contention made earlier that his style was heavily influenced by the organ-loft tradition. In the actual organ works we notice the same harmonic language and rhythmic ploys that feature in his piano music. *Three Impressions* of 1915-16 are, indeed, adaptations of piano compositions. This practice continued throughout his composing career. From the *Prelude in G* of 1911 to the *Prelude in F* of 1925 there is

nothing of conspicuous interest, not even the four pieces published by Augener in 1923, *Prelude*, *Elegy*, *Pastorale* and *Postlude*, though Frederick Allt, one-time pupil of Burrows and a leading Leicester organist and accompanist observed that when he took them to Sir William Alcock, that distinguished organist expressed surprise that Burrows was not more widely-known. Perhaps the pieces made more impact then than they would today. Only after 1940 was Burrows to write organ music of real individuality, and then but little. His introspective nature had greater affinity with the more personal quality of the piano than with the remoter organ and the author recalls his expressing his preference for the piano on one occasion.

Large-scale Compositions

Burrows's student orchestral works written for Kitson have been mentioned. His large-scale works are few and are not dealt with in any detail in this book. Yet they deserve more notice than as mere entries in the catalogue. Most of them were written in Burrows's early period, except for *Eight Folksongs* of 1943, arrangements of some of his original piano duets, and a *Prelude* of 1945, both for string orchestra. Apart from student examples, two were submissions for his London degrees of B. and D. Mus. Others were written for the De Montfort Orchestra, forerunner of the Leicester Symphony, of which his sister, Grace, was, at various times, leader or conductor.

No large-scale work earlier than his B. Mus. exercise of 1913, *In praise of music*, has been traced, though it is unlikely that he had not already practised scoring with Kitson, prior to his examination. In 1914 and 1915 there are five examples: *Lyric Pieces 2* and *3* (no number *1* has been found) for small orchestra, *Dusk* and *Dawn* for choir and orchestra, and *Prelude* for full orchestra. All exercises for Kitson, they share the same praise that the eminent man had given Burrows for his grasp of other media. The items he wrote for the De Montfort Orchestra are the fully-scored tone-poem, *Lady of Shalott*, and two *Valse-Caprices*, arrangements of the second and third of his *Three Valses* for piano and, for small orchestra, *Three Miniatures*. Finally, in 1921, he wrote his D. Mus. composition, choosing again, as he had for B. Mus., a work for choir and orchestra, *Song of Darkness and Light*. For both examination exercises he selected the poetry himself and appears not to have acknowledged the sources. The following is a typical specimen:

*Man born to toil in his labours rejoiceth,
His voice is heard in the morn;
He armeth his hand and sallieth forth*

*To engage with the generous, teeming earth,
And drinks from the rocky rills the laughter of life.*

Such unfashionable sentiments, couched in that inflated verbiage, attract little attention today and it is a relief to turn to the richer and more durable heritage upon which Burrows drew for the Jane Vowles songs.

CHAPTER III

The Jane Vowles Songs

For sheer concentration, Burrows's composition of ninety-three songs in twenty-one months is an achievement to set beside those of such notable names as Schubert (over five hundred in a brief lifetime) and Schumann (the "wonderful" year of 1840). Burrows's exceptional speed at composition has already been noted in Chapter I, but even that cannot be the simple explanation of such a remarkable effort. One must seek further, and the cause which outweighs all others is to be found in the maturing love between Burrows and his student, Jane Vowles. Their relationship has been described in general terms: now the musical aspect - the most powerful expression of it - claims attention.

In the writing of this chapter, notes from Ben to Jane have proved invaluable. It is unfortunate that any she may have written to him have not been traced. Only her own hand-copies of one or two essays she wrote for him are still extant. These writings are the only evidence available for an assessment of their association. There was, according to Jane's daughter, Vreli Fry, a diary from the period of Jane's studies with Burrows, which Vreli read shortly after her mother's death. Unfortunately, this seems to have disappeared and an attempt to trace it through Jane's widower, Geoffrey Corbett (now also dead), from whom she separated a few years before her death, has been unsuccessful. The notes, though expressly concerned with the songs and, with a few exceptions of a lighter nature, musical aspects of their work together, their general ambience illuminates their growing closeness.

The first three quotations from Jane's account of their first recital reveal her admiration for her teacher:

On the morning of Der Tag they met on the battlefield to run through the singer's part of the programme. Some went well and some not at all to the singer's satisfaction, and we doubt if to the composer's either, but he held his peace, being a man of few words, except when severely annoyed...

They retired to a coffee shop:

There they sat for 10 minutes or so, indulging in sparse conversation and chocolate biscuits - the singer rather regretting the biscuits for they produced, as usual, a slight feeling of nausea. However, she recalled a book she had read concerning the triumph of mind over matter and the sensation passed off. The bill paid, they emerged into the street again, the Singer omitting to thank her escort for the refreshments. We may say in passing that this was a young lady who took very much for granted and was often not over-gracious concerning benefits received.

Of George Parker, a London baritone of the day, who shared the programme, she writes:

It was obvious to the Singer and the Composer's sister that the Baritone was not too sure of himself - and though they both felt extremely sorry for him, their sympathy was tempered with indignation, for they felt that the Composer might lose some of his well-earned glory because of careless interpretation of his work, which possible happening could *not*
be viewed with composure.

An essay of Jane's, *Provincial Causeries* (Leicester, Sunday Feb. 19th 1928), shows her budding talents as a writer, talents which she was to deploy later in an international context as opera critic for the Morning Star. This political development would have shocked the conservative Burrows had not their complete separation after 1929 left him ignorant of it. The essay also reveals her awareness of contemporary music. She complains of the lack of enterprise in Malcolm Sargent's concerts with the Leicester Symphony Orchestra and goes on to praise the Leicester Philharmonic in one of their concerts under Sir Henry Wood for presenting Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*. She then continues:

*Then out came the Messiah and Elijah for the other two concerts. Ah well, we shall expect to hear the Gurrelieder next season...Of the Leicester Chamber Music Club she says:
We have had the VW G minor, Waldo Warner's Fairy Suite and shall have later McEwen in E flat, but where is the Howells, the Bridge, the Armstrong Gibbs, the Goossens? Always it is Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn and Mozart...*

The wideness of Jane's interest is clear from this next passage which also reminds us of Burrows's own flirtation with music for the carillon:

By transporting ourselves a few miles to the West¹, we come upon a town making a name for itself out of a branch of music established abroad but not so well-known here. I refer to the casting of bells for Carillons. At Loughborough the newest step has been the invention of a mechanical instrument using rolls like a pianola and working by electric power.

That paragraph, and another describing her efforts to take to pieces and reassemble a watch, while waiting for the evening of her first recital with Ben, reflects the effect upon her of his preoccupation with engineering, mechanics and horology, a subject more fully explored in Chapter I.

Jane's lively imagination is reflected in this paragraph from her account of Lambert's *Rio Grande*, broadcast from Daventry 5XX at 9.50 p.m. on Monday, 27th February 1928, presumably one of its first performances:

The piano had what might be termed "water music" practically throughout - trickling sort of cadenzas up and down the keyboard and violent agitation in the extreme treble. The chorus, as far as harmony went, could well have been a group of surpliced ones chanting a Sanctus - only their syncopations shattered such a dream.

Even aside from Jane's vivacity and considerable natural charm, it is not strange that Burrows should have responded to such an alert musical interest. Their lessons together were certainly times of increasing pleasure for both and the tangible outcome is the song-writing which absorbed Ben so completely during the twenty-one months they knew each other.

In a long series of ninety-three songs it would be tedious and superfluous to examine every song in detail; several will receive no more than a mention. There are clearly-defined groups such as the thirteen Housman settings, the seven Shakespeare and the twenty-five of Celtic poets. But there are many miscellaneous ones ranging from poets of the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. The songs, therefore, are treated chronologically and in four fairly

¹ Clearly Jane's geographical awareness was not acute; Loughborough lies to the North of Leicester

arbitrary sets with a change of order here and there to allow settings of one particular poet to be juxtaposed. The notes to Jane Vowles from Burrows about some of the songs from number 46 onward help considerably in revealing more fully the composer's intention and the extent to which he achieved it. In the inevitable and rewarding interchange of research, some views were received from Stephen Banfield. These were later substantially incorporated into his comprehensive survey of English song². Here it seemed appropriate to include some written personal observations he made at the time the present book was first being written and since they are general, they will be examined in advance of detailed criticism of the songs. He writes³.

I must say I think he was at his best in relatively large-scale, dramatic settings, where he could rely on conveying a weighty build-up of emotion without having to clinch the whole thing in a small lyrical compass. I don't think he was a natural lyricist of inspired melody like Warlock, and for that reason I don't on the whole care for his sixteenth-century and similar settings. But works like The Oracles and Mistress Fell are very exciting and quite different from what his fellow-composers were doing in England at that time.

There are songs, one finds, which support a contrary view of Burrows's lack of natural and inspired melody. In particular, *When first my way to fair I took, Somebody and Cam' ye by*, with their simple folksong-like charm, and *The Poplars, How should I your true love know* and *Rachel*, with greater sophistication and poignancy, manifest a spontaneous and natural line which no singer, in the author's experience, has failed to respond to immediately nor has easily forgotten. Since a natural lyric gift is so generally expected of a song-writer, this theme receives more attention as each song is examined in detail and when direct comparisons are made between settings of the same poems by Burrows and other composers.

It is easy to share Banfield's firm opinion about Burrows's handling of poems of dramatic scope and this is another feature that receives closer examination later. Burrows's long essay to Jane Vowles, *Trials of a Composer 9: He apologises for not liking opera*, raises issues in this connection which cannot be overlooked for they are highly revelatory of his privateness and abhorrence of extroversion and display. He quotes Ernest Newman in an essay on Maeterlinck:

As the inner life is too subtle to be expressed in ordinary language, so its interests are too refined to be spent upon crude facts.

He continues:

*The latter part might be put differently, for I don't consider myself refined, but this fairly expresses my point of view. I am uninterested from the artistic point of view in *Crime*, or *the workings of Fate*.*

One doubts whether this represents a very objective or consistent viewpoint: there are moments in Burrows's songs where issues of fate - if not crime - are dealt with. Consider *The Culprit*, probably the only setting of Housman's grim little melodrama, since none is listed in Gooch and Thatcher⁴; or Rossetti's *John of Tours*, a blood-curdling tale if ever one was told;

² *Sensibility in English Song* - Stephen Banfield

³ Letter of 19 September 1978 : Banfield toBBD

⁴ Bryan Gooch and David Thatcher (Garland Publications, New York 1976) *Musical Settings of the late Victorian and Modern British Literature*

or de la Mare's *Mistress Fell*, which Burrows interprets as the ravings of a crazed mind: these three, at least, reflect the dark side of life and suggest that the composer was not incapable of exploring themes which it may not normally have been his desire to contemplate.

Later in the same essay one reads:

To get satisfaction from music, I require it to be what it is - a mystery. I can set The Falcon, the refrain of Bailey, Rachel, Mistress Fell and live the indefinite thing that each one is. People who write impressionist poetry are after the same thing. Mere hints of ideas tend to get home to a reader without any definite expression of thought.

With this virtual alignment with the Impressionists, Burrows is on safer ground, for his music bears constant witness to his sympathy with their aims. So often he sketches a situation (the ambiguity of *A Frosty Night*), delicately creates a mood (the peace of *Innisfree*) or hints at a deeper emotion than he is prepared to reveal (*Lines*). While it may be true that operatic situations would not have drawn forth adequate response from this introspective man, one may speculate on how much his environment and circumstances accounted for his dislike of opera and whether, given more encouragement of the kind that Jane Vowles gave him, he could not have splendidly developed those powers of dramatic expression discernible in *The Oracles*, *Mistress Fell*, *Bredon Hill* and the *Piano Sonata*.

Songs 1-21

In a letter of 15.8.69 to the author, Jane Vowles recalls that Burrows told her that Douglas Hyde's poem, *I am Raftery*, mirrored exactly his own personal feelings at that time. So does one conclude that Burrows was:

*Full of hope and love,
With eyes that have no light,
With gentleness that has no misery.*

or that the latter part of the poem more accurately expressed his feelings:

*Going west upon my pilgrimage
By the light of my heart,
Feeble and tired
To the end of my road.
Behold me now,
And my face to the wall,
A-playing music
Unto empty pockets.*

The music sways between the more optimistic first lines and the bleakness of the later ones. The final, slow B major arpeggio brings ultimate solace. The ambivalence of mood is such as one might expect some four months after the beginning of the intense relationship that was growing between him and Jane.

Another Irish poem, J. M. Synge's *The Oaks of Glencree*, was Burrows's second setting in this series of songs. The brighter mood of the music is disturbed only briefly by the poet's uneasy reflection on death. Of these first two songs of Burrows, a reviewer in *Musical Times*, December 1928, writes:

B. Burrows writes a steady, competent but uninspired setting of The Oaks of Glencree. He is seen to better advantage in a far more

imaginative treatment of I am Raftery.

Burrows's first eleven songs do not explore the high range that Jane Vowles, a soprano, possessed. Furthermore, as far as Song 21, with one or two exceptions, the songs are more suited to a man's voice. *The Oracles*, Song 21, is the last of the thirteen Housman settings, so the aptness for male voice is understandable. It is as though Burrows dared not yet focus his attention upon Jane in the songs, but preferred a safer gesture through a generalised approach to song.

The thirteen Housman settings sustain comparison with those of Somervell, Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, C. W. Orr, Graham Peel etc. *Yonder see the morning blink*, *The Culprit*, *The Grenadier* and *The Oracles* seem not to have been set by others⁵. A detailed look at four of the Housman songs will serve as an assessment of Burrows's sympathy with the verses of the much-set Georgian poet. Because of a widely-held view that Butterworth is the most successful composer of songs to Housman's poems, it is interesting to read Burrows's reaction to his tone-poem, *A Shropshire Lad*, expressed in a note to Jane:

Very disappointing. Cold music in spite of the occasional noise. No depth of feeling. Not much better than an organist's extemporisation. Worked-out figures. A little more Parryesque than Parry. Over-rated stuff. By side of Delius' Brigg Fair seems futile and childish like a lot more English stuff. If Butterworth hadn't pegged out in War should never have heard any more of it.

Such a view is discountenanced by the continued survival of Butterworth's music. Yet, it is fair to add that history provides many examples of bad judgments by composers of others' music. This fact does not discredit their own efforts. The four settings of Housman by Burrows that are considered here are *The Poplars*, *Bredon Hill*, *The Half Moon* and *The Oracles*.

The Poplars (A Shropshire Lad LII)

Above the murmur of the far-off brooklands, the poet wistfully recalls his native regions. Trembling by the pools, the poplars he knew as a boy are pictured in the music. The key signature has three sharps but is neither clearly A major nor F sharp minor: G natural denies one, A sharp the other. The shimmering texture images the "marvelling" of the wanderer whom the poet, in his imagination, envies. The "trembling" of the poplars becomes a series of sighs heard by the night-time wanderer.

13

There in the wind-less night-time, The wan-der-er mar-vell-ing

Ex 16 *The Poplars*

⁵ *ibid.* (Gooch and Thatcher)

The nostalgia of v.1 returns. The sighs too recur and we learn that they echo the soul of the exile. The envied wanderer, hearing the sound by the glimmering weirs, however, does not recognise that.

Bredon Hill

There can be no other setting of this popular Housman poem that begins with such an effective imitation of the gradual growth from hesitant, isolated chimes to the full peal of church bells resounding through the warm Sunday morning air from Bredon Hill.

Animato

Ped sempre

Ex 17 Bredon Hill

The insouciant joy of the lovers, lying on Bredon Hill, overlooking the coloured counties and listening to the church bells, is delicately portrayed. Above them the song of the soaring lark heightens their pleasure. A modulation to B flat ushers in a peal of richer harmonic content as the bells call worshippers to church; the tempo slows to solemnize the occasion of prayer. The lovers do not heed the call. The music resumes its earlier, quicker pace and brighter E major key, in a return of the original peal. Verse four is an exact repeat, musically, of verse one; the lovers continue to enjoy the balmy day. The peal decays and in a silence, broken only by an intermittent upward arpeggio flourish, the lover tells of the girl's lone journey to church. There follows an ominous falling triplet chord-sequence, as though from a church organ, and the upward arpeggio flourish is revealed as the ascent of a bell-rope prior to the single toll of a funeral knell:

83 *rit.* [Slower ♩ = 60]

rit. [Slower ♩ = 60]

And went to church a - lone They

rit. [Slower ♩ = 60]

Ped.

Ex 18 Ibid.

In the quaver rest delay of the actual toll, Burrows reveals more of his grasp of campanology, for the rope-pulling needs some time to produce the sound. But life goes on.

The bells resume their initial peal and call to prayer. Out of an abrupt silence (*wind blowing the other way*, the composer drily comments in his MS) the lover bitterly demands the bells be dumb. A new, almost hysterical peal compels him to accept their challenge to pray. As the bells fall silent, the organ transfigures the final peal into a distant benediction in an augmentation of the earlier triplet chord-sequence.

The Half Moon (Last Poems XXVI)

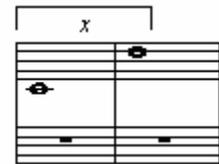
This brief, dismal poem finds echo in Verlaine's words:

Il pleure dans mon coeur comme il pleut sur la ville

Burrows exactly matches this mood in the close arpeggios - gusts of wind, scattering the rain - which introduce and accompany the voice. To describe the melody as dreary is to choose a word which may have a pejorative sense, yet, with its close intervals and narrow range, this melody is most aptly so described.



Ex 19 Ibid.



Ex. 20 Ibid.

Housman's words have no joy in them; they are pervaded by the melancholy of separation by distance and death. The sheer pessimism of the poet's last verse is intensified by the composer's prolongation and repeat of the last four words:

*I know not if it rains, my love
In the land where you do lie
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love,
You know no more than I.*

Nor is there, as there so often is in Burrows, a solacing major cadence; the music ends with a sombre low-lying C minor chord.

The Oracles (Last Poems XXV)

Burrows's setting of *The Oracles* is his largest, most dramatic and, arguably, the best of his thirteen Housman songs. Complete comprehension of the text needs some knowledge of the classical background that inspired it. Housman's persistent correspondent, the American, Houston Martin, clearly did not realise the significance of the italicised words in the poem until the poet explained them.

*Housman to Houston Martin, 27 September 1935 - Letters of A.E.Housman ed. Henry Maas
(Rupert Hart-Davis: London 1971) p. 376*

*I do not admire the oracle poem as much as some people do.
The italics, as elsewhere, are equivalent to inverted commas,
and give the supposed words of the oracle*

The whole poem, indeed, is 'supposed' and clearly expresses Housman's belief that life ends with the grave.

A piano prelude of twelve bars, poised over a C sharp pedal and incorporating a

march and loud fanfares, pre-echoes the priestess's oracle (Ex. 21). This rises, then falls into silence over an octave C sharp in the bass. This silence is compared by the poet to the days when Dodona mountain rang to the sound of the cauldrons hung from the oak trees to vibrate in the breeze and carry the prophetic words to the eager listeners.

Ex 21 The Oracles

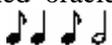
But the oaks were cut down in 219 B.C. and the sacred shrine destroyed. The poet now awaits the answer to his own question from:

The heart within that tells the truth and tells it twice as plain

The tempo for these words quickens and the truth is far from cheering as the increased musical tension and its sudden arrest imply. Now the song imagines the tolling of the cauldrons which, in a dream, merge with the opening fanfares.

There is again a subsidence to a low C sharp and the music of the first verse is resumed. The poet, though agreeing with the priestess's doom-laden sentiments, begs her put an end to her mouthing of self-evident truths:

*'Tis true there's better booze than brine, but he that drowns must drink
it;
And, oh, my lass, the news is news that men have heard before.*

The imagined oracle, shortly to be pronounced, is heralded in the piano by the rhythmic fragment  which grows again into the march of the Eastern invaders described by the priestess. None will withstand his onslaught, she proclaims, in a wild climax which gives way to silence.

And he that stands will die for naught, and home there's no returning.

As the song dies away to the faint resonance of the cauldrons, the Spartans on the sea-wet rock practise their rite of combing their hair to strengthen themselves for the coming battle.

It is understandable that this poem has not attracted other composers. The alternating seven and a half with seven iambs is a most unusual rhythm and one not eminently suited to musical setting. Yet the effect that Burrows achieves in this effective and dramatic song proclaims his conquest of the metrical obstacle.

Interspersed among the Housman songs are six miscellaneous settings, three of Burrows's favourite Celtic poetry, drawn mainly from the Irish Golden Treasury. *The Sheep* is one of his two versions of Seamus O'Sullivan's poem. This one conveys by means of a brief ostinato the seemingly incessant passing of the white sheep in the grey of the evening which reminds the poet of the passage of white days spent with his loved one, now sundered from him. *The Fairy Fiddler* is a deft, transparent setting of Nora Hopper's poem. In *Cradle Song*

(Padraic Colum), Burrows does not dispel memories of other settings of the poem, notably those of Hamilton Harty and Edmund Rubbra. *Bartholomew*, one of the ten songs published by London music houses and well-reviewed by Musical Times ("an unusual and well-written song") is a charming picture of a six-month old baby in which a recurrent upward phrase, ending on an unresolved leading-note, adds a smile to the song. No doubt moments spent with his own baby son, Ben, partially inspired the writing of this song. *Old Shellover* is, harmonically, one of Burrows's most advanced songs. His re-creation of de la Mare's "nocturne" in a dew-drenched, moonlit garden where molluscs enjoy their freedom from danger, in the shape of the horny old gardener and fat cock thrush, is impressionistic and weirdly effective. Hilda Conkling's *Moon Song* is an ingenuous setting of a children's poem.

Songs 22 - 42

With *Cam' ye by* (Anon.), Burrows wrote the first song of his series that is clearly a woman's item. The dedication, For Jane Vowles, appears on the OUP edition of 1928, though not on Burrows's own Bodnant Press republication of 1951. This is the first occasion on which Ben formally dedicated a song to Jane. It is a gentle evocation of the joyous impatience of a young Scots lassie awaiting the hour of meeting with her sailor-laddie. The song has a strong kinship with the Celtic folk tune *I know where I'm goin'*, not merely because of its use of those very words at the beginning of the second verse but since it is informed throughout with a folk quality arising out of the near-pentatonic flavour of the tune. Another Scots song, a setting of Allan Cunningham's *Gone were but the Winter Cold*, contrasts markedly with the previous song but is too harmonically warm for the stark and deathly quality of the words. The rocking rhythm of *Gently, Sorrowfully* is much more successful and poignantly explores W.J. Turner's poem about a dead lover, unresponsive to his girl's appeal.

Mistress Frances Harris's Petition is an oddity. Swift's seventy-five multi-syllabic line portrait of Frances Harris, an eighteenth-century maid and gossip, is amusing enough in its deliberately prattling way, but it is hardly the stuff to bear an even greater inflation of its shallow inanity by the addition of music. And, having decided to set it, Burrows even adds string quartet accompaniment for the first time to his customary piano. Though the additional colour is helpful in certain descriptive passages, the project must ultimately be judged a fruitless task. The work runs some fifteen minutes and falls into musical clichés, "inspired", perhaps, by Frances's banal chatter. If it seems cavalier to dismiss a lengthy song so cursorily, examination of the score will excuse such a course.

The paradoxes of love are described in Robert Herrick's duologue, *Upon Love*. Burrows, choosing to omit six lines, artfully poses three antithetical elements in a setting of great sensitivity. There follows a version of Psalm 137, *By the waters of Babylon*, words Burrows was to return to for the fourth and best of his Five Psalms. In setting it for solo voice, he follows in a well-established tradition that includes Brahms and Dvorák⁶. The undulating waters flow through the texture of the song and the Hebrew context of the words is touched in by bare fifths, tense chord progressions and a diminished fifth:



Ex 22

By the waters of Babylon

Ex 23

The song follows the poem closely, ranging from brooding despair to fierce

⁶ Brahms - *Four Serious Songs*; Dvorák - *Biblical Songs*

resentment. Compare the early plaints with the later ferocious outburst (Exs 22 -23 above and Ex 24 below).

Robert Herrick is again the poet of the brief song, *The Olive Branch*, a free-flowing, modal expression of the words' profound benediction. Another benediction - this time of the "last rites" - is harrowingly recorded in the next song. D.G Rossetti's version of an old French poem, *John of Tours*, is a grim tale with a horrifying close. Throughout the song, Burrows, with images of funeral knells, coffin construction and the death chants of priests, echoes the grim sentiments of the text.

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano accompaniment in the middle, and a bass line at the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 6/8. The score begins with a measure number '44'. The vocal line has the lyrics 'down with it, ev-en un-to the ground.' written below it. The piano accompaniment features a complex harmonic structure with many accidentals and a '5' marking above a measure. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with various chords and single notes.

Ex 24 *Ibid.*

Originally paired in publication with *Cam' ye by, How should I your true love know*, one of Burrows's finest songs, is very different in style. More sophisticated in its technique, it still retains the simplicity due to Rossetti's extension of Shakespeare's text. The origin of the poem is in Ophelia's scene in *Hamlet* where she appears before the Queen, distraught at her father's death and her treatment by Hamlet. It is a "mad" song, much shorter and far less dramatic than Burrows's later "mad" song, *Mistress Fell*. The madness of this jilted maiden is just as poignant but less frenzied. Unlike *Mistress Fell*, she gives quite coherent answers to her questioner who seeks signs by which he will recognise her lover as he comes upon her open grave. And so the song is set as a simple elegy of moving beauty ending, not in the harmonic no-man's land of the opening, but on a low-lying B major chord, one of Burrows's favourite devices.

Comparison between Burrows and Warlock is prompted mainly by two factors. One is the blind - or, possibly, deaf - view held by some of our leading song enthusiasts that Warlock is unassailable in his position as the greatest British song composer of his day. The author broadly accepts this view, but is prepared to be critical of certain details of Warlock's writing. From a distant, brief conversation with a fellow-student, the author believes that there was some correspondence between the men on the subject of song-writing⁷. Burrows, contemporaneous with Warlock, avidly writing songs at that time, and confident of his own musical prowess had no inhibitions in disputing some of Warlock's composition procedures such as the enthusiasts referred to earlier seem to have. Though their correspondence cannot be traced, it was, apparently, somewhat disputatious. Such differences of opinion as they had may have been trifling and it is only possible through comparison of their settings to surmise what they might have been. Their harmony, melodic outlines and sound texture are compared, for this seems the surest way to infer what their disagreements might have been. Even if these were to emerge as no more than shadowy suppositions, the existence of their music is the important fact and will reveal that each contributed worthy examples to the British song heritage.

Burrows's setting of *As ever I saw* is not one of his best, and Warlock's approach in the most widely-performed of his three versions, *As Ever I Saw* Peter Warlock Society

⁷ A letter from (?) Warlock attacking Burrows's pedantry has subsequently come to light (cf. Warlock Society newsletter)

Edition Vol 2 (Thames Publishing 1983, p 12) more graciously celebrates the charms of his lady. But in a comparison of other songs set by both men, it will be suggested that sometimes Burrows has more effectively captured the mood of the words.

Lawrence Atkinson's intense poem, *Irish Peasant's Love Song*, is probably the first overt expression by Burrows of his love for Jane Vowles. The recurrence of this theme in their composer-singer relationship leaves no doubt about the potency of their mutual passion. The patent romanticism of the poetry they chose (for Jane suggested texts to Ben) is a reflection of the idealised, sublimated nature of their love:

*And is your body soft and white
And your soul is it for me this night?*

These lines end this yearning poem and Burrows, with copious use of suspensions and appoggiature - devices traditionally associated with ardent desire - matches his music to this mood.

Slow ♩ = 60

p

Ex 25 *Irish peasant's love song*

William Sharp, writing as his alter ego, Fiona Macleod, wrote the poem of the next song. *Lennavanmo* is a lullaby with profound cosmic references and that quality of romantic imagery so characteristic of the poet. Burrows notes on his MS the problem of setting a simple lullaby against the deep implication of the text:

The problem is whether you will attempt to depict the convulsions of so many billion tons of gas [He refers to the words: "It is he whose wish is a leaping seven-mooned star"] or whether you will ignore the literal meaning entirely. Besides one should not frighten the child anyway.

Wisely he chose the second course: the profound content represents the thoughts of an observer of the simple scene of a woman singing her child to sleep and would not have been spoken aloud. So the song uses two ideas: a quietly-rocking accompaniment and recitative-statements over gentle chords for the observations of the onlooker. There is one obvious pictorial image as the "leaping seven-mooned star" shoots across the heavens by way of a simple arpeggio .

In a review of the recital referred to earlier in this chapter, on 16 April 1928, Cyril Tole wrote in the *Leicester Mercury*:

[Burrows] sets grammar but not prosody. Full Fathom Five, for example is dissected like a jig-saw puzzle, and put together in a fashion which leaves nothing of its original swing and flow. I was a little disappointed, too, by the attempt at realising the spirit of *The Blessed Damozel* in a setting for soprano, string quartet

and piano. It is atmospheric, truly, but it failed, to me, to realise that curious other-worldliness of the poem.

The reference to *Full Fathom Five* is mysterious : nowhere yet has this song come to light. It cannot have been the missing Song 89 for that came seven months later than this recital according to Burrows's meticulous dating. It is likely that he suppressed this song, not one hopes because of Tole's comments, for his review, as is common with critics writing contemporaneously, expresses views which would not necessarily be shared by later hearers.

Tole's dismissal of *The Blessed Damozel* in such a peremptory way demands investigation. It is the third of Burrows's songs to bear a dedication to Jane and the extract from the poem is the passage spoken by the blessed damozel herself, with one or two omissions. The spirituality of Rossetti's poem was a perfect expression of their relationship - one which dare not face the true needs each had of the other. There is little doubt that it represented for them a kind of marriage - the only kind their morality could contemplate. The blessed damozel leans out from the gold bar of heaven and speaks:

*We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayers sent up to God;...*

.....

*And I myself will teach to him
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow...*

The reference to song here is unequivocal. It was in this form that the minds and spirits of Jane and Ben met and continued to converse. The communion is reinforced:

*"We two", she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys..."*

Rosalys - the rose-lily - is a symbol which recurs again in *The Bailey*, another "bridal" song (Song 65). *The Blessed Damozel*, like the later *Nocturn*, begins with a long (18 bars) prelude. This, and the ten-bar interlude shortly before the end, pulses steadily like a heartbeat, providing relief from the almost totally recitative-like character of the singer's line.

The first performance of 1928 could well have seemed long and so account for the critic's adverse opinion of it. On close investigation, it must be admitted that Burrows does not seem to establish a personal style in this song. Shades of early Debussy appear in certain passages.

62

Ex 26 *The Blessed Damozel*

127

speak. Her-self shall bring us hand in hand to Him to whom all souls

130

kneel, The clear-ranged, un - num - bered heads bowed with their

Ex 27 *Ibid*

Savitri - Holst
When thou sleep - est I am wak - ing

Ex 28 *Savitri (Holst)*

It is interesting to recall that Debussy had set a French translation of this poem (*La Damoiselle Elue*) and, almost certainly, Burrows knew his version. There is also a strong resemblance with Holstian technique, (Ex 27) which prompts curiosity about Burrows's knowledge of that composer's one-act opera, *Savitri*. And finally, yet in another manner, that of his early piano pieces, one finds a passage exemplified below (Ex 29). These three instances amply demonstrate the derivative nature of this song, and, after such a compendium

of styles, it is salutary to turn from such subjectivity to the following songs.

There is a more open expression of love to be found in Joyce's poem, *Donnellycarney*. Two brief settings of Browning continue this preoccupation with love, both of them entirely convincingly. *My Star* is a happy fancy in which the loved one is symbolised by a star; *A Woman's Last Word* is a tender expression of solace.

30

The image shows a musical score for 'The Blessed Damozel'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat), starting with a fermata and a circled '8'. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment with a treble clef, featuring a melodic line with a 'cresc.' marking. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with a bass clef, featuring a rhythmic line. The score is in 3/4 time and spans three measures.

Ex 29 *The Blessed Damozel*

Four of the next five songs, to words by Robert Burns, were set with string quartet accompaniment. All are effective, unpretentious and well-suited to Burns's direct, uncomplicated verse. In *Eppie Adair*, with piano accompaniment, apt use is made of the Scottish snap for this gentle avowal of loyalty. The four songs with string quartet make an effective group. *Somebody* has at each verse-end an inconclusive cadence, suggestive of the singer's reluctance to name her lover; only the ending cadence resolves the matter without betraying the confidence. *The Dusty Miller* is a joyous love poem set in brisk gait. *One-and-Twenty*, equally brisk, is a defiant expression of a young girl (when I am one-and-twenty, Tam!) to flout her parents' refusal to allow her to marry the man of her choice. How long and dreary is a reflection on lost love. All these Burns settings show Burrows's craft at its most assured.

Songs 43 - 69

Burrows's five settings of de la Mare are all amongst his best. *Old Shellover* has already been mentioned; the other four now follow, *Queen Djenira* first. Burrows sets four of its five verses. In a letter of 17.5.69, JV to BBD.Jane Vowles says:

...a strange thing happened. Ben, by mistake, left out the last verse!! So the poem is not really complete. He took it from a book of poems called A Private Anthology by Naomi Royde-Smith which I gave him!) and the last verse hid over the page and was not discovered till much later. Quel horreur!

An unfortunate omission! Burrows's setting of the four verses is one of his best. *Queen Djenira*'s sultry noon repose is here in the opening bar: its augmented second and Eastern flute arabesques, recurrent throughout the song, breathe the air of Araby.

♩ = 72

Ex 30 *Queen Djenira*

Although there are clear moments of tonality in the song (the opening in E minor, C minor in verses one and four and a cadence in A minor), there is a fluid, chromatic texture which subtly evokes the daydream of the poem. Several times, the composer spins out a syllable to intensify this quality (Ex 3 below). Add to these features the sweet moment of repose in verse two (Ex 32 below) and the luminous quality of verse three's musical imagery, and the result is one of Burrows's happiest inspirations.

Among the next ten songs come the remaining three de la Mare settings. *Three Cherry Trees*, is a delicate song with similar use of imagery and the translucence of *Queen Djenira*. The beautiful lady, more lovely than the blossoms and birds of her garden, walks through it as though in a dream, against a background of airily-swaying chords. Charmed away by a lover, her ghost that still walks there is evoked in the thin harmonic texture of the song. For *Rachel*, Burrows clearly had a deep

51 *p* *rall.* (3)

Psu - - - thys are'

Ex 31 *Ibid.*

50

birds of Psu - - - thys

Ex 32 Ibid.

affection. Despite its brevity, he wrote a long note to Jane on 2 February 1928 about it, and later arranged it as a solo cello piece with organ accompaniment. His note to Jane gives fascinating glimpses of his thoughts and feelings about song composition and is quoted here in full:

Rachel Song 49

The Composer's confidences to the Singer.

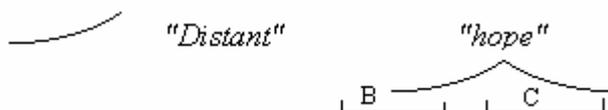
The problem is to extract the tender, fragile sentimentalities of the words without touching on any orthodox and second rate reminiscences. I thought I would like to have Rachel playing the piano part while the singer talks about her but there were two difficulties (1) Rachel would become self-conscious (2) she would be alarmed at the sort of music she would have to play. So the ultimate aim was to give a detached and atmospheric description.

Rachel does not either sing or play. Notice my patent  into a nice-sounding chord. I intended to get a continuous movement with no break anywhere (which I have not yet done) but found myself cutting up into two parts. But the second part is what I was after - a movement up to an emotional climax (not a noisy one) on "distant" gradually sinking with continuous movement into the end.

It's true that it's possibly Van Dieren. But I say it is an advance on Van Dieren because there is logic in the use of material and in this song this feature is a good one.

Why is it that folk tunes are perfectly organised with all kinds of "play" upon figures and with subtleties of form if the common people do not appreciate them? I think they do, without knowing.

In this song the repetition of the figure with changing chords has a definite appeal for me and so has the last section containing



The relation of the section B and C (with each together) with a recall of the first part gives pleasure which you can't put into words, but which depends on technicalities of form and in my idea, gives equal pleasure to one having no knowledge of form.

_____ *Sidelights on the process of composition.*

Dec-Jan-Feb 1928: - You write a song and like it and then wonder whether you will ever be able to do another you like and you set to work again immediately to see if it is so or not.

Previously, the writing of a likeable one was a sufficiently rare pleasure to last a while.

Burrows had firm views about logic in music. His claim to his emotional climax being an advance on van Dieren (and one cannot be sure to which of Van Dieren's songs he was referring) must be compared with views he expressed about the use of device in music. Later that year, another note of 11 April includes this passage:

Technique of composition. To take my own which are easier (i.e.songs) to weigh up

on this point, Raftery technique is very much below To music. There's scarcely any sign of brains in Raftery nor in Sansom Cradle Song nor Green Willow Slater.

But any amount in Daffodils Delius and Curlew Warlock. I think I could write a good article on Device in Music (a serious one, ignoring the clichés of which seem to be only fashionable mannerisms) I feel sure this is an important matter in composition...

And it is a mathematical proposition. I don't believe strings of chords or tunes will be any good without design. They can be used like that of course and are, like the Quartett whose ultimate aim is complete silence but they are outside the stuff of art... So it really comes to this: that technique = the amount of brains in a song.

Shown by use of device, new chord treatment etc. which must be good and fitting treatment.

Device for its own sake is worth nothing. It should help the truth of the song.

Burrows's belief that a melodic fragment should not recur in the same harmonic guise is one he departs from only for a very deliberate reason. This attitude is further discussed in the section of Chapter Five dealing with the 1942 chorale preludes for organ. These lengthy quotations from Burrows show why his teaching of musical composition was so successful: the analytical process that he followed himself was one he cultivated in his students. Though much of his work was concerned with the business of coaching for examinations of a traditional and stereotyped nature, he was able to look beyond this and, whenever he had students who also aspired beyond the immediate examination, he could stimulate them to profounder and more individual thought about their craft.

To select the greatest of Burrows's songs could be nothing other than a subjective act, but *Mistress Fell*, the last of the de la Mare settings, is a strong contender for such an honour. One knows, to the last minute, from a note to Jane of 17 - 18 February 1928, how long, or rather, how short a time Burrows spent on the song:

Started Friday 1.45 - 2.15

Saturday 12.15 - .45; 1.45 - 2.30; 5.00 - 6.45 finished

Scene: A burial ground

Characters: A chance passer-by and Mistress Fell

*Interpretation left to the singer. But the after effect made *The Silent House* quite ordinary except its first scene. Page 3 "*Magic*" to "*sigh*" eerie.*

Two hours, fifty minutes, snatched, one supposes, between lessons to private pupils, is an incredibly short time for such a complex song and yet another indication of the fantastic speed at which Burrows could compose. Indeed, ninety-three songs in the space of twenty-one months, while fully-occupied in teaching, is something of which only such an intellect as his was capable. And how surprisingly laconic is his reference to this song in his note. Clearly, from what he says, Jane sang it shortly after its composition (a common practice with all Ben's songs for her) and it is her performance he alludes to in the last two sentences. *The Silent House*, the song he mentions, is probably the setting by Vaughan Williams. In his essay on his dislike of opera, quoted earlier, he does speak more fully of *Mistress Fell*, but it is of the poem rather than his setting of it:

*..... I believe that the appeal of a poem (omitting the music for the composer's sake) like *Mistress Fell*, is really far greater and more lasting in effect on account of the fact that it leaves things to*

your imagination..... Mistress Fell I don't know. She is merely an idea.

She does not live next door and I have not heard her raving. The complete picture is left to my imagination and becomes part of me in some way or another.

Despite the implication in this comment, Burrows's recreation of the poem is among the most dramatic utterances he ever made. His words are another instance of the phenomenon of a person not fully recognising his true self, nor being able objectively to assess a personal achievement. But the expression *becomes part of me in some way or another* shows his appreciation of the workings of intuitive processes.

Mistress Fell, as well as being a great "mad" song in the tradition of "mad" songs so thoroughly explored by Purcell, prompts a comparison with the Housman poem, *Is my team ploughing?*, set earlier by Burrows. In both poems duologue is used and, though *Mistress Fell* is not dead, she inhabits a world so removed from the real world of the stranger questioning her, that the similar treatment adopted by Burrows can be justified. Her responses to the stranger's direct questions can be couched in the same type of other-worldly terms that mark - in reverse - the dead man's questions in *Is my team ploughing?* to his friend on earth.

Night, magic and the mystery of dreams are evoked in the haunting de la Mare poem. Lovelorn *Mistress Fell* seeks in the graveyard the one into whose dream she tried to creep: her stranger questioner receives wild replies. An interesting comparison may be made with Purcell's great song, *Mad Bess*. *Mistress Fell*'s frenzy is not the fickle folly nor meandering mood of *Bess*, but the eternal pain of a tormented soul, love-crazed, like *Bess*, but never sharing her moments of respite, nor her diet of nectar and ambrosia.

The passer-by's three questions are simple enough and such as any stranger might put. They are posed to a simple, chordal accompaniment, leading each time to a fresh tonal plane from which the mad woman's fancy takes flight. Each time, her replies grow longer and wilder as her tortured mind wanders. The piano figures accompanying her imaginings take on dramatic shapes. Finally, as the melody rises to a high, hysterical B flat, there comes an almost unbearable tension, which then subsides with *Mistress Fell* into her tormented, endless yearning for her lost love.

The first of the seven songs interspersed among the de la Mare settings is *Strings in the Earth and Air*, a progression of subtly-inflected chords, akin to those of *Rachel*, which admirably realises the title and its succeeding line:

*Strings in the earth and air make music sweet;
Strings by the river where the willows meet.*

A traveller's delight in the countryside is the theme of Masfield's poem, *Tewkesbury Road*. Burrows conveys its infectious joy and imagery in a setting of barely-disturbed onward surge. Memories of Vaughan Williams's *The Roadside Fire* are stirred by the accompaniment of this song.

Burrows's gentleness, introspection, even serenity, find an almost perfect echo in W. B. Yeats's poem, *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, an inspiration of profound peace. With his obvious leaning towards Irish poetry, it is surprising that Burrows set this superb lyricist only once. And the perfection he achieves in this song causes regret that he did not again choose Yeats. The composer has fully documented the process of composition he went through in this instance. Not only did he write what he calls a psychological commentary on the music, but pasted onto the front of his MS a newspaper picture of Yeats and a brief article that throws light on the poem:

*The making of the poem was a curious chance: as the poet tells.
One day, as a young man in London, he saw a crowd gathered
outside a shop in Fleet Street. An enterprising business man had
chosen to further the display of his goods by means of a small*

*model fountain with a pretty play of real water.
The young poet, lured by the sight and sound, heard in his own
heart, the lapping of water on a Sligo shore.
Innisfree is an islet in Lough Gill - the Lake of Brightness, a wide
and beautiful water which lies among the mountains and has
several large wooded islands. It is a small and very rocky islet,
deep in heather, with a few bushes growing from the crevices.
Innisfree is known locally as Rat Island, we regret to say.*

The last sentence would most surely have appealed to Burrows's dry sense of humour. His own psychological commentary ends with a similar wry observation. After referring almost bar by bar to the method he had adopted in interpreting the poet's resolution (*to go to Innisfree*), his practical considerations (*to build a cabin there*) through to his ultimate entrancement with the peace of Innisfree, Burrows writes:

*Page 5 Bar 2 Illustrating his ultimate state, which the man in the
street would describe as "water on the brain".*

Neither example of his amusement at the paradox between Nature's loveliness and practical living robs his setting of exquisite beauty.

The words of the poem, though certainly rhythmic, are not obviously so, and the composer's choice of a recitative-style is understandable. A plain 'A' minor chord is struck by the piano and the singer (poet) announces his intention of returning to Innisfree. The rhapsodic content of the second verse, suitably ornamented, is supported by a rich texture, spun from the opening musical figures. Consider the rare quality of these words:

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

Dividing the two halves of this verse is an intricate, sliding figure. This could be the cricket, the glimmer of midnight, the purple glow of noon or the evening full of the linnet's wings. It matters little which - regard it rather as a ravishing musical compendium of all these images.



Ex 33 Innisfree

It is the peace of Innisfree that informs the song throughout; the island's eternal tranquillity that is reflected in the rapturous quality of this picturesque musical translation of Yeats's words. There are constantly falling effects in the melody, reminding one that in Innisfree, peace comes dropping slow. Many of the accompaniment figures also reflect this restful subsidence and finally rock the song down into sleep on the final chord.

Francis Thompson's poem, *Nocturn* [sic], drew forth a more satisfactory treatment of the sublimated love between Jane and Ben than the earlier *The Blessed Damozel*. There is again in the words that element of union the two sought:

*The wind lieth with the rose,
And when he stirs, she stirs in her repose:*

Under this symbolic guise it was possibly easier for Ben to express his feelings than in the more specific words of Rossetti's poem. The music is more individual, the texture, compared with that of the earlier song, cleaner. In a twenty-four-bar prelude, the piano floats a long melody, marked by arabesques and an accelerating, monotonal repetition which recurs in the middle of the song and at the final cadence (Ex 34). The singer enters and, for the first vocal section of the song, emulates the recitative-style of *The Blessed Damozel*.



Ex. 34 Nocturn

Then follows a passage in which the voice borrows the piano's opening melody over a harp-like arpeggio of glowing ardour:

47

You may think the rose _____

pp

49

sleep - eth, but though she fold - ed is, _____

Ex 35 Ibid.

Another recitative section follows, forming, in ternary style, one of Burrows's most ecstatic utterances and summed up in the final comment of a note to Jane of 24 January 1928:

... he (the poet) sends his soul after he knows not what and the piece never ends but takes off into eternity in a similar manner.

With *The wounded Cupid*, Burrows daintily sets Robert Herrick's picture of Venus comforting Cupid, stung by a bee, but pointing out :

..... if this
 Such a pernicious torment is
 Come tell me then, how great's the smart
 Of those thou woundeth with thy Dart!

Siegfried Sassoon's *I listen for him* evokes a gentle response from Burrows in a song of harmonic richness with a steadily-rocking rhythm.

English medieval poetry has attracted many songwriters and four examples that appear in Burrows's series also attracted Warlock. Since Warlock enjoys such a high reputation as a composer of songs, it is useful to compare the two men's settings in an attempt to demonstrate the comparable standing that the author believes is due to Burrows. The case of the two settings of *Robin Goodfellow* is somewhat surprising. It is well-known as Hubert Foss has pointed out, that Warlock was no keyboard executant⁸. Burrows, on the contrary, was a brilliant performer, destined at one stage for the concert platform. The texture of Warlock's accompaniment bristles with notes, as his songs often do. In such a song where speed is of the essence, this is a great obstacle. Burrows's version, though no easier to play technically, is much airier in texture, more suited, one might imagine, to the character of the sprite, Robin. Yet, in that paradoxical way that such things come about, it is Warlock's song that more deftly catches the chameleonlike quality of the hobgoblin. There is a note on Burrows's MS that reads:

Nonsense rhymes! With a good crescendo on "columbine" each time and the rhhthm of 10,000 Irishmen behind the words:

*With in and out, in and out, round as a ball
 With hither and thither, as straight as a line*

The rhythm Burrows uses is that of an Irish jig, though research has provided no clue that associates the poem with Irish origins. It is this rhythm that imbues the song with a bucolic character that is not quite delicate enough for the elfin nature of Robin Goodfellow. Yet the song is lively and creates an effect with its sheer vitality.

Burrows believed that the poem, *Adam lay ybounden*, was probably written by some monk with tongue in cheek and this explains his rapid, throw-away treatment of the words' logic. Warlock's setting is only slightly more expansive in form but his richer harmony gives a more emphatic delivery to the verbal twist of the conclusion. Burrows has as much harmonic interest as Warlock but it is of a more kaleidoscopic nature – subtle semitonal changes within a modal framework. Both settings are attractive, reflecting the different sense of humour of the two men.

Another tongue-in-cheek song is *The kiss, or My gostly fader*, to use Warlock's title. His version has a greater sobriety of utterance and a less flexible line than Burrows's:

⁸ British Music of our Time – ed. Bacharach (Pelican 1945) Chapter IV – “Peter Warlock” Philip Heseltine – Hubert Foss (p. 64)

My gost-ly fa-der I me con-fess First to God and then to you

Ex 35 My gostly fader – Warlock

My ghos-tly fa-ther, I me con-fess First to God and then to you

Ex 36 The Bailey - Burrows

In view of the humorous character of the words, Burrows, with his freer, less solemn approach catches the whimsical mood more effectively than Warlock.

Similarly in The bailey there is a moment when a shaft of light breaks into the gloom of the maid's chamber and illumines her wedding preparations. Warlock suggests this in a subtle change of harmony that might well go unnoticed by the listener. Burrows, by expanding the melodic range to a high A flat, lends a rare radiance to the moment.

And through the glass win-dow shines the sun;

Ex 38 Ibid.

Both settings are superb, but it is the impressionist quality of Burrows that, in purely human terms, is more suited to the bride's tremulous emotion than the austerity of Warlock.

In a note to Jane of 6 March 1928, there are some interesting observations by Burrows on the subject of songwriting generally, and, specifically, a comparison of Warlock with himself. He writes, with reference to his own song, *By the Hearthstone*:

On reviewing the song I find I am indebted to Peter Warlock for an idea - "Burning in the embers etc." - something about golden hair in The Curlew (But, as usual, mine is the better use for it is also brainy - my series of chords reharmonises the tune and therefore has a real justification. Peter Warlock's is a nice bit in a patchy whole.)

Such comments may smack of conceit. That was definitely not one of Burrows's

characteristics, however, as those who knew him would roundly declare. Ben had an abiding view about the use of device in music, as already stressed; it is his widely-acknowledged skill at his craft that gives him the right to make such a specific claim, made, one should recall, in a note to a student whose judgment he valued and to whom he was close, not to the public at large. Conceit was far removed from his nature which, rather, suffered from an excess of modesty in his social relationships.

It is strange that he should continue in the same note:

Are we putting new life into the song form by using a higher scholarship than the average songwriter possesses, or carrying the art any further along, or writing in an absolute style which will be valueless in 20 or 30 years?

Certainly he might well have asked the first question about many of his songs though not of *By the Hearthstone*. But as he also says:

*The words invited me to write the most sentimentally sloppy juicy stuff I could find being a degenerate.
The ultimate aim of the singer is voicing humanity as a whole, to make the audience feel utterly sorry for the she of the song, and the sorrier they are, the more copies we shall sell.*

Such a descent from the lofty planes of *The Blessed Damozel* to mundane commercialism - though his comment is clearly a half-amused pose for Jane - is apparent throughout this song, but especially in the harmonies of the final bars. *To Music* (Herrick) represents a stylistic hangover from the previous song, though it is more elaborately treated.

In *A Frosty Night* (Robert Graves) there is something of a return to the macabre mood of *John of Tours*. The incidents are less overt and Burrows's harmonies in the intervening period have acquired a greater chromaticism. But the poem's intriguing doubts have caught his imagination as this kind of poem tended to. Duologue always appealed to him and inspired some of his best songs.

With *Heaven haven*, Burrows seems to have been the first composer to set Gerard Manley Hopkins's poetry⁹. His note to Jane Vowles on 3 April 1928, prompts several speculations:

Heaven haven
Written 5.15 - 6.15 Apr. 3 after a week's indecision.
*The composer has simply projected the idea as if on to a screen. It is not subjective or objective. Neither the Singer nor the Composer will be very sorry for the poor child; but anyway here she is, and the composer knows that his singer likes chords and hopes she'll like some of these. The composer can verify the imitation of the convent bell, though perhaps he has pitched it rather high, as his mother's garden adjoins a convent and he has listened to the convent bell at all hours of the day.
It is true in respect of the fact that it also becomes a little monotonous and you can't sing this song twice straight off without becoming aware of the fact.*

The bell technique is a repeat of that used in *Bredon Hill* and reminds one of Burrows's interest in the Loughborough carillon, considered in Chapter Two. Indeed, Burrows's mother lived in Loughborough. It seems, then, to have been Jane's interest in

⁹ Musical Settings of late Victorian and Modern British Literature - Bryan Gooch and David Thatcher (Garland Publishing, New York 1976)

chords that accounts for their usurpation in such songs as *By the Hearthstone* and *To Music* of the more interesting contrapuntal treatments found in other - and better - songs of his. Burrows probably recalled this authentic convent bell when he wrote his piano study, *Censers*, in 1947, for its long, slow arpeggios have a distinct similarity with those in *Heaven Haven*.

The chords of *The Herons* (Francis Ledwidge) have an astringency which, though not new in Burrows's harmonic palate, is more consistently used in this song. The presence of so many juxtaposed semitones gives the harmony the bleak sound that the final lines of the poem demand:

*When all the hills are withered up
Nor any waters flow*

In *At Dusk* (Enid Hamilton-Fellows) a similar harmonic approach is adopted throughout, though the accompaniment is more complex. These two songs, both on the theme of nature asleep, clearly point towards Burrows's sixty-ninth song, *Lines*.

The Falcon and *Carol to Our Lady* re-explore the territory of mediaeval anonymous verse. Those familiar with Britten's *A Boy was Born* will recall the incredible effect of his version of *The Falcon* for boy trebles as it gleams through the opaque, icy-still texture of *In the Bleak Midwinter*. A 6/8 tempo is natural to the iambic metre of the words, and, like Britten, Burrows chose it. He also chose the Aeolian mode, here centred on B flat. This mode and stark effects (the augmented fourth and diminished fifth in the interlude between verses two and three) speak the same sepulchral language as the poem. The refrain starts and its second line ends the song. The obscure words with their metaphor of a falcon bearing off its prey, and references to a maiden mourning for her dying knight and a tombstone inscribed *Corpus Christi* are from fifteenth-century literature which contains many such poetic images¹⁰. The poem is set strophically; the accompaniment varies from the solemn chords of verse 1 (Ex. 39) to the arpeggios of verse 2 - the flowing tears of the maiden (Ex. 40). The climax of the song has strong chords and the high melodic peak of the words "Corpus Christi" written thereon and ends gently with its lament for the crucified Christ.

12

In that or- chard there was an hall that was hang- ed with

17

pur- ple and pall, And in that hall there was a bed That was hang- ed with gold so

Ex 39 *The Falcon*

¹⁰ *Medieval English Lyrics* - R.T.Davies (Faber and Faber, 1963) p. 23.

27

wounds bleed-ing day and night. By that bed - side

31

kneel-eth a may and she weep - eth both night and day.

Ex 40 *The falcon*

In *Carol to Our Lady*, Christ's entry into the womb of the immaculate maiden, Mary¹¹, is, says the poet, as natural an event as the falling of dew on grass. But the imagery has an even deeper significance. Medieval interpretation of the scriptures consistently related Old Testament events to those in the New Testament. The dew which fell on Gideon's fleece (Judges, Chapter 6) thus becomes a presager of the Holy Spirit descending upon Mary. This poem has attracted many composers and there are settings of it as varied as Berkeley's simple hymn and Britten's blithe canon in *A Ceremony of Carols*. The interesting harmonic framework of this setting by Burrows supports an artless, smiling melody, ideal for this springlike carol. Each verse, generally strophic, comes to rest on a different chord: A, C minor, F sharp, C minor and A - a musical palindrome. This device beautifully matches the verbal variants of the poem, variants such as are commonly found in the ballad-type carol. Verses two, three and four extend their final phrases increasingly (as dew in April that falleth on the flower, ...grass, ...spray) and verse five restores the simplicity of verse one. The harmony too increases in complexity from verse to verse and then returns to its pristine freshness. Though the key signature implies A major, the music is poised over the dominant of D major, quite clearly so in verses one and five. In the other verse, chromatic notes proliferate and lead to the previously-mentioned cadence chords.

Burrows's setting of Mathew Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman* is more a cantata than a song, running some twenty minutes. (Perhaps *Scena* would best describe it) For such an ambitious project, one might have expected at least a string quartet with the piano, as Burrows used for the two earlier large-scale pieces, *Mistress Frances Harris's Petition* and *The Blessed Damozel*. Indeed, orchestral forces would serve the song well. In a letter from Jane of 15 August 1969¹², there is a mention of the heart-burnings over Merman when it was being written! Despite that, it was completed in ten days!

The work comprises five sections. In a brief introduction, arpeggios conjure up the ocean deeps before the merman summons his children home with him after a last entreaty to

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² JV to BBD

the wife and mother, Margaret, to return to them. His flexible, wide-ranging melody befits the elements of earth, air and water in which the drama unfolds. Diminished chords convey the anguish of their appeal which grows heart-rending before subsiding as they realise the futility of their calls.

4
Come _____ dear

5
chil - - dren, let us a -

Ex. 41 – *The forsaken merman*

A second, gentler section, relaxes the harmonic tension and a wistful, pentatonic theme, vital throughout the remainder of the work, introduces the sorrowing merman's recollections of happier days, with Margaret content in her ocean home. But Easter comes and the exile, fearful of losing her soul, returns to earth for absolution. In the third section, the merman takes his children to fetch her back from the *little grey church on the windy hill* whence organ chorale sounds appropriately emerge.

204
We went [up] to the beach by the san - dy shore Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white walled

f dim.

Ex. 41 – *Ibid.*

The fourth section recalls the merman to reality. In a brief, modified recapitulation of section one, he renews his summons to his children. A fifth section - an interlude - describes Margaret spinning and singing of her *joy in the world and the blessed light of the sun*. Section two's tender motif plays an important role, now in a bright E major, as opposed to the original

darker D flat. Her innocent bliss, like that of the Lady of Shalott, a lady whose situation attracted Burrows earlier in his career (Example 41), is clouded as she looks out of the window and sighs for her watery home. In a more exact repetition of section one, the merman renews his agonised cry to his children and promises eternal haunting of the faithless, cruel mortal who deserted them. Section three's chords, less comfortable now, are welded into the texture. Just as it opens with little comment from the piano before the voice enters, so the song ends with only five bars of codetta. How effective this work could have been with instrumental colour. Billowing harp arpeggios; brass, notably horns, for underwater effects; a choir of woodwind to suggest the organ passages; strings generally for the period romantic flavour of the poem. Here is an absorbing project awaiting a keen orchestrator!

Burrows had set Seamus O'Sullivan's *The Sheep* in March 1927. Now, in July 1928, dissatisfied with his earlier effort, and possibly spurred on by a setting of Patrick Hadley's he had come to know, he tried again. Though his comments to Jane indicate that he did not like Hadley's attempt, he says with reference to his own first version:

The rhythm of Hadley's middle section irritates me. It is not flexible enough. But the matter is ten times ahead of mine.

Jane told the author that when she went as a student to the Royal College after leaving Burrows, she studied composition with Hadley; no doubt Burrows's comments about him must have struck a variety of chords of remembrance during her studies. In two undated notes Burrows speaks of his second setting:

1. *Felt obliged to make an attempt. Have borrowed Hadley's general style but not his matter... Hope you will like finding yourself afloat on the last B flat last bar but one.*
2. *This is frankly sentimental. The composer spent a long time finding the atmosphere of the second part and tried to extract the uttermost from "We two". i.e. the music is not illustrating a picture but endeavours to express to the uttermost the essence of the feelings of the poet. The only limit is the sense of taste which would be revolted by the spectacle of a person crying all round the town for lost days. Restraint, but not emotion thinned out until it is absent and you have left the paper wrapper that went round the Oxo cube instead of the cube itself. The emotional climax (a negative one - suppressed to the point when the cylinder might go bust anytime) is got by the same monotonous chant that occurs in Innisfree. The state becomes a kind of hypnotism.*

The harmonic colour of this song, expressed in a steady contrapuntal flow, is a further extension of that bleaker quality one observed emerging in *The Herons* and which is distilled in the focal song, *Lines*.

Blue Collar, *The Bride Cometh* and *Lines* to poems by Confucius (the first two) and Li-Po, are the only translations that Burrows set - if one discounts Rossetti's "treatment" of the old French poem, *John of Tours*. Worth noting in this context is a recollection of the composer's son, Ben, an accomplished linguist, that his father had great difficulty in grasping foreign languages and, indeed, would become quite irritated by them.

A newspaper cutting, as with Innisfree, is linked with the song, *Blue Collar*:

Some of the higher grandees were, indeed, very difficult not to look at - especially one Chinese major, a man with almost as large a wheel-base pyramid and rather the same shape he was obliged to appear in sky-blue, voluminously-skirted and tightly-throated, and on the peak of the pyramid quivered a little helmet with a very tall

splash of a white plume waving above it.

A brief comment to Jane from Ben also illuminates the composer's aims and hints at their very unsatisfactory relationship:

This is just a tender little Romance, which won't last very long. But she will soon find someone else.

Even more telling is this note about *The Bride Cometh*:

July 26 (1928)

The Composer regrets he can't put into words any ideas about this one. This is the final piece of Bridal music he has written and he means it to be as far from Mendelssohn's idea as possible. As also did Confucius or he wouldn't have brought in the turtle dove etc.

What is one to assume from Burrows's inability - or could it be reluctance? – to express his thoughts about this song? This line in the poem:

The magpie's house the young dove hath possessed

is surely not a mere poetic image for him. It needs little imagination to interpret his unwillingness as an implicit avowal of his love for Jane, an avowal which was to be more substantially stated in the seven settings of Shakespeare soon to follow. Both *Blue Collar* and *The Bride Cometh* catch the delicate complexion of Confucius's verse. The melodies, with their use of the pentatonic scale, are supported by impressionist harmonies making the songs transmutations, in musical terms, of oriental water-colours. *The Bride Cometh* is certainly, in this sense, a far cry from Mendelssohn.

The setting of *Lines* by Li-Po clearly caused Burrows much anguish. His note to Jane about it runs:

Idea of Song. Like having a tooth out

1. Brooding mystery

2. A sort of quick shiver as the needle goes in and the raven starts

3. The agony

4. Brooding again for there are still more to come out.

I think "When shall I see you again" proved a little too something or other for the composer. It doesn't seem to me to ring true.

The line spoils the poem too I think.

Strange that the line he quotes should not seem to ring true to Burrows, unless it is that he felt it colloquial in the context. Or was it perhaps, aware that he would see Jane regularly for lessons, the heartache that he points so tellingly in the harmonic tension of his music, is not of quite the same order as the poet's? This tension is still contained within the generally pentatonic framework common to all three "Chinese" songs and says much for Burrows's integrity as a composer. One other comment in the correspondence between Ben and Jane alludes to this song and it is the nearest approach by Ben to any direct expression of his feelings for her. It appears in his essay *Trials of a Composer*, 9 (in which he apologises for not liking opera):

But that Chinese business seemed foolish (as it probably was in any case) while I had got the spell of that poem on me [Lines]

Sometimes you have made it difficult for me to keep still in my chair. But it's different from a flesh and blood affair. I'm neither furious nor irritated.

And it's a thrill worth getting again if I can do it.

15

Ah ³ how my heart aches to - night

19

This hour.

Ex. 43 - Lines

This comment, in combination with references made to the author by Jane, strengthens the conclusion that their love remained an affair of the mind. Their very life-styles precluded all else. The break, when it came, was inevitable and painful.

The numbering of *Postscript* as Song 69a sets it apart from the rest as a light-hearted interlude. To discover the authorship of the poem, one of the few unacknowledged by the generally meticulous Burrows, meant a long search.

It is brief enough to quote in full:

*I'm sorry to find at the city of Bath
 Many folk are uneasy concerning their faith
 Nicodemus, the preacher, strives all he can do
 To quiet the conscience of good Sister Prue
 But Tabby from scruples of mind is released
 Since she met with a learned Moravian priest
 Who says - who says
 There is neither transgression nor any sin
 A doctrine that brings many customers in.*

Eventually a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* brought half a dozen replies tracing the words to Christopher Anstey's *New Bath Guide*, 1766. The song is not, nor surely was it intended to be, vintage Burrows, but it does reveal his dry sense of humour. The salacious overtones of the words are overtly amusing though Henry Williamson, a correspondent from the Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, suggests that the poem

may be a distortion or misapprehension of an eighteenth-century Moravian emphasis on the joy of forgiveness which they experience. Their eighteenth-century leader, Count Zinzendorf,

referred to them as "Happy Sinners". Even slightly out of context that could be misunderstood.

Burrows's quotations from *The Rosary*, *Tristan and Isolde* and *They'll never believe me* combine the religiosity, the element of sensual love and the words' sly humour in an amusing amalgam. His central section is in 1920's dance-style and provides another example of his occasional habit of borrowing from the popular idioms of the day.

23 Fairly fast ♩. = 80

Fairly fast ♩. = 80

But Tab-by fromscru-ples of

p dolce

Ex. 44 Postscript

Songs 70 - 93

V.C. Clinton-Baddeley, in one of his essays¹³, implies that it is impossible to set Shakespeare's sonnets to music. It was some years before Britten ended his *Nocturne* with the exquisite and wholly successful setting of *When most I wink* (Sonnet 43) that Clinton-Baddeley penned his unfortunate comment. It is certain that he knew none of the six sonnets set by Burrows in September 1928 for Jane Vowles. It was a planned series as we know from one of his notes to Jane:

70. The first of a batch the composer hopes. Puts him in mind of Lenore, Isabel and a host of similar things. The point of view changes temporarily in this and succeeding unwritten ones for the composer hears (temporarily) an ideal baritone or tenor in place of the ideal soprano.

Being strange to this atmosphere, perhaps accounts for the admission of doubtful passages here and there; but acting true to his line of procedure since Mar. 1 1928, the composer has after dire patience put down the best of the moment and trusted to luck.

The expression, "the point of view changes", though intended as the projection of the soundworld onto a male rather than a female singer, does also account for a marked change of style in these six sonnet-settings. Much of the harmonic tension generated in the songs between *The Herons* and *Lines*, has disappeared and a certain serenity prevails. Shakespeare's reflective philosophy is clearly the greatest factor in this change, but the introduction of the long, slowly-unfolding melodies that are woven into the texture must also be taken into account. It is possible here to see the emergence of a feature that was to become such an important contributor to the sonatas that followed the Jane Vowles songs and that form the subject of the next chapter. These melodies have the effect of welding each song into a profoundly thoughtful statement. (Exs. 45 and 46).

This reliance on developing melody points to a more considered, less introspective

¹³ Words for Music - V.C. Clinton-Baddeley (CUP 1941) p. 19

approach by the composer, and it is supported by his own observation about the male voice being in his mind rather than the female. This thinking does not merely reflect his appreciation of Shakespeare's words, but indicates his maturing acceptance of his and Jane's relationship, one still fluctuating between joy and despair, but one with which he was gradually, if painfully, coming to terms.

As a form, the sonnet possesses notorious difficulties for the composer. Its inflexible fourteen iambic pentameters must be subjected to an infinite variety of approaches to achieve freedom from musical monotony. Only when there is a clear sentence ending or specific change of idea can one justify an interruption of the words and, even then, some relevant musical link must continue the poet's line of thought. Burrows was an adept logician, as is demonstrated abundantly throughout this book, and his settings "work" in that sense. The importance he evidently placed on this group of songs recommends at least a general review of one of them.

Slowly ♩ = 80

My glass shall not per-suade me I am old so long as youth and thou are of one

age; But when in

6

Ex 45 *My glass shall not persuade me I am old* (Sonnet 22)

[Slow ♩ = 50]

[Slow ♩ = 50]

mf

Ex 46 *How heavy do I journey (Sonnet 50)*

Full many a glorious morning is a useful paradigm for this purpose as well as being perhaps the best of the six. The radiance of the opening lines is interpreted in one of Burrows's most innocent, pentatonic melodies in his much-favoured key of B major.

Flowing [♩ = 50]

Full many a glorious morning have I seen Flat-topped the
 mountain tops with sov-erign eye, Kis-sing with gol-den face the mead-ows
 green, Gild-ing pale streams with heaven-ly al-chem-y; A -

Ex 47 *Full many a glorious morning have I seen (Sonnet 33)*

A change to the tonic minor, as the glory of the morning turns to cloud, darkens the music. The leisurely arpeggio accompaniment baulks and struggles in a chromatic net. Finally released it assumes the melodic role given first to the voice which adds a counterpoint in similar vein above. Once more the "regent cloud" obscures the music, at first exactly as on the earlier occasion, then transposed down a tone. But the sun breaks through to dispel the gloom and the song ends in tranquillity.

Having spent eight days examining his own side of their friendship in these sonnets, it seems, from the next song to words by Margaret Woods, that he explores Jane's mood. Of his brief attempt, *Song*, he writes to her:

No fervour, no blessings from S. Cecilia, no eye on the Publisher either, but a pleasant mixture of faded music hall and one or two modern effects. But 77 is from a book bought on Feb. 24. Been in the wind ever since.

Another note about *A Picture* (Lewis Morris) is puzzling. It merely says *My dear children*, and then, at the bottom of a virtually blank page, (*With apologies to H.G.Wells*). Does *My dear children* mean his songs? The poem may help to elucidate the mystery:

*Around a harpsichord, a blue-eyed throng
Of long-dead children, rapt in sound devout,
In some old grange, while on the silent song
The sabbath twilight fades and stars come out.*

The Irish Golden Treasury again inspired Burrows's next three songs. A reflection of Jane Vowles in a letter of 15.8.69¹⁴, written at a time when she was arranging recordings of Ben's music for a tape, now lodged in the Composers Guild Library at the British Music Information Centre, gives something of her feelings about *My love, O she is my love* (Douglas Hyde).

*My Love, O has a somewhat recitative style but a full and
passionate ending just asking for a warm baritone with a top G
and a bit of heart.*

Kathleen Tynan's *Lambs* is a brief two-verse strophic song of gently-breathing simplicity with an attractive luminous harmonic change to mark the earth-heaven antithesis of these lines:

*He feeds as a lamb might
Beside his mother.
Somewhere in fields of light
A lamb, his brother,
Feeds, and is clothed in white.*

Love was true to me (James Boyle O'Reilly) is a deeply-grieving elegy. A woman mourns her dead lover and bitterly regrets the unkindness she showed him which led to his death:

*Years he cried to me to be kinder;
I was blind to see and grew blinder.*

The music of this moving threnody is simple and effective. It uses no obvious images - only the rocking in the piano, the occasional dissonant chords that mark the singer's pain and the heart-broken cry as she recalls how her lover "wept and praised, still beseeching".

The same mood of fulsome anguish continues in Douglas Hyde's *This Weariness and Grief*, which Jane thought one of Ben's most beautiful songs. Reading the words might suggest that this is a rather subjective view and the song, musically, is surely not as effective as the previous one.

The arabesques of the next song, a setting of Dora Shorter's *In the Midst of Life*, imitate the cry of the robin on the spray and are another reminder of Burrows's fondness for impressionist imagery. In this respect the song looks back to *The Bride Cometh*. Ben says in a note to Jane:

*"Slow ding dong". This goes on right through the song as it did all
day in the poem. It is the justification for bars joining verse 1 and 2..*

Another nature poem, set in similar vein to *In the Midst of Life*, and with its bell-like chords too, is found in the next song but one, *The Incense Burner* (D.C.Thomson).

¹⁴ JV to BBD

The evening prayer is clearly imagined by the composer as a child's breathless ritual, an automatic repetition of familiar sounds (for how much do the actual words mean to most children?). He marks the song rather fast and the incessant recurrence of the three-part melodic shape for every verse, linked by the piano interludes which use the first two bars of the melody, heightens the hypnotic, sleep-inducing effect. The harmonic pattern resembles that of *Carol to Our Lady* and is again centred around 'A'. The A minor key signature, as in the carol, is denied by the recurrent F and C sharps and, in this case, the absence of G sharp. Both songs could perhaps more accurately be described as being in the Mixolydian mode. *The Evening Prayer* resorts to chromaticism far less than *Carol to Our Lady* and consequently takes on the more innocent air of the child's world.

The Loyal Lover and *I must live all alone* (Songs 86 and 92) are both set in folk-song style. The melodies in both are strophic (slightly modified in *The Loyal Lover*) and any variety of colouring is left to the piano. The subject of both is typical of so many folk songs - love, in the first unclouded, in the second, unrequited. The adoption of this style anticipates the intense interest Burrows was to take in folk songs in his piano settings of 1941 - 1955.

At one time, Burrows tells Jane in a note of 21 November, his mother lent him a poetry book, *Songs of Divers Airs and Natures*, a treasury of English lyrics, from which he set two Thomas Vautor poems, *Mother, I will have a Husband* and *Sweet Suffolk Owl*. The two songs make a good foil for each other. The determination of the woman, in the first, "to have a husband", is declared in a breathless setting with an emphatic final line and the lightest of accompaniments. Of the second, Ben comments to Jane:

*I do not think I have knocked out the lady who wrote your version*¹⁵!

His own setting is, nevertheless, a charming and attractive song in which little arabesque figures admirably characterise the hooting of the owl. (Ex. 50)

Song 89 has not come to light and Jane Vowles's letter of 10.2.69¹⁶ merely states that she has a copy of all Ben's 92 (sic) songs (except 89). The matter is therefore likely to remain one of those omissions that nag at researchers!

Of Burrows's brief James Stephens setting, *Peggy Mitchell*, Jane writes in a letter of 15.8.69¹⁷:

Peggy Mitchell you may have seen. It's very simple but almost unbearably sad.

This opinion is, as an earlier one quoted, unduly subjective. The song is slow and gently-swaying with drooping figures in the piano, but the overall mood seems rather one of resigned acceptance of reality than inconsolable grief.

¹⁵ This surely refers to Elizabeth Poston's setting (Boosey and Hawkes, 1925): Burrows's scribbled recollection, included in the note, resembles one of Poston's phrases:



Ex 48 Burrows's recall of Poston



Ex 49 Sweet Suffolk Owl Elizabeth Poston

¹⁶ JV to BBD

¹⁷ *ibid.*

Slow ♩ = 60

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Slow' with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'Sweet Suffolk owl, So trimly dight with feathers like a ladybright Thousing'sta lone Sit - ting by night, To whit to whom'. The piano accompaniment features complex, chromatic chords and arpeggiated patterns.

Sweet Suffolk owl, So trimly dight with feathers like a ladybright Thousing'sta

lone Sit - ting by night, To whit to whom

Ex. 50 - Sweet Suffolk owl

O Youth of the Bound Black Hair again treats Douglas Hyde's Verse to the same highly-coloured harmonies as appear in several of the Celtic love-poems Burrows set. Though Eleanor Hull's *I lie down with God* is listed as Song 93 - the last song in the series - the date of *I must live all alone*, Song 92, is later. The composer gives simply 1929, and one suspects that it must have been early in that year. So the final poem he chose to set may well underline his mood at the departure of Jane Vowles for London, after she had accepted her parents' injunction that the relationship with Burrows must end. *I lie down with God* however also represents a farewell. At the same time Burrows seeks consolation for his loss in its setting. He uses the chromatic chords of which Jane was so fond and it is the favoured key of B that ends the song in a last benediction. With the words of this poem we take our leave of the Jane Vowles songs:

*I lie down with God, and may God lie down with me;
 The right hand of God under my head,
 The two hands of Mary round about me,
 The cross of the nine white angels
 From the back of my head
 To the soles of my feet.
 May I not lie with evil,
 And may evil not lie with me.*

Eleanor Hull (from the Irish)

CHAPTER FOUR

Chamber Works 1929-1934

Introduction

The five years in which Burrows wrote his finest chamber music followed immediately upon Jane Vowles's departure from Leicester to pursue her studies at the Royal College of Music. The only words that he set after that date were sacred texts for his choir at Victoria Road Church. The one exception is the attractive but superficial song, *Were I the Wind*, of 1953. This desertion of secular verse is too abrupt to be merely coincidental. The very nature of the poetry he had set for Jane, with its increasing emphasis on the theme of love, rarely requited, tells its own story. The intensity of his feelings for her were so mirrored in the poems he chose that, with her no longer there, it must have proved impossible for him to contemplate writing more songs at that time or, with the one exception mentioned above, ever again. But his spirit, however sensitive, possessed resilience and he continued to compose in other media.

In turning to large-scale chamber works at this time, it is as though he sought to pour his ideas into moulds which made such demands on his intellectual powers as gave him the psychological therapy he so much needed. These chamber works, especially the *Piano Sonata* of 1934, represent an impressive subjugation of a personal pain which was able, even at its most intense, to find within itself the seeds of a perhaps even greater burgeoning than the songs which were released by it. After this series of works, he evidently never again had a sufficiently compelling catalyst to produce music of the originality of his Jane Vowles songs and these sonatas.

Violin Sonata

In his sister, Grace, a violinist and violist, Burrows had another fine interpreter. Grace led a busy professional life as a performer and teacher and her connections with Leicester remained unsevered until her retirement. Even when living in London, where she played continuously, she returned annually to her home city to lead the orchestra for Leicester Bach Choir performances conducted by George Gray.

For the *Violin Sonata* he dedicated to her, Burrows chose a one-movement form in three linked sections. Whether or not additional stimulus for this choice was provided by the requirements of the W. W. Cobbett awards for *Phantasy compositions in one movement* we are unlikely to learn. Certainly Burrows had entered competitions - had once,

indeed, won first prize for a fugue. A comparison of his first venture into sonata composition with his last previous chamber work, the *Lament and Gigue* for viola and piano of 1927, indicates the enormous effect upon him of the writing of the ninety-three Jane Vowles songs. His debt to the late romantics, especially Delius, is still acknowledged in the harmonic colours he chooses, but one can hear clearly the characteristics of passion, warmth and humour he had acquired, as well as the tranquillity that had always been one of his hallmarks. Not only is there complete assurance of style but the intensity of the expression is deeper, more personal. The serenity of the long, winding melody with which the violin opens the work, gives immediate voice to the complete maturity Burrows had achieved since his composition of the *Lament and Gigue*. A fuller analysis of the work would be required to demonstrate the features which prove his creative growth. Such an analysis is reserved for the *Piano Sonata*, the last of this series of chamber works. Here his other sonatas will be considered in general terms.

As in the later *Piano Sonata*, though to less an extent, Burrows explores the cyclic form of composition so much favoured by Liszt and Franck, especially in respect of thematic metamorphosis. Three pairs of themes illustrate this process (Exs 51 a/b – 53 a/b).

Moderato [$\text{♩} = 110$]



Ex 51a Moderato: Violin Sonata



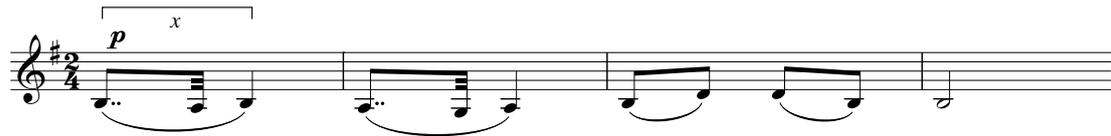
Ex 51b Allegro: Violin Sonata



Ex 52a Moderato: Violin Sonata



Ex 52b Allegro: Violin Sonata



Ex 53a Slow: Violin Sonata



Ex 53b Allegro: Violin Sonata

These quotations show interrelation of the three sections. They are suitably contrasted in mood. In the first, *Moderato*, section, Burrows presents, as well as the sustained lyrical melody of the opening, a big climax, featuring the rhythmic element x from Ex. 53a, later to be developed more reflectively in the second section. A passage in E major occurs, the rhythm of which, in a more delicate guise, foreshadows the lively A major Celtic dance of the final section.

Marks of the style Burrows formulated in his pre-1927 works and securely established in the Jane Vowles songs, are worth mention, since they inform his composition for the rest of his career: his fondness for the double-dotted rhythmic cell, , his frequent use of arabesques, the Celtic dance rhythms already quoted, his predilection for sharp keys and long, legato opening melodies. Only the *Piano Sonata* which as will be shown later differs in other respects too, foregoes this leisurely opening and strikes an immediate, dramatic pose.

Works for Cello and Piano

Burrows's next essay in sonata was the *Sonatina* for cello and piano of 1930. For this medium he wrote more chamber music than for any other. His father's skill as a cellist, had early on borne in him a particular fascination for the instrument. It is believed that he once played it himself.

The *Sonatina* bears the dedication *For Sheridan Russell*. So impressed was Burrows with Russell's London première of the work¹ with him that he wrote a *Second Cello Sonata*. Sadly, Mr Russell has no recollection of it and, certainly no copy. For the purpose of analysis, a fair copy had to be made from the very rough MS which came to light in the

¹ Britten, hearing the performance describes it in his diary as "pleasant and competent"

(*Letters from a Life*, Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed (Faber and Faber p. 167/8)

British Music Information Centre so revealing a work hitherto, one guesses, almost unknown. In addition to the two complete works for cello and piano there is a slow movement from an incomplete third sonata.

Sonatina for Cello and Piano

Burrows's writing for string instruments, is assured and effective, as string players who have performed these works have acknowledged. The *Sonatina* is a four-movement work: the first in sonata form, the second a slow song, the third a scherzo and trio and the last a sonata-rondo. The work is genial and melodious throughout, so persuading the composer to term it *Sonatina* rather than *Sonata*, one assumes. The two main themes of the first movement, in E and B respectively, are both reflective.



Ex 54 Moderato: Cello Sonatina



Ex 55 Ibid.

The song of the slow movement rises steadily to a passionate climax and subsides again into the repose which marked the piano's opening. One of Burrows's favourite devices, the arabesque, appears abundantly, as too does his characteristic double-dotted rhythm. In contrast, the scherzo and trio is light-hearted, almost elfin-like at the outset. The trio introduces a naïvely charming melody which reveals Burrows's admiration for John Ireland, whose second violin sonata contains a melody of similar ingenuousness, and whose piano music Burrows played and taught (Exs 56, 57).



Ex 56 Allegro: Ibid.



Ex 57 Violin Sonata 2 (Last movement) - John Ireland

Ex 58 Allegro moderato: Cello Sonatina

The rippling pattern which opens the last movement establishes right away a mood of joy which infects the cello's song. This is twice interrupted by an impassioned outburst, first - pace sonata form - in the expected dominant of B, then in the tonic, E (Ex 58).

Ex 58 Allegro: Cello Sonatina

A Final Allegro of mounting energy brings this happy work to a radiant close.

Cello Sonata 2

Burrows's second endeavour in this medium is a more extended work, though unlike the *Sonatina*, in only three movements. The work dates from 1931 and, in common with his string quartet of the following year, opens with an offbeat chordal accompaniment supporting its theme.



Ex 59 *Allegro Moderato: Cello Sonata 2*



Ex 60 *Moderato: String Quartet*

The problems in deciphering the rough MS from which a fair copy was made were considerable. Certain passages were unmarked by accidentals clearly required for euphonious performance and in one or two instances it was unclear whether or not some bars crossed out in the MS were to be omitted, for the bar numbering was inconsistent.

Ambiguity about the key at the opening arises from the recurrence of the G minor chord and the E natural. This soon dissolves however, and after prefatory hints, the D minor of the key signature is established. The assurance of the key is reinforced by the appearance of a second subject in the dominant major of A and by the final D major cadence of the movement. A modified version of the opening theme occurs, further pointing to a movement in regular sonata form with this being the opening of the development. The first subject recurs, again ambiguously harmonised, and then the second subject in the tonic - this time major.

Very little disturbs the general autumnal serenity of the movement with its strong reminiscences of Delius: one has but to compare the steadily-rocking rhythm of *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* with the first movement of this *Sonata* to note the resemblance. A fortissimo climax and a lugubrious pedal tremolando prelude the recapitulation of the second subject, are the only intrusions upon the pastoral mood.

Yet another device favoured by Burrows opens the second movement - a 5/4 rhythm. This is, presumably, the slow movement although there is no speed indication. It is long (147 bars) compared with the slow movement of the other five chamber works in this canon. The 5/4 tempo is scarcely modified throughout; only an occasional 6/8 or 9/8 bar interrupts the halting gait. The result is an inevitable rhythmic monotony that may be possibly one of the reasons the composer appears not to have produced a fair copy and, consequently, why Sheridan

Russell, its dedicatee, knew nothing of its existence. The prevailing mood is one of guilelessness and, in performance, the charm of the movement might well be enhanced by some judicious cuts.

The third, and last, movement is again long (276 bars) and, though richer in incident than the slow movement, still tends to overstay its welcome. Thematic metamorphosis is again a feature in this sonata as comparison of the first subjects of the first and last movements reveals. Gone is the easy sway of the theme as it first appeared, replaced now by a mood of urgency. This does not slacken despite the broader rhythmic nature of the later bars until a bridge- passage into a slower episode is reached, after which the music accelerates into a return, rondo-like, of the opening theme.

The overall figuration in this sonata is not nearly as fluent as in the earlier *Sonatina* and the general impression left is that the composer never fully completed his intentions. Cancelled bars and illegible passages in the rough MS add to the conviction that Burrows never revised the work, never even produced a fair copy.

Cello Sonata 3 (Slow Movement)

An examination of the one existing movement of the third sonata for cello and piano causes regret that this work was left incomplete. The moments of beauty discovered in the patchy and unrevised second sonata are distilled in the perfection of this lone movement. Like the *Sonatina*, the work was apparently to have been in four movements with the scherzo preceding this third, slow movement. Reference has already been made to the Delian quality of the second sonata, especially its first movement. In the slow movement of the unfinished third, this quality is even more pronounced as the chromatic colour of the opening bars bears witness. Throughout, a rhapsodic atmosphere prevails, marked by those Burrows hallmarks, the arabesque and the double-dotted rhythm. Such an utterance of lyric beauty reveals him at his most intimate and emotionally high-charged, a significant return to the quality of many of the Jane Vowles songs.

Before considering Burrows's first string quartet, which interrupted the composition of music for cello, it is worth mentioning, out of composition order, a transcription of his song, *Rachel*, which the composer made for organ solo. Evidence from the section on Jane Vowles songs explains why this particular song so appealed to Burrows. Who knows whether he now decided to transcribe it for a particular performance or whether this was a nostalgic reflex?

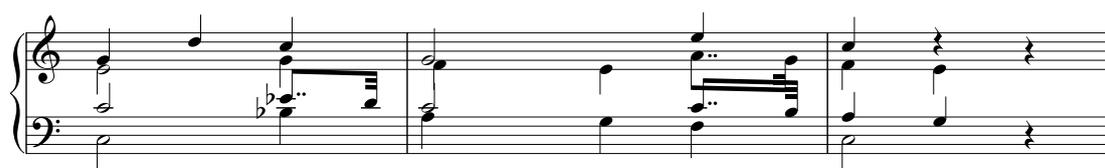
String Quartets

Until 1932, Burrows's only essays in writing for strings without keyboard were some early string quartet variations of 1912 and the group of settings for string quartet and voice in the Jane Vowles series (Numbers 39 - 42). In 1932, between his second and unfinished third sonatas for cello and piano, he determined to attempt his first string quartet and, later in the same year, began a second of which only two movements were completed. There is an assurance in the writing for this movement which would not be surprising in any composer over forty who had practised his craft continuously for at least a quarter of a century. In Burrows's case, it is even less surprising considering his intimate knowledge of strings and his mastery of the techniques of composition.

His *First String Quartet* is in four movements: *Moderato*; *Andante*; *Presto*; *Allegro*. The first movement has a clearly-defined sonata form, the keys of the two main subjects conforming to standard first-movement procedure. The noteworthy features of the movement are the pastoral mood, (Ex 61) the highly-chromatic passages with their atonal effects in a basically tonal context (Ex 62) and the structural coherence of the whole.



Ex 61 *Moderato: String Quartet*



Ex 62 *Andante: String Quartet*

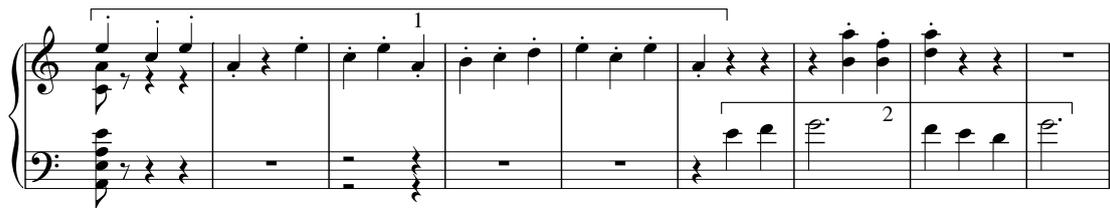
An interesting parallel may be noted between the slow movement of this quartet and the central slow movement of the viola sonata of the following year. Each could well be termed a *Rhapsody*. In both, the mood is meditative, the motion free and relaxed. But there is an even more precise resemblance in the drooping character of the opening bars. The harmony of each, in exactly the same rhythm and time length, moves away from and falls back to its home chord, like an inhalation and exhalation of breath (Compare earlier Ex 62 with Ex 63 below).



Ex 63 Slow: Viola Sonata

The two comparable movements are of approximately the same length and both in ternary form. The mid-section of each, standing between a gentle prelude and similar postlude, is more energetic.

The Presto of the quartet is notable for its almost incessant crochet movement: the only quavers in this virtual moto perpetuo are the triple- and quadruple-stopped chords which mark one of the climaxes of the first section. Again Burrows uses a ternary scheme and the movement bears close historic links with the *Scherzo and Trio*. An initial statement provides the two generative elements of the movement (Ex 64).



Ex 64 Presto: String Quartet

Out of the opening develops a first climax (the stopped chords) which, at its height, forcibly reiterates the opening idea. The music subsides and leads into the slightly slower trio in the tonic major of A. Here, in similar rhythmic manner, two new motifs, both ampler in scope, are passed among the four instruments to form coruscating patterns, marked at one point by suddenly-alternating pianissimo and mezzo-forte repeated chords. The music fades to pianissimo, and a brief coda, including a sudden outburst from the viola, leads to a da capo repeat of the opening section. There is no immediate let-up of the onward surge as the G major *Allegro* opens. A chattering motif grows out of the bold statement of four strong chords (Ex 65). After this discourse the mood relaxes and a warmly-glowing passage gives relief from the busy opening (Ex 66).

Ex 65 Allegro: String Quartet

Ex 66 Allegro: String Quartet

This procedure is repeated with the chordal passage in the tonic at its second appearance, before the work ends resolutely with the strong chords that announced the last movement.

The two movements of the second quartet are more notable for their incompleteness than for their content. The first, *Moderato*, in E minor, opens with a sombre, syncopated statement, violins and violas in unison with cello at the lower octave:

Ex 67 Moderato: Two Movements.

This graveness is undisturbed.

When the music moves into an E major passage near the movement's end, accidentals cloud the clarity of the brighter key:

Ex 68 Moderato: Two Movements.

An ominous rhythmic figure is introduced midway, stressing further the sobriety of utterance and underpinning a variation of the opening statement. The movement is in stark contrast to the gracious first movement of the complete quartet and, though Burrows continued with a second movement, he apparently felt disinclined to finish the work. For the second movement he returned to the sixteenth-century tune, *Walsingham*, which had fascinated him in his previous compositions for piano and (?) carillon. In an ingenious set of variations, he exploits the tune more fully than in either of his earlier treatments and effects a favourable contrast with the darker first movement.

Viola Sonata

Though Burrows's *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, begun in 1932 and completed in 1933, bears no dedication - at least in the copy made by his sister, the only available source - it was surely intended for her. As equally fine a viola player as violinist, Grace Burrows led the viola section of the Kathleen Riddick string orchestra for some years. She once expressed a preference for this sonata over the one for violin. It is not a preference all would share; its structure is looser than the compact and unified one-movement fiddle work. But it is certainly worth the violist's attention, adding, as it does, one more work to a somewhat sparse repertoire.

There are three movements: *Moderato*; *Slow*; *Con Moto*. The key structure of the work is intriguing in that the central movement in E is completely remote from the A flat of the outer ones. First-movement form marks the *Moderato* and the two main themes are both well-conceived for the viola:



Ex 69 *Moderato: Viola Sonata*



Ex 70 *Ibid.*

The argument of the movement is evenly distributed between the two players, at times in canon. Procedures that have been noted in the earlier sonatas are again apparent, and the movement ends placidly with the composer's favourite arabesques.

The brief, gentle piano opening of the second movement sets the harmonic background for the viola's first meandering melody, later transferred to the piano and then returned to its original exponent to terminate the movement. The middle section of this ternary structure opens in canon:



Ex 71 Slow: Viola Sonata

This leads to a spacious and eloquent viola statement over piano arpeggios with an added counterpoint touched in by the right hand. Energy increases; the arpeggio accompaniment to the viola line is paralleled in right and left hands before the melody spins itself slowly to rest at the return of the prelude as restful postlude.

Constant semiquaver patterns characterise the gay, last movement. A syncopated figure from time to time holds up the movement as though gasping for breath before racing headlong onwards.



Ex 72 Con moto: Ibid.

The last four bars switch suddenly and enharmonically from A flat onto the dominant of E major, the key of the slow movement, and thence, by way of an adroit scalar passage in the piano, above an almost amused observation from the viola, back to a final widespread A flat chord without its fifth - a delightfully precipitate ending to a rewarding work!

Piano Sonata in F sharp

On the occasion that Dr Burrows produced and autographed a copy of his Piano Sonata in his Bodnant Press edition, he commented:

It was during the blackout evenings of the war² that I set up the

² 1939 - 1945

stencils for this extravagant piece.

One received the impression that it was a work for which he had very ambivalent feelings. Perhaps there is an instructive comparison to be made with Vaughan Williams's remarks about his *Fourth Symphony* : that

...he wasn't sure that he liked it, but that it was what he meant.

The harshness, even aggressiveness of Burrows's sonata is one quality that, at least, it shares with the Vaughan Williams symphony. It is a work of rhetoric, written for the Leicester pianist, Maud Randle, who gave frequent recitals at her studio, The Hut, Birstall, many of them in preparation for concerts further afield. It is believed that she played Burrows's sonata at a Wigmore Hall recital but enquiries to the Hall failed to discover any date.

There are four movements in this large-scale work, the first and last prefaced by a short introduction. There can be little doubt that Burrows was attempting a sonata of demanding technical virtuosity and broad intellectual sweep. Of all his instrumental works, this is the most demanding of listener and performer. Its harmonic language, although similar to much of his music in its use of chromaticism, is harsher. Semitonal clashes and chords of the seventh and ninth are regular participants in the unfolding drama. They add their strident voices to the forward sweep of the movement to its resolute, not to say, defiant, final F sharp major chord.

That it is hardly his most satisfying work is true, its very nature being so alien to his own. The sonatas for violin, viola and cello and the string quartets speak more truthfully of Burrows's sensitive, romantic being than this turbulent piano work. Even in its more placid moments there are restless, brooding currents just below the surface. In such songs as *Mistress Fell* and *The Oracles* there can be heard premonitions of this dramatic aspect of Burrows's music so it would be wrong to imply that he never tapped this vein of his personality, only that the occasions were rare.

Once, while teaching this work, Burrows drew attention to the cadenza-sequence in the last movement, commenting that the chordal elaboration he had used here was typical of Liszt. Close analysis makes clear that the debt to Liszt goes far beyond this one gesture. In an article entitled *Liszt and the Twentieth Century*³, discusses the peculiar contribution of Liszt to the development of contemporary music. It is

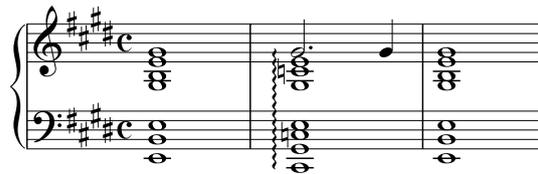
³ Alan Walker : *Franz Liszt: the man and his music* - ed. Alan Walker (Barrie and Jenkins, London 1970)

useful to the purpose of showing Burrows's indebtedness to the Hungarian composer, to list some of the innovations Walker attributes to Liszt and observe Burrows's use of them.

Augmented triad used as a colouristic device [Exs 73, 74]

Simultaneous use of major and minor thirds [Exs 75, 76]

Chords built up of other intervals than the third [Exs 77, 78]



Ex 73 Petrarch Sonnet 104 – Liszt



Ex 74 Presto - Piano Sonata



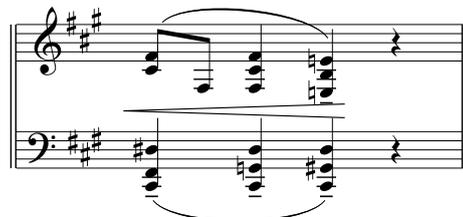
Ex 75 Czardas Obstiné – Liszt



Ex 76 Con moto: Piano Sonata



Ex 77 Hungarian Rhapsody 17 - Liszt



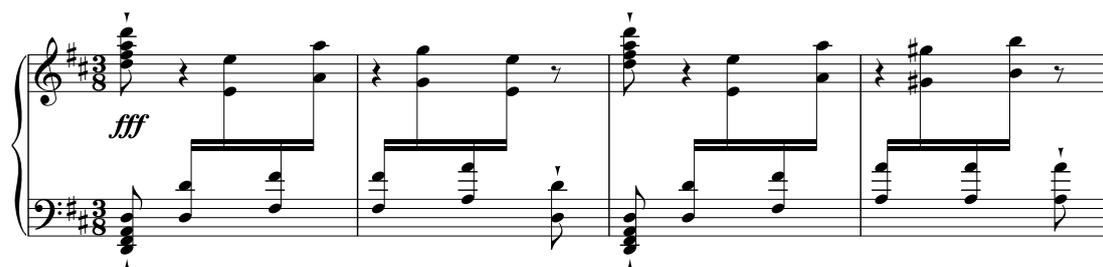
Ex 78 Moderato: Piano Sonata

Arthur Hedley, too, reminds the reader in his essay *Liszt, the pianist and teacher*⁴ of Liszt's claim:

Chromatic octaves divided between the hands are my property.

Burrows borrows this procedure (cf. following examples).

⁴ *ibid.*



Ex 79 *Spanish Rhapsody* - Liszt



Ex 80 *Presto: Piano Sonata*

These vital features are outweighed by two even more significant factors that show Burrows's homage to Liszt. They also reveal his own acuity put to practical use: first, the structure of the work and, second, its thematic development. Only a lengthy and detailed analysis would fully demonstrate the potent grasp of form Burrows possessed. In this work he reveals his complete understanding of Lisztian principles, notably those which Alfred Lorenz described in his exhaustive analysis of Wagner's music⁵ as Bar- and Bogen-form.

Attempts to analyse Burrows's *Piano Sonata* in terms of the sonata-principle used in his other instrumental sonatas will prove frustrating. There are features which seem to conform to Sonata Form, but it becomes clear that the constantly-fluctuating harmonies with their resulting stretches of atonality make nonsense of any attempt to analyse the work in these traditional terms. The initial attempts of the author to do so were put to rout by Ronald Reah, whose researches into the works of Wagner and early Schoenberg⁶ provided the key to shrewder analysis. His survey of the last movement made clear Burrows's extensive use of Bar- and Bogen-form. This structure extends to all four movements. All are built on Bar-forms of varying lengths which, compounded in ternary patterns, produce large Bogen structures. The *Presto* is typical, and demonstrates Burrows's dependence on this structural approach and his appreciation of it at a time when few musicians had come to terms with these innovations of Wagner and Liszt, despite the pioneer work of Lorenz. One may find a

⁵ *Der Ring des Nibelungen* - Alfred Lorenz (Berlin 1924)

⁶ *The Gurrelieder as Music-Drama* - Ronald W. Reah (University of Birmingham 1978)

useful survey of these principles in Gerald Abraham's excellent summary in his book *A Hundred Years of Music* (Duckworth, 1949).

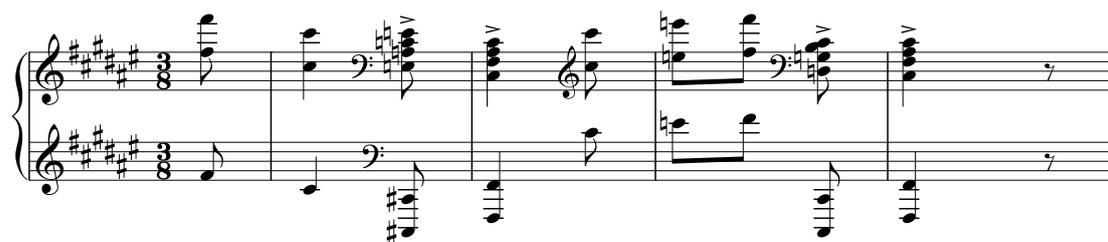
Though this movement might be analysed as a *Scherzo and Trio* (see the analytical table at the chapter's end), so revealing a vestigial dependence on one of the sonata's traditional forms, the processes are much more comprehensible in terms of Lorenzian analysis. The second important facet of the sonata, consequent upon Liszt's contribution to composition is the use of thematic metamorphosis. Burrows had used this procedure before, as our general survey of the violin sonata showed, but its use in the *Piano Sonata* is even more extensive. Surveying the whole work will, simultaneously, draw attention to further aspects, demonstrate thematic metamorphosis in action, and delineate features that mark this as Burrows's most grandisonant work.

The vehement introduction is the seminal element of the cyclic principle observed throughout the work:

The image shows three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'ad lib.' and 'f'. The second system is marked '2', 'sf', and 'pesante'. The third system is marked '3'. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F major), and a 2/4 time signature. The first system consists of two staves with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system also has two staves, with a more complex bass line and some markings above the staff. The third system has two staves with a more rhythmic and chordal texture.

Ex 81 Introduction: Piano Sonata

The movement begins with a theme whose connection with that bar is evident in its dependence on the perfect fourth (C sharp - F sharp), the interval between which the double octaves of the introduction range. The key signature of the *Moderato* is F sharp, but the key is restless, as often in the minor as the major. A bold metamorphosis of the opening *Moderato* theme occurs, again harking back to the outline interval of bar one:



Ex 82 Introduction: Ibid.

A chromatic modulation brings a nervous, staccato passage and a more sustained motif in D flat (C sharp), the dominant of F sharp.(Ex 83) This, in the coda of the last movement, undergoes a powerful transmutation (Ex 84):



Ex 83 Presto: Ibid.



Ex 84 Allegro: Ibid.

Two abortive climaxes mark the development of the first movement: the first recalls, in nostalgic melismas, the opening of the *Moderato*; the second, after an upward flourish (pace Haydn) also twice recalls this theme (Ex 84), though with more resignation, before allowing it to re-emerge in its original key of F sharp. Another passage derived from elements in the introduction returns much later with a changed bass and transposed up a fourth (Ex 85). Finally, the D flat motif recurs in the

tonic F sharp and, in a shortened form, brings the movement to an abrupt but firm end in this key.

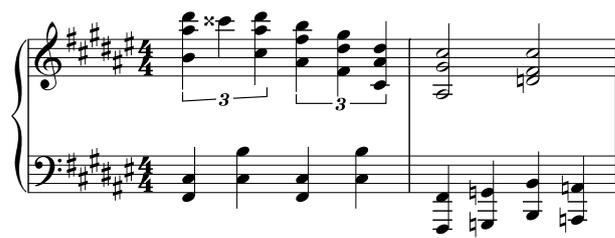
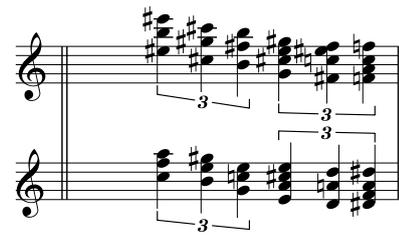
Ex 85 Moderato: *Ibid.*

Ex 86 Moderato *Ibid.*

The second movement, in B major, is a march. The opening bass sets up a characteristic rhythm and contains, passing through its chords, three semitonal steps from the opening introduction (x in Ex. 81). The following grave theme, different in mood from the clamorous opening of the sonata, at least shares its down-stepping character. It is treated canonically for a few bars before the section ends with its rhythmic components  or  and  counterposed in duologue in a final upward flourish.

Ex 87 *Con moto: Piano Sonata*

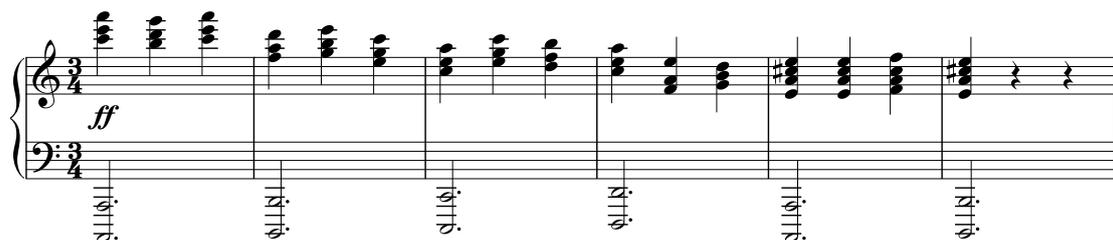
The second section briefly reworks the first theme of the march in the tonic minor before subsiding into a third section in F sharp. Introduced in this section is a theme with a strong likeness to the first theme of the movement though much serener in mood and with a triplet element which is richly recalled in the fourth movement:

Ex 89 *Con moto: Piano Sonata*Ex 90 *Allegro: Piano Sonata*

This new idea forces a climax in which the duologue of the earlier bars is again introduced and a modulation into an A flat tonality (though with G flat, D flat and F flat as strong contenders) for a recurrence of the theme of the second section (i.e. the minor version of the first theme), this time in the bass. The climax evolved is harmonically typical in its tortuous, varied convolutions of the harmonic character of the whole sonata. This character is, undoubtedly, another factor affecting the composer's ambivalence about the nature of his achievement in this work.

The whole movement is highly unified by its relentless  rhythm and continues to develop its basic melodic idea by the use of this device before ending peacefully in B major with the third aspect of the theme (originally in F sharp). Even this relative peace, however, is disturbed by the devious harmony, noted earlier, in the final bars of the movement prior to the low-lying, gentle B major chord of the final cadence.

In the third movement, Presto, is found the clearest example yet of Burrows's use of thematic metamorphosis. The agitated theme which opens the movement is identical in melodic contour to the first movement's introduction and is followed by a second facet and a third which develop that type of anguished harmony heard in the second movement. After a repeat of this first section, a passage based on the movement's three opening notes and containing octaves alternating between the hands, in the manner which Liszt claimed to be his own contribution to piano style, runs into a fortissimo statement of the opening pianissimo theme made against a heavily-pounding and upward-moving four-note figure, twice repeated.

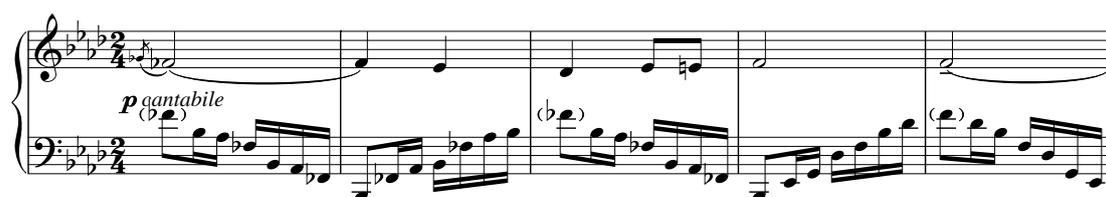


Ex 91 Presto: Ibid.

The second and third facets of the opening section recur, though in a different key from those of their first statement (the second facet in A as opposed to C, the third in a tonality equally as undefinable as before). The third facet is extended climactically, is subdued, and leads into the middle section of the movement. This section is in the tonic major of A and uses two basic elements: the first a drone, the second a brief fragment of melody, almost a sigh. The tortured harmony takes over as the "trio" progresses and leads back to an exact repeat of the opening section, thus producing an overall ternary structure.



formed from elements of the first section and ending in a fleet, fortissimo rising B flat scale, it proceeds to a slightly more extended melody. In its turn, this subject becomes agitated and, in a passage of harmonically-convoluted semiquavers, leads into the first sustained section of the movement. Its key signature is A flat, though it does not settle into that key until the twentieth bar of its progress. Within this theme can be traced motif x of the sonata's initial introduction. (Compare this example with Exs. 81 and 87)



Ex 93 Moderato: Ibid.

This first cantabile statement is gently subdued and is then expanded in range into a fuller harmonic version, though still retaining its serene character. The end of the section recalls the first theme of this movement and then refers to a passage in the slow movement (Compare Exs 89 and 94). Now occurs a modified version of the opening *Allegro*, including a melodic shape borrowed from the work's introduction (Compare motif x of Ex. 81 with Ex 95).



Ex 94 Allegro: Ibid.

Ex 95 Allegro: Ibid.

This leads to a repeat of the earlier passage ending with the B flat major ascending scale and followed by a more extended melody, though at this appearance there is, en route, a significant change which grows into a restatement of the earlier sustained subject in the key of F sharp (originally A flat). This restatement is very similar to the first appearance where it led into a reference to the opening theme; it now develops into a cadenza-like sequence (the one Burrows referred to as an imitation of a typical Lisztian procedure). This passage springs out of its opening major seventh which heralds a kaleidoscope of sequential semiquaver patterns.

In turn these become a downward arabesque-sequence and come to rest on a rapid but decelerating alternation of an augmented and diminished fifth (one contained within the other) over a pedal G-D perfect fifth. A brief codetta to this section (Compare the abortive codettas in the first movement) brings thoughtful repose before the triumphant, final march begins its soft, but incessant tread.

Presto: Piano Sonata in F# - Benjamin Burrows
Analytical Table

Bars	Phrases	Sections	Units	Arch	Old Terms	
1-2	A	Stollen	BAR	B	(Scherzo)	
3-4	A inverted					
5-6	B	Stollen				
7-8	B modified					
9-12	C	Abgesang				
13-16	C modified					
17-18	D	Stollen				
19-21	D extended					
22-26	E	Stollen	BAR			
27-30	E transposed					
31-32	F	Stollen				
33-34	F					
35-36	G	Abgesang				
37-38	G					
39-42	Link					
43-44	A expanded	Stollen	BAR	O		
45-46	A modified					
47-48	B	Stollen				
49-50	B					
51-54	C	Abgesang				
55-58	C modified					
59-60	D	Stollen				
61-62	D transposed					
63-64	E	Stollen	G			
65-66	E modified					
67-68	F	Abgesang				
69-70	F					
71-72	G	Stollen	BAR	E		
73-74	G					
75-76	H	Stollen				
77-78	H					
79-82	Link					
82-98	I	Stollen			BAR	N
99-114	I modified					
115-118	J	Stollen				
119-122	J transposed					
123-134	I modified	Abgesang				
135-147	I extended					
148-156	I extended					
157-237	Repeat of bars 1-79 with added cadence chords					

Scherzo and Trio, above, are used merely as familiar terms of reference.

Chapter Five

The Final Works 1930 - 1961**Choral Works**

Though Burrows's most intense compositions after the Jane Vowles songs were the chamber works discussed in the previous chapter, alongside them he returned to writing sacred music for use at Victoria Road Church where he was appointed organist and choirmaster in 1929. It was, in fact, in the mid-thirties that Burrows composed his major works for choir with organ accompaniment. All reveal that subtle response to words that he had acquired during the writing of the Jane Vowles series and which continued to characterize his writing for the voice. *Come unto Me*, a setting of verses 28 and 29 of St Matthew, Chapter XI, the first of these works, is for eight-part choir. The harmonic content is simple, starting and ending in a five-part section which leans towards E flat. At its opening appearance it is stated by the women's voices, at the close by the men's. The middle section seems rather wrong-headed, since the words to which the serene passage are set, run:

*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden
and I will give you rest*

whereas the middle section, musically busier, has:

*For I am meek and lowly of heart
And ye shall find rest to your souls*

In May 1930 appeared a group of six anthems. All are similar in scope and simpler than *Come unto me*. Though written for SATB choir, they include short solo passages and the choral parts occasionally divide. The first two, *Blessed are they* and *Lord unto us be merciful*, were published by Stainer and Bell in 1932. In 1930 they had published Burrows's first setting of *Out of the deep*, a much inferior version to his later setting of these words, which became the second of his *Five Psalms* of 1934 - 1936. Of these six anthems, *Blest are they* (Burrows's title as opposed to the version *Blessed are They*, published by Stainer and Bell) is quite the best. The other five add little to the development of church music; they are pleasant and well-written examples for the standard repertoire. A particular passage of harmonic development from *Blest are they* is a pointer to the richer, more striking texture of his later choral works.

with organs accomp.

God with their whole hearts and mind
 God who seek the living God with hearts and mind
 with their whole hearts and mind
 Seek who seek with their whole hearts and mind

Ex 96 *Blessed are They*

Burrows's attraction to reflective words is again in evidence in three anthems of May 1933: *Jesu, meek and gentle*, *Jesu, meek and lowly* and *Jesu, the very thought of Thee*. The first is a revision of a 1912 composition; the second was published by F.W.Smith and Lewis of Leicester. *Jesu, meek and lowly* is the best of these modest anthems. Its three verses are set in a ternary structure. The first and last identical sections contain an attractive syllabic extension, a device Burrows had come to use in the Jane Vowles songs and which was to play a more regular role in his *Five Psalms* and *Three Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving*.

cry - - - - - ing

Ex 97 *Jesu meek and lowly*

Five Psalms, first performed complete by the composer's own choir in their church, Victoria Road on 28 January 1937, was clearly considered by Burrows one of his most important works. In 1947 he issued it from the Bodnant Press and included information about its genesis and first performances. The third setting, *Psalms 23*, was the first to be composed. In its original form it was described as a *Rhapsody for Choir and Organ* and, completed in 1934, was dedicated to the

composer's friend, Percy Hallam and his Bach Choir of Bury St Edmunds. It was first heard there in November 1935 after an initial performance at the Great Meeting, Leicester under Dr Lewis Lilley in January of the same year. Dr Lilley also gave the first performance of the final psalm, *When Israel came out of Egypt*, at the Great Meeting in October 1936. In 1937, and again in 1949, George Gray, with the composer at the organ, conducted the Leicester Bach Choir in the complete work in Leicester Cathedral. Boston Choral Society, directed by Dr Bernard Jackson, sang them in the Stump - as the parish church of St Botolph is commonly known - in 1939 and 1940.

In June 1976, a combined choir of students and staff of the City of Leicester College of Education and members of Grantham Choral Society performed them on successive evenings in St Wulfram's Church, Grantham and Bishop Street Methodist Church, Leicester. In October 1980 three of the psalms were performed at the University of Evansville, Indiana, by the University Choir conducted by the author with Sara Johnson at the organ, and a complete performance the following year under the baton of Dennis Sheppard with the same organist, brought trans-Atlantic recognition. On Friday 18th April 1986, the work received a public accolade in a performance at Bishop Street Methodist Church in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Leicester (See Chapter Six for further details), and was recorded shortly afterwards. It is now in the British Music Society catalogue (BMS ENV 026). The *Five Psalms* is surely Burrows's most widely-performed work. Such is its importance in his output that a more detailed description is appropriate. If it does not represent an advance, musically, on the Jane Vowles songs or the chamber works that immediately preceded it, it stands as the highest peak in the range of Burrows's church music.

The *Five Psalms* use highly chromatic colours appropriate to the Hebrew imagery of the psalms chosen by the composer. The choral writing throughout employs standard procedures of imitation, canon, fugato and homophony with short solo passages for soprano, tenor and bass. Psalm 46, *God is our Hope and Strength*, is an affirmation of faith springing directly out of the final E major chord of the short organ prelude which introduces the work and summarises the themes that appear later. This first psalm seizes every opportunity for colourful word-setting (Ex 98) and maintains a mood of high religious fervour. The words with their references to events of cataclysmic proportions ("though the earth be moved and though the hills are carried into the midst of the seas") proclaim the psalmist's assurance - notably in the quiet close - of the saving grace of the "God of Jacob" (Ex 99).

and burn - - eth the char-iots in the fire

and burn - - eth the char-iots in the fire

and burn - - eth the char-iots in the fire

and burn - - eth the char-iots in the fire

Ex 98 God is our hope and strength: Five Psalms

re - fuge, the God of Ja - cob is our re - fuge

Ex 99 Ibid.

The second of the *Five Psalms*, *Out of the Deep*, opens with a bass solo. Throughout, an incessant 5/4 tempo helps to produce the almost hypnotic mood of resignation that imbues the piece. The alternation of B natural with B flat, and the regular recurrence of F natural in a G major context, create effects of bitonality (G major opposed to B flat) and modality.

Solo

Out of the deep have I called un - to thee O Lord

Sw.

pp

Ch

Ex 100 Out of the deep

The choir, in wave-like canon, follow the bass solo, and a passage for soprano solo includes a falling augmented second which aptly interprets the yearning of the words and adds a touch of the middle-Eastern origin of the psalm (Exs 101, 102):

If thou, Lord will be ex-treme_ to mark what is done

Ex 101 Out of the Deep

I looked for the Lord_____ my soul_____ doth wait for him

Ex 102 Ibid.

After a brief, but powerful climax, the choir relax onto a form of interrupted cadence from where the organ slowly wanders to the final resolution in the opening key of G.

Psalm 23, *The Lord is my Shepherd*, is freely based on the Scottish metrical psalm, *Covenanters*. The composer suggests that in a complete performance of the work the hymn is sung by choir and congregation prior to the psalm-setting. The five verses of the metrical hymn receive varied treatment: verse one is in unison; verse two adds a descant for the sopranos of the choir; verse three is sung unaccompanied by the choir; verse four has a second descant; verse five is again in unison.

It is with justification that this setting originally bore the title, *Rhapsody*, for though Burrows uses the tune *Covenanters*, it never appears in such a highly-organised form as some of the folk-tunes chosen for his later piano duet settings. Rather, fragments of the tune are woven into the texture. The mood is naturally pastoral with that type of syllabic meandering, specific to verbal content, noted earlier.

the qui - et wa - - - ters by

eth me the qui - et wa - - - ters by

Ex 103 The Lord's my Shepherd

It is in the last two psalms that Burrows most colourfully captures the flavour of the mid-Orient. In his treatment of *By the Waters of Babylon*, the almost unbearable grief of the Israelites, exiles in Babylon, is poignantly reflected. These words have attracted a multitude of composers from Palestrina to William Walton (in *Belshazzar's Feast*) and a few years ago even reached the Top Ten in a version by Boney M. With his analytical and scholarly skills, Burrows introduces melodic shapes and embellishments typical of those the Moors brought into European music in the Middle Ages, so transporting us ineluctably into a Near Eastern soundscape.

By the Waters of Babylon had attracted Burrows earlier as Song 27 of the Jane Vowles series. The Walton setting, from his oratorio, *Belshazzar's Feast*, was first performed on 8 October 1931 at the Leeds Festival, and it is tempting to conjecture whether Burrows was influenced by that fact in returning to this particular psalm. It is doubtful, however, that even had he heard the Walton version, he was much affected by it. His own conception is less overtly dramatic, typically so in a man who professed to eschew theatricality in music. Doris Kendall, one-time accompanist to the Leicester Bach Choir and to the Leicester Philharmonic Society, played both versions for rehearsals and considered that Burrows's was equally as effective as Walton's.

The regular use of arabesques by the organ and the voices captures something of the unique flavour of Jewish music; a peculiar Burrows use of cross relations brings a poignancy to the psalmist's question, and the bare fifth of the initial choral entry helps to reinforce the sorrow of the opening words (Exs 104 - 107).

Ex 104 *Ibid.*

Ex 105 *Ibid.*

Ex 106 *Ibid.*

Ex 107 *Ibid.*

A solo tenor, cantor-like, speaks for his people, who echo his sentiments with decorative cadences in the next short episode. In his original MS the composer supported this solo with a simple organ part. His after-thought is better, for the full choral form with melismatic cadences that follows, more effectively contrasts with the "cantor's" stark statement:

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning;
if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my
mouth, yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem in my mirth.*

The final section is built on a relentless ostinato which recurs eighteen times, hoisted from the original D sharp minor into E minor at its eighth appearance and into B minor at its fourteenth:



Ex 108 Ibid.

Above this, the women followed by the men in canon demand retribution on their oppressors. This demand is repeated with the roles reversed, then in virtual unison the singers intensify their demand and the psalm rises to a fierce and horrifying climax. Burrows's effect is barbarous, with its emphatic fortissimo and use of the augmented second:

Ex 109 Ibid.

The final repetition of the question, *How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?* restores the grieving mood of the opening. In a repeat of the first section we again share the sorrow of the exiles "by the waters of Babylon" at the conclusion of the finest of Burrows's five settings.

The placing of Psalm 114, *When Israel came out of Egypt*, immediately after Psalm 137, and as the last number in the work is quite ingenious. Although it tells of the Jews' escape from exile in another

land and at an earlier time, it does provide a musical opportunity to end the *Five Psalms* in a mood of gladness after the woe of captivity that burdened the previous setting. All creation shares the abounding joy of the children of Israel as they celebrate their freedom:

When Israel came out of Egypt, Jordan was driven back

exults the psalmist, and

*... the mountains skipped like rams and the
little hills like young sheep*

The depiction of nature's delight at the release of the Jews is reflected in the lively arabesques that decorate the organ interludes, and the splendid final bars bring this effective work to a glorious end.

After his *Rhapsody for Choir and Organ*, and before completing the remainder of the *Five Psalms*, Burrows wrote a group of three short anthems. The first of these, *Let my Prayer come before Thee*, (verse 2, Psalm 141) could well have been written for Evening Service. It is for choir and organ with solo passages. In common with the unaccompanied hymn-anthem, *Hear my Prayer*, (verses 1-3, Psalm 102) written five months later, it has that sweet, sentimental atmosphere (pace Stainer's *Crucifixion*) found in much Nonconformist music. *The Day draws on* written in the following month is for female voices and organ. It is a translation by T. A. Lacey of an old Latin hymn, *Aurora lucis rutilat*, sometimes attributed to *St Ambrose*. The mood, similar to the other two, is a little over the top and one may be forgiven for recalling at its close the kind of angelic choir backing associated with the fade-out of certain romantic Hollywood films of the thirties.

These three anthems are merely time-markers before the completion of the *Five Psalms*. Following the psalms came the *Three Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving*. The words Burrows chose for these settings are the *Te Deum*, *Benedictus* and *Benedicite*. These three passages of scripture have become such cornerstones of Protestantism that it is hardly surprising that Burrows should have adopted a somewhat different style in his approach from that of the psalm settings. He does, however, again choose from the Psalms a short passage for soprano solo as a prelude to the set. No doubt these words from Psalm 34 struck the composer as an appropriate introduction to such a festival of praise and thanksgiving as he envisaged:

*I will always give thanks unto the Lord,
His praise shall ever be in my mouth;*

O praise the Lord with me and let us magnify his name together.

It is in the harmonic texture that the greatest contrast between the *Five Psalms* and the *Three Hymns* may be observed. Not only does Burrows select simpler keys for the hymns but their use of chromatic colour is more restricted than in the psalms where it is constantly features. All three hymns are in C major, the *Benedictus* throughout; even in the *Te Deum*, the longest setting, the remotest key used is B major, and that for only thirty-five bars of a total two hundred and thirteen. The only other keys that appear are A (once in the *Te Deum* and once in the *Benedicite*), G major (in the *Te Deum*) and G minor (in the *Benedicite*). The *Five Psalms*, in contrast, range from A flat to D sharp minor. Nor is it only the relative limitation of key range Burrows imposes on the hymns that contrasts them so sharply with the psalms but the inclusion in the latter of so much modality that is missing from the hymns. Burrows obviously felt that these familiar scriptural texts which despite their Latin - or in the case of the *Benedicite*, Hebrew - origin have become so integral to Non-Conformity, would not benefit from the mid-Eastern flavour that he had imparted so profusely to the psalms. The harmony he chooses is, therefore, more cosmopolitan, blander perhaps. There are obviously chromatic passages in the hymns (to have excluded them would have been a denial of the personal style forged over the years) but they are fewer. Moreover, whenever the music is inflected within a clearly-stated key, it usually produces another definable key. Compare examples 110 and 111 and the point is succinctly made.

Saints in glo - ry ev - er - las - - - ting
 num - bered with thy saints in glo - ry ev - er las - - - - - ting

Ex 110 Te Deum: Three Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving

and my cup, my cup ov - er - flows

Ex 111 *Ibid.*

In a structural sense one again perceives the simpler approach that Burrows adopts in the hymns. The choral devices he uses are generally similar but there is much greater use of homophony in the hymns. When such devices as imitation, canon, ostinato and fugue occur, they are seldom as comprehensively deployed as in the psalms.

The *Te Deum* is the largest settings of the hymns. The strong affirmation of the text is boldly supported by the music:

in the

Ex 112 *Te Deum*

yet, as contrast, Burrows allows his introspective nature to lend a quality of easeful trust to the final bars:

Let us

Ex 113 *Ibid.*

A solo line begins and ends the *Benedictus* and recurs two-thirds of the way through. It engenders much of the material developed by the

choir (Exs. 114 and 115)

Kien - und in der Lord God of Is - ra - el For the sake of all who demand his
 pas - sion And hath raised up a mighty and - va - nish for us in the name of his in - vent Der - by

Ex 114 Benedictus

serve him with - out fear in ho - li - ness
 ff serve him in ho - li - ness and right - eous - ness
 serve him in ho - li - ness
 srve him in ho - li - ness and right

Ex 115 Benedictus

The *Benedicite* uses the same technique. Its solo, almost a plainchant, is taken up immediately by the choir in a metrically irregular passage:

O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and mag - ni - fy Him for ev - er

Ex 116 Benedicite

Five crochets to many bars again betray the composer's affection for this limping gait. As in the *Te Deum*, the contrasted moods of the words is reflected. The next passage is especially distinctive for this. Tension between major and minor points verbal antonymy; volume changes mark the literal "light" and "shade" and the waving roulade of exultation, culminating in the female voices' blazing C major, bring a faint echo of Haydn's light out of darkness in *The Creation*.

Three 1938 anthems, *Her Foundations are upon the Holy Hill*, *I was glad when they said unto me* and *The Hill of Sion is a Fair Place* return to the psalms. All three are songs of praise and strongly proclaim belief in the God of Jacob. The first (from Psalm 87) lauds Mount Sion. In the second, (from Psalm 122) the holy city of Jerusalem is the object of the psalmist's praise. Finally, the third, (from Psalm 48) the longest and strongest setting, further extols the Hill of Sion. A tenor soloist is used in each one and many of the techniques that mark Burrows's recent choral

music reappear.

There remain four undated church choir items. *Blessed be he that cometh* (Psalm 118, verse 4); *Three in One and One in Three* (source untraced); *Sweet Day, so Cool* (George Herbert) and *Now God be with us* (Petrus Herbert) are all reflective pieces. The last is for double choir. *Deus misereatur*, a unison anthem with organ accompaniment, was published by Smith and Lewis of Leicester in 1942. Four years later Burrows used Phineas Fletcher's ecstatic and much-set words, *Drop, drop, slow tears*. The result is an attractive SATB anthem with organ accompaniment that was a favourite with his Victoria Road Choir. At the same time, he set for the same forces, *God that madest Earth and Heaven*.

Burrows's last two sacred pieces were referred to in Chapter One: the anthem for female voices, *There is a land of pure delight*, written at a time when men singers were becoming scarce, and the hymn, *In this World, the Isle of Dreams*. To complete this account of Burrows's church music one should mention an unnamed psalm chant, used on the occasion of his centenary Thanksgiving Service (see Appendix III), a series of responses for the *Communion Service*, written on 29 November 1939, and an undated hymn, *Victoria Road*. The responses are quite plain and the hymn tune memorable only for its use of the unusual metre 11 10 11 10 and refrain.

The Post-1934 Piano Works

After his *Piano Sonata* of 1934. Burrows wrote nothing for solo piano until 1946. In March of that year he wrote three pieces: *Valse in E flat*, *Tango* and an arrangement of one of his folk-song settings, *A Young Serving-Man*. The *Valse* is a brief, delicate, slightly whimsical piece; *Tango*, twice as long, is considerably more varied in content and richer in harmonic flavour. Burrows thought sufficiently of it to publish it in the Bodnant Press. It owes little but its rhythm to Spain or Latin-America: the sound is typical of the idiom into which Burrows's music settled after 1934.

Twelve Studies for piano appeared in 1947. Of these, Burrows issued four from the Bodnant Press: *Rumba* (2), *Vespers* (4), *Paradies* (7) and *Censers* (8). *Rumba*, like *Tango* of the previous year, is another gesture by Burrows to the popular music of the day. It has the usual rhythmic grouping of 3: 3: 2 (semiquavers in this instance) and above this rhythm the melodic accents are varied (See Ex 117a-c). The piece, quite relentless in its pianistic demands, is a kind of *moto perpetuo*, the intervallic progressions of which call for a high degree of co-ordination and dexterity. The term *Study* is well-deserved.

Allegro

[mp]

20

f

77

8va

Ex 117 (a,b,c) Rumba

Vespers and *Censers*, published as a pair, are gentler and imbued with the air of sanctity implied in the titles. Their harmonic colour is however quite contrasted: *Vespers* is akin to an organist's evening service improvisation (a task that Burrows excelled in); *Censers*, an impressionistic recollection of the smell of incense, wafts chromatic inflections into the air. At the close of the latter piece, a series of ten bells on treble F sharp suitably locates the music in its ecclesiastic setting and, incidentally, harks back to the persistent convent bell from Burrows's song, *Heaven haven*. A glance at the texture of *Paradies* tells that here is a latter-day tribute to the eighteenth-century Italian composer of that name whose *Tocatta* was so popular in the heyday of the home piano. Burrows clearly believed that the four he chose to publish represented the best of these twelve studies, but the third, *Chanson*, the sixth, *Autumn*, and the tenth *Musical Box*, are attractive and deserve attention.

In 1948, Burrows wrote a group of four piano pieces, the cover of which bears in his own hand the words:

'A Leicester Tune' and offshoots set for piano to replace a Finnish

one transposed from piano to organ.

The Finnish tune to which he refers is Selim Palmgren's *West Finnish Dance* from his group of five *Finska Rytmer*. Burrows enjoyed this delightful tune and often played his organ transcription of it. He included it with *Leicester Tune 1* in a programme for the opening of a new organ in the Leicestershire village of Wymondham in 1949.

The first tune of this group is clearly modelled on Palmgren's. Both are in ternary form though Burrows, unlike the Finn, does not repeat the opening eight bars. The three tunes which follow are slight; indeed all four are mere trifles and would no doubt be most effective - in their turn transcribed for organ - as preludes to Vespers.

Despite the paucity of solo piano pieces since the 1920's, Burrows had not deserted the instrument but preferred to write duets for one and, more copiously, two pianos. *Rhapsody* and *Intermezzo* date from 1934. The overt influence of popular music is apparent in the foxtrot rhythm of *Intermezzo*, while the syncopated blues chords of *Rhapsody* transport one to the world of the th, dansant and Hollywood musical. Here is the legacy of Gershwin and Kern and, in common with his contemporaries, Berners, Lambert and Walton, Burrows has lent his ear and borrowed many of their hallmarks (Exs 118, 119).

The image shows the musical score for Ex 118, *Intermezzo*. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a piano staff (treble clef) and an organ staff (bass clef). The piano part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the organ part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system continues the piece with similar textures. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

Ex 118 Intermezzo

The image shows the musical score for Ex 119, *Rhapsody*. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a piano staff (treble clef) and an organ staff (bass clef). The piano part is marked *pp* and features a series of chords, some with an *8va* marking. The organ part is marked *p* and features a series of chords, some with an *8va* marking. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

Ex 119 Rhapsody

A group of folk-song settings, *Under the Rose*, for piano duet, published by Bodnant Press in 1941, began a series of some thirty settings, mainly for two pianos. Composed regularly from this time until 1954 they represent a substantial contribution to the literature for this medium. The composer chose tunes with features that intrigued him as being apt for interesting treatment. The settings range from modest examples such as *The Young Serving-Man*, *The Spanish Lady* and *Drimen Duff*, in which the composer is content to provide a simple harmonic frame for the melody, to extended elaborations. Amongst these are *Gossip Joan*, whose first phrase was shrewdly perceived by Burrows as a perfect fugue subject, *Eggs in Her Basket* which provides delightful canonic opportunities, and two which Burrows found ripe for variations, *The Trees they Grow so High* and *Cold Blows the Wind*. *The Three Dukes* is a particularly attractive, bouncy setting that received several broadcasts by the piano duo, Olive Rees and Mary Madden. The opportunity for a mediant-tonic cadence instead of the more normal dominant-tonic appealed to him.

The principal sources for the folk songs were *Chappell's Popular Music of the Olden Times*, *Journals of the Folk Song Society* and *Folk Song Collections* (Novello). His setting of *Greensleeves* owes nothing to Vaughan Williams's popular version; indeed, Burrows, surprisingly, did not even know the tune until requested by a friend to set it. In the event, he treats it to a swiftly-moving tempo that removes it completely from the gentle, romantic atmosphere with which it is usually surrounded and gives it an open-air quality that is quite a refreshing change.

Peas, Beans, Oats and the Barley is another example of a tune that crept into the series. Burrows wrote it as a tribute to his secretary, Elsie Everett, on the occasion of her marriage to a market gardener and included in the piece the appropriate sound of wedding bells. This was the same Elsie Everett the pianist for and to whom he wrote and dedicated his *Variations on an Original Theme* for organ and piano (See later in this chapter). Elsie was amused at the description of her husband as a market gardener; he was much more amateur than commercial, but no doubt this is how Ben liked to tell the story! With the series of folksong settings officially ended at No. 24, Burrows found yet more melodies that interested him. The result was three more groups: *Three Irish Airs*; *Three Scottish Airs* and *Three Welsh Airs*. Outstanding amongst these groups is that marvellously simple Welsh lullaby - elsewhere known as *Winter*. It is based on the notes doh, ray, me, and so, invaluable to teachers of elementary recorder and tonic solfa. The arrangement contains exquisite harmonic touches.

Interspersed among the folk-song settings are some two-piano

pieces of a more abstract nature. A *Rumba* of 1944 contains a fragment of melody which suggests that Burrows was familiar with that better-known and, let it be confessed, more effective *Jamaican Rumba* of Arthur Benjamin. *Five Valses* are charming enough pieces but, fundamentally, mark a return to the style of his pre-1927 compositions for piano. Bodnant Press issued two of them : the second, a sentimental, languid number, and the fifth, containing a musical box effect, heightened by the high tessitura and prevailing rotary motion.

Much more interesting are the *Three Fugues*. Written in 1951, they are inscribed to Ronald Settle and Joan Ovens and arose out of the events recounted in *The Story of a Song* and more fully treated in Chapter One. The first fugue in C has a brisk subject containing an upward scalar flourish which adds excitement to the generally vigorous nature of the piece. The second in A is a gentle pastorale in 6/8, flowing with easy grace and coming to rest on a low-lying tonic chord. The third is the most complex. Although in B major - unmistakably so in its final bars - the long, reflective subject weaves its way through a tonal maze, only establishing the main key in its sixth bar (Ex 120).

The counter-subject is rhythmically contrasted in its use of two stressed crotchets and, after the completion of the third voice, occurs an episode where delicate semiquaver patterns add further contrast, though still in pensive vein. The subject is now harmonised, as opposed to receiving more traditional contrapuntal treatment. This forms a sequential bridge to a repeat of the earlier episodes. There is a build-up of tension in which chromatic colour plays a greater part than in either of the previous two fugues, reminding one of the rich years 1927-1929 when Burrows had extended his harmonic idiom in that direction.

Andante ♩ = 76

Ex 120 No. 3: Three Fugues

After a *rallentando*, in which the semiquaver figures play a prominent part comes the coda dominated by the counter-subject and the same semiquaver figures. The subject is virtually forgotten except for a wraith-like reflection in mid-register for the final notes.

Various Keyboard Works

The remaining keyboard works of Burrows's later years comprise organ transcriptions (including two of his own folk-song settings), chorale preludes for organ and a set of variations for organ and piano. The seven chorale preludes, dating from 1942, were published in two sets by Bodnant Press. Each prelude was dedicated to a fellow-musician and friend of the composer : *Rhosymedre* to H. L. Barnes, *Christus der ist* to C. A. Wykes, *Leoni* to Clifford Twigger, *Moriah* to Percy Hallam, *Irish* to George Gray, *Martyrdom* to Lewis Lilley and *Southwell* to Cardinal Taylor. Most of these men were organists and choirmasters, amongst them, Percy Hallam and George Gray of the cathedrals respectively, of Bury St Edmunds and Leicester. They are effective preludes, written with the sureness of touch of an expert organist and composer.

Rhosymedre, based on a tune by the Welsh writer, J. D. Edwards, receives a quiet, meditative treatment. The melody is maintained without pause in mid-register right up to a brief codetta. A chromatic web is woven around the tune and the ending is based on a G pedal over which the prelude winds down from a high B flat to a peaceful chord of G major. *Christus der ist*, the well-known Vulpius tune, is also treated simply, glowing through a gently-moving texture of quavers in mid-register. Reaching a pensive pause, it fades quietly away to a low-lying bass chord of E flat major. In a marked change of pace, *Leoni* presents a vigorous toccata. This well-loved tune of Hebrew origin achieves great excitement before its final augmentation ends with a sonorous major cadence, the melody in the pedals. To end the first set, *Moriah* brings its limpid, pastoral quality. The melody sings gently - again in mid-register - over a short ostinato in the pedals. Interrupted briefly in the middle section where it moves into the soprano, it is harmonised in a series of subtly-changing colours. A resumption of the first idea ends the prelude serenely.

George Gray, dedicatee of the fifth prelude was a close friend and colleague of Burrows at the University of Leicester. *Irish*, the prelude written for him, is majestic in mood and demands the full organ at the outset. There is a middle section in fughetta-style and then a return to the grandeur of the opening. Perhaps the best of the seven preludes is *Martyrdom*. In unashamedly romantic vein, though not eschewing formal contrapuntal devices, Burrows bedecks this beautiful hymn in a richly embroidered harmonic apparel that enhances its well-loved features. A noble climax occurs as a fragment of the tune is presented on the tuba stop. From here the prelude subsides to a peaceful and totally fulfilling conclusion.

A comparison between *Southwell* and Vaughan Williams's *Bryn Calfaría* raises the matter of Burrows's ambivalence towards a composer widely regarded as a British musical giant. Burrows had serious reservations about Vaughan Williams's methods of composition, revealed once in a caustic comment from the usually gentle man:

Any fool can slither about in diatonic harmonies!

Examining the two preludes, one can understand why Burrows, with his Kitsonian background and long-established profession of teaching traditional procedures of harmony and counterpoint, could not easily accept what he perceived as a slovenly approach to these procedures. Vaughan Williams, after a brilliant opening, treats his tune in fugal style with scant use of harmonic development. Finally he lands on a first inversion chord and proceeds by way of rapid downward figures to the largamente cadence based on the last phrase of the hymn.

Burrows also starts his prelude with an introduction, then develops the hymn fugally. But his development conforms more closely to traditional practice: it may be that it is less original for that, but his abiding respect for the skills of harmonic and contrapuntal development could not have permitted him such an unfettered approach as Vaughan Williams's. And, certainly, his middle section has more harmonic colour as a result. His coda is so similar to Vaughan Williams's as to point to a direct imitation, though his last phrase is assigned to the pedals. This overt imitation typifies that ambivalent attitude suggested earlier. While totally out of sympathy with the older man's dependence on side-stepping harmonies and excessive use of modality, he could not, perhaps instinctively, ignore his original talent.

It is also worthy of note that, like Vaughan Williams, he too chose *Rhosymedre* as the basis of one of his own chorale preludes. Of Vaughan Williams's set of three preludes (1920), of which *Bryn Calfaría* was one, *Rhosymedre* was the one Burrows disliked least and, clearly, it is the one which conforms most closely to what he believed musical composition entailed. But it must be owned that his own brief, almost laconic treatment of the hymn cannot bear comparison with the truly "Lovely" version of Vaughan Williams.

In May 1948 Burrows wrote his *Variations on an Original Theme* for the unusual combination of organ and piano. The work is inscribed to Elsie Everett, a Leicester pianist, member of the Victoria Road Church choir and at that time secretary to the composer. The first performance was given by Burrows (organ) and Percy Hallam (piano) in St Edmundsbury Cathedral, and it has since become one of Burrows's most frequently-performed works. The first Leicester performance was given

by the composer and the dedicatee in their own church and, in 1949, they again played it in Leicester Cathedral in a concert which also included Burrows's *Five Psalms*. It was introduced to the USA in the Wheeler Concert Hall of the University of Evansville on Sunday, 5 October 1980 by the author as pianist and Douglas Reed, resident organ professor.

The original theme of the work is folk-like in character, reflecting Burrows's preoccupation of that time. Six variations and a fugue are worked upon this theme. The first is alternate decoration of the theme by organ and piano, played in barely-altered form. *Variation 2* is livelier, presenting a much-fragmented version. Lyrical treatment is adopted in the third variation and subtle harmonies produce a mood of serenity. *Variation 4* is a fleet scherzo followed by a march, at the coda of which is a quasi bugle-call on the trumpet stop.

A pompous duologue now ensues between the instruments in the first section of *Variation 5* and, after a reflective pause at the beginning of section two, the music grows towards an even more forceful version of the opening debate. In the sixth variation a pastoral mood is set by harplike piano arpeggios accompanying the organ's oboe melody. This is further ornamented by arabesques before a recitative passage leads to the fugue. The subject is spirited and developed with great ingenuity to an exciting fortissimo climax which needs careful rehearsal to prevent the swamping of the piano by the organ. The sixth variation material returns to end the work with a peaceful rising arpeggio sequence. Like Brahms's *Clarinet Quintet*, the work maintains interest throughout, though rarely departing from its chosen key.

Despite the relative frequency with which the Variations are heard, they cannot claim to stand with the best of Burrows's work. They are certainly not in the rank of the Bach Goldberg, Beethoven Diabelli or Brahms Handel variations, but find their place more comfortably alongside Glazunov's *Theme and Variations* or Somervell's *Variations for Two Pianos*. Performers, however, aware of the dearth of music for organ and piano duet, should welcome a work which needs no adaptation into their repertoire.

Final Works

Burrows's four last works include three for wind instruments, a medium for which he had previously written little. A Suite for descant recorder and piano was published by Schott in 1955. It was written for Ellen Dryden, a Leicester schoolteacher, pupil of the composer and member of his Victoria Road choir. An attractive work, it has three movements: *Prelude*; *Pastorale*; *Allegro Moderato*. The outer movements are in C while the *Pastorale*, after a brief, ornamental introduction, settles

into the Dorian mode based on D with a return of the introduction as coda. Generally the texture is simple with minimal use of chromatic colour. The Prelude is in 5/4, a favourite tempo of Burrows, with a steady crotchet movement throughout. The two principal ideas, though not especially memorable, are suited to the instrument. The introduction and coda of the Prelude are the most effective passages in the work and recall the slow movements of the *String Quartet* and the *Viola Sonata* in technique, though eschewing their rich harmony. The melodies of the last movement are bright and artless and there is a relaxation of the brisk speed in midstream before the current resumes its onward course and runs to an abrupt end.

In 1957 Burrows obliged the BBC Midland Region with an arrangement of a folksong *I'll tell you of a fellow* for one of their Country Magazine programmes, those delightful broadcasts that enlivened many a Sunday lunch in the 1940's. The song was "taken from Mrs Wilson, near King's Langley, Herts., who had it from a Leicester maidservant. Burrows's arrangement for string quartet and soprano is uncomplicated with, here and there, slight variations in the harmony of the five strophic verses.

For Dennis Mulgan, newly appointed Director of Music at the University of Leicester when it gained its autonomy from the University of London in 1956, Burrows wrote in 1958 a *Theme, Variations and Finale* for oboe and piano. Mulgan had been a professional oboist and the work suits the instrument well. As in the Suite for recorder and piano of three years earlier, there is that cleanness of texture Burrows had acquired, no doubt from his intensive period of folksong setting. The theme indeed has the simplicity of a folk tune and the three variations and finale that treat it retain a character of innocence. *Variation 1* gently develops the 3/4 B flat theme in easy quaver movement divided in duologue between oboe and piano. *Variation 2* is brisker, more vital, with this rhythmic cell  generating much of the interest. A slower, rocking 9/8 variation captures that pastoral sound associated with the oboe from its reedpipe origins. Typical woodwind melismas decorate the melody. Though beginning and ending in B flat (the key of the piece), this third and longest variation moves through B, D minor and A. The *Finale*, which changes from the three-beat rhythm, used hitherto into a duple metre, vividly recalls the texture and techniques of the last movement of the *Viola Sonata* of 1933. The ubiquitous semiquaver pattern is periodically broken by a triplet of crotchets. Again, as in *Variation 3*, there is use of remote keys: B minor, A, E minor and F sharp. Finally, a slower coda in the main key of B flat, and in duple time, restores the original triple time for its last five bars.

Again for Dennis Mulgan, and his new Leicester Wind Quintet,

Burrows wrote his last work. It is a *Quintet* in four movements and was first performed at a concert of wind music for an Overseas Students Vacation Course sponsored by the University of Leicester in 1958. *Dorian Idyll* is the first movement and consists of the interplay of two contrasted themes. The second is a short fugue based on a quixotic subject (Exs 121, 122, 123). An equally brief *Serenade* follows as third movement. Ideas seem to have been somewhat elusive, for Burrows merely repeats his thirty-bar section and appends a three-bar codetta. The last and longest movement, *Rondo*, provides a happy end to this light-hearted work and to Burrows's career as a composer.



Ex 121 *Dorian Idyll* (1st Movement - Wind Quintet)



Ex 122 *Ibid.*



Ex 123 *Ibid.* (2nd Movement - Fugue)

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Since his death, several events have gone some way towards establishing Burrows, the composer. A vital stimulus was given to his emergence by the vital pioneer work of Jane Corbett (née Vowles) and his sister, Grace, in copying scores and parts for housing in the Composers Guild library of the British Music Information Centre. This attempt to build up a complete collection of his works in the late 1960s and early '70s was halted by infirmity and death. Now there is a complete collection housed in the library of the University of Leicester - arguably a more relevant home.

Jane Corbett also initiated several recordings for the Composers Guild library of Ben's songs by two young singers, Caroline Friend and Julian Pike, both of whom were students at the Royal College of Music and have since married and forged well-established professional careers. A historically even more interesting recording is a group of songs which Jane herself made at that time with her husband, Geoffrey Corbett as accompanist. Jane's voice lacks the bloom of youth, but it still possesses great beauty and her highly sensitive interpretations, of great documentary importance, give some small inkling of the impression she must have made on Burrows as a student. It is not surprising that she should have been cast as Vreli for an historic performance of Delius's *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (which, interestingly, included Peter Pears in the chorus) by the Royal College of Music under Sir Thomas Beecham in the 1930s.

Revivals of Burrows's chamber works, those important works that immediately followed the Jane Vowles songs, unheard since the 1940's - except for the performance of the *Violin Sonata* by his sister, Grace, at the memorial concert to Burrows in 1966 - were given on 30 April 1970 by Helen Dalby and the author, (*Sonatina for cello and piano*), and by Susan Brown and the author on the 29 May 1975 (*Violin Sonata*), and 16 February 1978 (*Viola Sonata*). So another aspect of Burrows's distinctive style was revealed. Recordings of the *Violin Sonata* by Grace Burrows and the *Cello Sonatina* by Helen Dalby, both accompanied by the author, are in the Composers Guild library. In addition, Burrows's choral, organ and two-piano works have received regular performances in the United Kingdom and in the USA as may be seen from Appendix III of this book.

The rediscovery of the complete series of the Jane Vowles songs in 1978 led to the first step in bringing Burrows, the songwriter, before a wider public. In 1978 six of his songs were published by Thames Publishing, giving immediate access to this most important aspect of his

Six Songs - Benjamin Burrows (Thames Publishing, London 1978)music. *Melodies of a Midlander*, a lecture-recital, given on 27 February 1978 in the Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, and, in a wider context, in modified versions at the University of Evansville, Indiana, on 11 July of the same year and at the Third British Festival of Music in Bracknell on 20 July 1980, brought a deeper awareness of a unique and distinctive voice in the field of British song.

The performers in these lecture-recitals have included a variety of singers. Two of those in the Leicester performance were local musicians, Vivienne Parker and Michael Freeman, now a professional singer under his professional name of Michael Lessiter, who as students, benefited from the teaching material of Burrows. The Australian, Rosamund Illing, soprano for the Leicester occasion, was later that year winner of the first prize in the Aldeburgh Competition for Young Singers. The fourth singer, American tenor, Dennis Sheppard, notably extended the reputation of Burrows to his own country before his premature death in 1991, and throughout the United Kingdom where he included many of the composer's songs in his recitals. As conductor of choirs in the USA, he has also pioneered Burrows's choral music there. The Evansville soprano, the late Shirley Shepherd, who shared the singing of Burrows's songs in the American performance of *Melodies of a Midlander*, also helped in spreading the composer's reputation to the USA.

The British Music Society has taken several very practical steps towards the resurgence of interest in Burrows and his music. They have undertaken recordings and the publication of books dealing with his music. A lecture-recital, *The Forgotten Composer*, given at Southhill College, Bracknell on the occasion of the Third Festival of British Music, organised by the Society, was one of a series of three promoting the causes of York Bowen, Benjamin Burrows and John Foulds. For the Burrows occasion, the singer was Caroline Friend, whose recording for the Composers Guild library, mentioned above, and this performance at the British Festival lecture-recital, made her a natural choice to share the 1983 recording of songs by Burrows and his pupil, the author, with Dennis Sheppard. This cassette (BMS 403) represented a unique collaboration between the British Music Society and BBC Radio Leicester and set a precedent for future similar collaboration between the Society and other local bodies for the promotion of music by neglected British composers.

The May 1989 issue of the British Music Society's newsletter, NEWS (No. 41) contains an article, *Did you ever hear?* on Burrows's folk-song settings for two-pianos. In 1991 the Society issued the first of its series of monographs (a term used by Burrows of his own Bodnant Press publications dealing with specific aspects of musical education).

This was *Benjamin Burrows and Some of His Poets*, an expansion of notes on certain of his songs detailed briefly in Chapter Three of the current book). In addition, British Song Composer Year (1991-2), in which great efforts were made to promote British Song, culminated in the publication of a book *Aspects of British Song*. This contains a chapter by the author entitled *A Brief Obsession* dealing with the personal and artistic background to the composition of Burrows's Jane Vowles series of songs.

In 1986 a second issue of music by Burrows on cassette appeared and the following article, written for the British Music Society and published in their Newsletter 33, 1987, is of relevance to this venture. Though intended specifically as an encouragement to other local bodies to collaborate with the British Music Society in similar schemes, it appropriately outlines the events leading to the issue of the second cassette and, at the same time, indicates the keen interest of the Society in promoting British music.

GETTING ON THE MUSICAL MAP

The first and most essential need for promoting the cause of local composers is enthusiasm. Unfortunately this is not enough. Organisation, tenacity and - of course - money are also required. A recent event in Leicester typifies an approach that might commend itself to others seeking to spread the gospel on behalf of a local British composer.

The British Music Society was interested enough in the Leicester project to request an article describing it as a possible blueprint for other bodies who might wish to attempt something similar. In such cases, the British Music Society might consider the possibility of entertaining such projects to extend their record catalogue so long as the quality of the music and performance achieved the standard they maintain. The benefits of such collaboration could be considerable: mutually in publicising British music and uniquely to the local reas in helping with publicity, technical advice and assistance in recording and, perhaps in exceptionally outstanding cases, financial aid.

The Leicester project took the dual form of a civic concert in honour of Benjamin Burrows (1891-1966), eminent composer of the city, and a cassette recording of the major item in the concert, Five Psalms for choir and organ, with two organ preludes as additional items, issued in 1986 by Whitetower Records (ENS141). The project was sponsored by

the Music Panel of the Leicester Arts Association who agreed to meet a fixed financial deficit. In fact, this proved unnecessary as the project was financially self-supporting and produced a small surplus.

An auditioned choir was assembled for the occasions and money was raised by two substantial grants from a national building society and a local trust and some forty individual subscriptions of £10 minimum from interested individuals. The co-operation of BBC Radio Leicester in recording and broadcasting the civic concert was a further financial aid and their news items allied to local press reports notably increased public interest.

Interesting side-issues were the naming of a three-and-a-half inch gauge working locomotive:

Benjamin Burrows, D. Mus

by the Lord Mayor, [Councillor Mrs Janet Satchfield] and the siting of a blue plaque by the Leicester City Council outside the studio where Burrows for some thirty years earned his reputation as the most eminent theory teacher in Britain at that time. The naming of the locomotive would have delighted this remarkable precision engineer.

1991 was the centenary of Burrows's birth. A group of Leicester friends and associates of the composer organised two events to mark the occasion. The first, on Sunday, 20 October, Burrows's actual birthdate, was a Service of Thanksgiving at the Central Baptist Church in Leicester, Burrows's home town. Dr Arthur Kirkby, minister of Victoria Road Church during Burrows's twenty year term there as organist and choirmaster, led the service. The normal sermon was replaced by an affectionate tribute from Harold Barton, a friend of the composer and member of his choir for many years. The music included (see Appendix III) was either by Burrows or hymns that he chose for his retirement from Victoria Road Church in 1953 (see Chapter One).

On the following Wednesday evening, a concert of Burrows's music was performed in the Fraser Noble Concert Hall of the University of Leicester on whose music faculty the composer taught for 30 some years. The venue was most appropriate; the complex of rooms surrounding the hall (in Burrows's day, the Edward Wood Hall) are connected to Victoria Church. For part of his working life, Burrows had used several of the rooms, including the hall, as teacher, printer (from his Bodnant Press) and performer.

The music chosen for the occasion ranged widely across Burrows's vocal, chamber and piano music (see Appendix III for the programme). Michael Jones, the pianist, reviewing the concert in *British Music*

Society News 52 (December 1991) wrote:

It is a rare and fascinating experience to attend a concert where one has never before heard a single note of a particular composer... I must say that I was not reminded of any other composer through the entire evening. Burrows's style is richly romantic but not of the pastoral-modal school, nor of intellectual/eclectic trend, but of a highly intuitive and sensitive lyricism with a notable harmonic originality...

Both sonatas, [Violin and Viola Sonatas with Piano] though well-structured, were not exceedingly long (on average 20 minutes each) ... nevertheless I suspect that we will think of Burrows as a miniaturist of distinction, rather than a large-scale composer of broad symphonic utterance.

*Extraordinary it must be by anybody's standards to create 93 songs in 21 months, and all for one singer, Jane Vowles - pupil of the composer during that brief period in the 1920s; one thinks of Schumann's 'song-year' with its not entirely unconnected parallels (except that Burrows was married by this time) and the general fertility of a Schubert or Kilpinen. Two groups of songs were sung at the concert with real personality and clear beauty of voice by Catherine Martin ... the four Robert Burns songs were of a lighter, more immediate style and could well be popular on more frequent hearings, but I preferred the deeper and more dramatic settings of Walter de la Mare, particularly *Queen Djenira* and *Mistress Fell*, the former for its rich and colourful evocation of an eastern 'sultry noon', notable in the delicate melodic notes picked out in the arpeggio piano figurations, and the latter for its dramatic recitative declamation of a maiden on the verge of insanity, its climax being particularly effective. It was on the strength of these performances that I bought a copy of the cassette BMS 403 which contains these songs.*

*James Walker gave musically authoritative and accomplished performances of several piano works, including three of *Twelve Studies*¹ (not those issued by Augener) and here I was pleased to see that Burrows was very much a pianist at heart. Apparent though this was in his songs, his piano works are most skilfully written in their clarity of imagination without being heavy. The concert actually started with the *Sonata for Violin and Piano**

¹ Subsequently, Michael Jones (the writer here) has included performances of several of the studies in concerts at the University of Leicester and at the Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery.

of 1929 - a one-movement work in three sections with a key relationship of the tritone: E minor - B flat major - E minor. The violin part is more overtly lyrical than virtuosic, the piano part is very economical in texture, yet most effective musically and I was struck by some individual cadences, particularly at the end of the jig-like finale - a C major chord with bass B to the tonic. The Sonata for viola and piano of 1932/3 inhabited a darker world, no doubt more suited to this particular instrument. Three separate movements this time with the key relationship of A flat - E major (with strong leanings to C# minor) and back to A flat. The emotional centre is clearly the second movement, starting with piano chords held against the viola's lyrical recitative; this unfolded into a very beautiful movement with an original cadence of notes A flat-D-G over bass B flat resolving to E major. The finale was considerably lighter in mood with lively semiquaver figuration predominant in the piano part - it seemed more in the nature of a scherzo with a dangerously flippant ending and I was left with the impression that one needed to return to the mood of a more substantial finale to balance the work. Nevertheless, both sonatas deserve more frequent performance... All in all a concert well worth all the effort, and Burrows's music deserves more serious consideration by a discerning audience.

This centenary concert was recorded by the British Music Society (see Discography in Appendix I). Derek Downes of the music department of the University of Durham reviewed the recording :

...There must be many who know [Burrows] through his correspondence courses, and although these marked him out as a technician of skill and insight, I (a former student for a short while) was totally unprepared for the quality of the music on this tape.

... The piano pieces I felt were not in the same league as the songs and sonatas. Their effectiveness seemed to vary in inverse ratio to their length with the Leicester Tune providing a warmly romantic opening, and the rather mawkish Rumba and Tango becoming a little tedious especially when one recalls similar party pieces by Walton and Warlock.

The songs are quite another matter, falling into two groups: settings of de la Mare and D G Rossetti, and shorter works by Burns... The composer reacts well to verse with a strong dramatic element and Mistress Fell (de la Mare) is not only the longest song in the selection, but quite the most gripping item on the whole cassette - a full-blooded operatic 'scena' using the full range

of the voice and an almost Wagnerian array of leit-motifs. The four Burns settings, all are short (none more than 1'30"!) and show Burrows as a composer well able to express a mood with the minimum of musical strokes: the most attractive of these is Somebody which has an ingratiating, slightly syncopated line...

The Violin Sonata of 1929 (just after the songs) is in the style of the Cobbett "fantasy" much in vogue between the wars: its three connected movements are clearly-defined but linked by thematic cross-references, and the piece is one which can be heard again and again with increasing pleasure - a real gem in my opinion. The Viola Sonata (written four years later) has a broader design, and perhaps because of this does not have the same impact. It is interesting that the more compact and integrated forms of instrumental music seem to appeal to Burrows's muse, but that he is equally at home in large- and small-scale songs. The notes accompanying the tapes are admirably full of detail unobtainable elsewhere. I hope we may hear more of Burrows's music on record before long.

On 9 April 1992, at the Lidiard Theatre, Darlington, in a concert of British songs, Teresa Troiani, accompanied by Eileen Bown, included three of Burrows's songs: *Three Cherry Trees* (de la Mare), *Cam' ye by* and *The dusty miller* (both by Burns). Later in the year she repeated these, this time accompanied by the author, on 15 October in the Bede Tower of Sunderland University.

The Leicester singers Catherine Martin, soprano, and her husband, Stephen Holloway, bass-baritone have also made a considerable contribution to the promotion of Burrows's songs : Catherine in the aforementioned centenary concert and both of them in recitals at (details of London) and the Belvoir room of the University of Leicester (see Appendix III).

On 5 July, at the annual Hoylandswaine Festival, Elizabeth Charlesworth, soprano and Festival Organiser, and the author gave an illustrated lecture on Burrows's songs as part of a programme of musical, literary and fine arts events centred around early twentieth century British creative artists.

In October 1996, in commemoration of the centenary of the publication of A E Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, Bromsgrove Concerts and the Housman Society presented a programme of concerts primarily centred on settings of the poems of Housman. The author, sensing the importance of the occasion, sent copies of the Burrows 13 Housman settings to Iain Burnside, one of the artistic directors of the event. A selection of these songs was chosen and presented by William Dazeley,

baritone and Iain Burnside, piano. (See Appendix 3 for details). Some weeks later these were performed by the same artists on BBC Radio 3.

Iain Burnside's interest in Burrows has continued and he has introduced other singers, among Irene Drummond and Roderick Williams to Burrows's songs.

As recently, as this century, the University of Leicester secured a grant from EMMMLAC (East Midlands Libraries and Archives) to produce a handlist of their holdings – the largest in the world – of Burrows's MSS and publications, compiled by S Gribble. Their website may be visited to obtain a copy of this handlist.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/heritage/research/wac_home.shtml

So the recognition of Burrows as a composer continues to grow and the establishment of a bibliography and discography of his music should reinforce his position in British culture. To place in perspective a composer about whom nothing has been written, is to be without the aid of others' formulated views. This is less of a handicap in the case of composers whose music has been widely performed and whose names have been constantly before the public. With one whose work is hardly known and consequently has no reputation, the task is especially difficult. Discussion of others' opinions is impossible at all but the most superficial level. Any comment about Burrows's music that has been received during the writing of this book has been valuable, but little of it based on a broad or detailed awareness of his total output. The ninety-three Jane Vowles songs, in particular, from the most intensely creative period of his career, were known - in toto - only to the composer and Jane and to some extent by her husband, the late Geoffrey Corbett. Though ten of them were published shortly after composition and a further nine by Burrows's own Bodnant Press later, the remainder had little chance of public audition until research brought them to light again.

In his series, *A Century of English Song*, Volume 5, the late John Bishop, published Burrows's setting of *Mistress Fell*, bringing belated attention to possibly the finest of the composer's songs. But even more significant in the re-establishment of Burrows as an important British composer is the Burrows Imprint from Cedric Lee's Green Man Press. This new edition now includes 10 volumes by Burrows. (See Appendix 1).

Burrows's overall style grew out of the late nineteenth-century renaissance of British music. Initially owing much to the Parry-Stanford tradition, it acquired a chromatic content closely associated with such neo-Romantics as Bax, Delius and Ireland, but with a personal attachment to diatonic melody which is never deserted for long. Rhythmically, one

could desire a more inherently athletic spring, rather than the dependence on favoured patterns that tend towards the mannered.

Burrows's skill in the deployment of counterpoint to add interest to the underlying harmony of his texture is one of his most powerful attributes. In comparisons made earlier between Delius and him, it has been intimated that it is in respect of this structural grasp that Burrows scores. Any pianist who has played the keyboard part of Delius's Cello Sonata, for example, would readily appreciate the much greater interest of Burrows's piano part in his Sonatina and Second Sonata for cello and piano. The work has the glow and sensuousness of the Delius and a much greater structural integration between the two players.

Song affords great variety of expression to a composer, and in this field Burrows believed - and often tested this belief - that a songwriter, whom one might not compare with the giants of music, could score a palpable hit. His two *Liederjahre* produced many great songs ranging widely between the narrative-dramatic and the intimate. In this context alone he has earned his right to a place in the company of Gurney, Ireland and Warlock.

Though the music he wrote before 1927 is unlikely to attract much attention these days, there is in the body of folk song settings that he wrote between 1941 and 1954, many an item that should appeal to those who revel in the current revival of the now buoyant, now poignant music of Percy Grainger. And in his later choral works there is a sensitivity to words that will always appeal to choirs who appreciate this vital factor in their music.

The decline in interest that often affects the music of composers, better-known than Burrows, after their death, hardly affected him, who was so unheard in his lifetime. He had no broad base of popularity on which to build. The small stir he created as a composer, largely as a result of his own reluctance for fame, could well have lost any impetus it ever possessed. This attempt to document his life and musical output, at least affords him a chance of continued recognition.

APPENDIX I

Catalogue of Works, Bibliography and Discography

The works listed in this catalogue and discography are, with a few exceptions, available in the library of the University of Leicester. The exceptions are indicated by a letter in the source column which indicates where the work can be traced.

KEY

(The letters refer only to their own specific columns)

Medium		Publisher or Company	
B	Bassoon	A	Augener
Ch	Choir	B	Bodnant Press
Cl	Clarinet	C	Curwen
F	Flute	CR	Cramer
H	Horn	D	Donajowski
O	Organ	O	Oxford University Press
Ob	Oboe	S	Schott
P	Piano	ST	Stainer and Bell
PD	Piano Duet	T	Thames Publishing
2P	Two Pianos		
V	Voice		Abbreviations
2V	Vocal Duet		
Va	Viola	FS	Folk Song Setting
Vc	Violoncello		
Vn	Violin		

Other Sources

D	Daubney, B. B., Summerfields, King Street, Twyford, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE14 2HR
G	Composers Guild Library, 10 Stratford Place, London W1
R	Leicestershire Collection, Reference Library, Bishop Street, Leicester
U	University of London Depository Library, Egham, Surrey

<i>Title</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Publ.</i>	<i>Source</i>
Weep you no more, sad fountains (16th c. Anon.)	V P	?1908		
How Happy for the Wood Birds	V P	1908		
Hear my Prayer (Ps. 143, 1,4)	Ch O	?1910		
Turn Thy Face (Ps. 41 9-11)	V P	?1910		
Mellow Moon of Heaven (Tennyson)	V P	?1910		
Day is Dawning (poet unknown)				
White Rose (poet unknown)	V P	1910		
Psalm 1	Ch	1910		
Sunset (poet unknown)	V P	1910		
There is sweet music here (extract from The Lotos Eaters - Tennyson)	Ch	?1911		
Two Pieces	P Vn Vc	1911		
1 Allegro				
2 Presto				
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis	Ch O	1911		
Two settings : 1 in E flat (unfinished) 2 in G				
Three Trios	P Vn Vc	1911		
1 3/4 in G				
2 Moderato				
3 Presto				
Three Partsongs	Ch	1911		
1 Fain would I change that note (anon.)				
2 Take, O take those lips away (Shakespeare)				
3 Music, when soft voices die (Shelley)				
Prelude	O	1911		
Three Songs	V P	?1912		
1 The Splendour Falls (Tennyson)				
2 There is sweet music here (Tennyson)			A 1917	
3 Song (Alfred Noyes)				
Pieces	P	1912		
1 (Untraced)				
2 (Untraced)				
3 5/4 in F				
4 3/4 in D minor (unfinished)				
Variations on an Original Theme Vn Vn Va Vc		1912		
Seven Chorale Preludes	O	1912		
1 Lord in this Thy Day				
2 Lord, teach me how to pray aright				
3 Lord, Thy word abideth				
4 Forty Days and Forty Nights				

5 Blest are the Pure in Heart			
6 The People that in Darkness Walked			
7 Thou art the Way			
Nocturne	P		D 1913
Pieces	P	1912	
1 3/8 in D flat			
2 4/4 in A (The Close of Day; Country Idylls 1)		A 1922	
3 9/8 in C minor (Summer Night: Country Idylls)		A 1922	
Two Picture-Pieces	P	?1913	
1 Lentamente (Twilight: Two Pictures)			A 1922
2 Allegretto (By the Stream: Two Pictures)			A 1922
Sea	P	?1913	
Four Pieces	P	1913	
1 4/4 in E flat			
2 Presto			
3 Andante			
4 3/8 in A flat			
In Praise of Music (B. Mus. exercise to composer's own selection of poetry)	Ch Orch	1913	U
Six Compositions	P	1913	
1 Nocturne			
2 2/4 in A			
3 2/4 in E minor			
4 Idyll (The Brookside: Country Idylls 5)			A 1922
5 (Untraced)			
6 (Untraced)			
Legend	P	1913	
Three Melodies	P	1913	
1 Andante (Stillness: Three Melodies)			A 1915
2 Allegretto (June Night: Three Melodies)			A 1915
3 Moderato (Consolation: Three Melodies)			A 1915
Lytic Piece 2	Orch	1914	
Lytic Piece 3	Orch	1914	
Dusk	Ch Orch	1914	
Dawn	Ch Orch	1914	
Poem	Orch	1914	
Music, when soft voices die (Shelley)	V P	1914	B 1950
Suite	P	1915	
1 Allegro Moderato (Prelude)			
2 (Untraced)			
3 (Untraced)			
4 6/16 in B			

Prelude	Orch	1915	
Low Sighing Winds (poet unknown)	V P	1915	
Lady of Shalott	Orch	1915	
Lady of Shalott (transcription)	PD	1915	
Oh, Many a Lover (Noyes after Rostand)	V P	1915	
Three Miniatures	Orch	1915	
1 Allegretto			
2 Lento			
3 Vivo			
Siegfried Idyll (Wagner transcription)	O	1915	
Sweet and Low	V P	1916	
Piece (Twelve Studies 1)	P	1916	A 1921
Three Impressions (arrs. of Three Easy Pieces for piano)	O	1916	
Valse 2 (Dance Rhythms 1)	P	1916	A 1919
Two Valses-Caprices (arrs. of Three Valses for piano, Nos. 2 and 3)	Orch	1916	
Minuet (Dance Rhythms 2)	P	1916	A 1919
Lyric	P	?1916	A 1916
Four Lyrics	P	1916	A 1916
1 Andante			
2 3/4			
3 3/4			
4 3/4			
By the Fireside	P		A 1917
1 The Day is Done			
2 Pleasant Visions			
3 Night			
4 Resignation			
5 Lullaby			
Four Preludes	P	?1916	
1 Slow			
2 Allegro			
3 Andante			
4 Allegretto			
Three Songs	V P		A 1917
O Gentle Moon (Shelley)			
There is sweet music here (Tennyson)			
O Happy Lark (Tennyson)			
Second Concert Piece	Vn P	1918	
On Shadowy Waters	Vn P		A 1919
Jig	P		A 1919
Song of Darkness and Light (D. Mus. exercise to composer's own selection of poetry)	Ch Orch	1921	
Twelve Studies in style and expression	?U		
	P		A 1921

Country Idylls	P	A 1922
1 The Close of Day		
2 A Hidden Brook		
3 Woodland Depths		
4 Still Waters		
5 The Brookside		
6 Summer Night		
Two Pictures	P	A 1922
1 Twilight		
2 By the Stream		
Among the Heather	P	A 1923
Summer Musings	P	A 1923
Prelude	O	A 1923
Elegy	O	A 1923
Pastorale	O	A 1923
Postlude	O	A 1923
Prelude	P	A 1924
Intermezzo	P	A 1924
Romance	P	A 1924
Scherzo	P	A 1924
Fugue in F (unfinished)	O	1925
Prelude in F	O	1925
Pictures from The Fairy Queen	P	1925
A Gentle Knight; A Little, Lowly Hermitage; A Grave Personage; A Trickling Stream; A Garden; Sad Shadows; A Jolly Company		
Chimes	P	O 1925
I Moderato		
II Allegretto		
Fancies	P	A 1925
I Moderato		
II Con Moto		
III Poco Allegro		
IV Slow		
V Fast		
Variations on Walsingham 16th c.	P	1926

The Jane Vowles Songs

All ninety-three of the 'Jane Vowles' songs are conveniently available in a complete collection, prepared by the author. The four copies are housed in the following locations:

- 1 Brian Blyth Daubney, Summerfields , King Street, Twyford,
Melton Mowbray, Leics, LE14 2HR
- 2 Composers Guild Library, British Music Information Centre, 10
Stratford Place, London W1
- 3 Pears-Britten Library, The Red House, Aldeburgh, Suffolk
- 4 University of Leicester Library

NOTE: All these songs are for voice and piano unless otherwise stated

Title	Date	Publ.	No.
I am Raftery (Hyde after Raftery)	1.03.27	A 1928	1
The Oaks of Glencree (Synge)	2.03.27	A 1928	2
Yonder see the Morning Blink (Housman)	3.03.27	A 1928	3
When First my Way to Fair (Housman)	4.03.27	A 1928	4
The Long Road (Housman)	5.03.27		5
The Sheep (O'Sullivan) first setting	10. 3.27		6
The Poplars (Housman)	13.03.27		7
The Fairy Fiddler (Hopper)	14.03.27		8
Cradle Song (Colum)	14.03.27		9
The Soldiers (Housman)	25.03.27		10
Grenadier (Housman)	27.03.27		11
Bredon Hill (Housman)	28.03.27		12
Bartholomew (Gale)	30.03.27	C 1928	13
Old Shellover (de la Mare)	31.03.27		14
Moon Song (Conkling)	31.03.27		15
The Half Moon Westers Low (Housman)	5.04.27		16
The Sigh that Heaves the Grasses (Housman)	6.04.27		17
From far, from Eve and Morning (Housman)	9.04.27		18
Is my Team Ploughing? (Housman)	10.04.27		19
The Culprit (Housman)	17.04.27		20
The Oracles (Housman)	20.04.27		21
Cam' ye By (Anon.)	22.04.27	O/B 1928/1951	22
Gone were but the Winter (Cunningham)	22.04.27	ST 1928	23
Gently, Sorrowfully (Turner)	23.04.27		24
Mistress Frances Harris (Swift)	28.04.27		25
V 2Vn Vn Va Vc P	-2.05.27		
Upon Love (Herrick)	11.05.27		26
By the waters of Babylon (Ps. 137)	14.05.27		27
The Olive Branch (Herrick)	15.05.27		28
John of Tours (Rossetti, from the French	22.05.27		29

How should I your true love (Rossetti)	?26.05.27	O/B 1928/1951	30
As Ever I Saw (Anon.)	20.06.27		31
Irish Peasant's Love Song (Atkinson)	23.06.27		32
Lennavanmo (MacLeod)	27.07.27		33
The Blessed Damozel [extract] (Rossetti)	15.10.27		34
2Vn Va Vc P			
Donneycarney (Joyce)	1.12.27		35
My Star (Browning)	9.12.27		36
A Woman's Last Word (Browning)	10.12.27		37
Eppie Adair (Burns)	20.12.27	B	38
Somebody (Burns) V 2Vn Va Vc	23.12.27	B	39
The Dusty Miller (Burns) V 2Vn Va Vc	23.12.27	CR 1929	40
One and Twenty (Burns) V 2Vn Va Vc	24.12.27	B	41
How Long and Dreary (Burns)V 2Vn Va Vc	24.12.27	CR 1929	42
Queen Djenira (de la Mare)	30.12.27	B/T /1978	43
Strings in the Earth and Air (Joyce)	2.01.28		44
Tewkesbury Road (Masefield)	13.01.28		45
Innisfree (Yeats)	17.01.28	T 1978	46
Nocturn (Thompson)	24.01.28		47
Three Cherry Trees (de la Mare)	26.01.28		48
Rachel (de la Mare)	2.02.28	B	49
The Wounded Cupid (Herrick)	10.02.28	B	50
Robin Goodfellow (Anon.)	15.02.87	T 1978	51
I listen for him (Sassoon)	16.02.28		52
Mistress Fell (de la Mare)	17/18.02.28	53	
	B 1949		
Adam lay ybounden (Anon.)	27.02.28	B	54
By the Hearthstone (Newbolt)	2.03.28		55
To Music (Herrick)	13.03.28		56
The Kiss (Anon.)	21.03.28	T 1978	57
A Frosty Night (Graves)	28.03.28		58
Heaven Haven (Hopkins)	3.04.28		59
The Herons (Ledwidge)	5.04.28		60
At Dusk (Fellowes)	9.05.28		61
The Falcon (Anon.)	10.05.28		62
Carol to Our Lady (Anon.)	11.05.28		63
The Forsaken Merman (Arnold)			64
	15/25.06.28		
The Bailey (Anon.)	10.07.28		65
The Sheep (O'Sullivan) second setting	24.07.28		66
Blue Collar (Confucius)	25.06.28		67
The Bride Cometh (Confucius)	26.07.28	T 1978	68
Lines (Li-Po)	30.07.28		69
Postscript (Anstey)	2.08.28		69a
My Glass shall not Persuade (Shakespeare)	6.09.28		70
Weary with Toil (Shakespeare)	7.09.28		71
When in Disgrace (Shakespeare)	10.09.28	B	72
Full Many a Glorious Morning	11.09.28		73

(Shakespeare)			
How heavy do I journey (Shakespeare)	13.09.28		74
Is it Thy Will (Shakespeare)	13.09.28		75
How oft when Thou (Shakespeare)	14.09.28		76
Song (Woods)	26.09.28		77
A Picture (Morris)	28.09.28		78
My Love, O she is My Love (Hyde)	2.10.28		79
Lambs (Tynan)	4.10.28		80
Love was True to Me (Boyle O'Reilly)	10.10.28	T 1978	81
This Weariness and Grief (Hyde)	15.10.28		82
In the Midst of Life (Shorter)	19.10.28		83
The Evening Prayer (Anon. trad.)	1.11.28		84
The Incense Burner (Thomson)	9.11.28		85
The Loyal Lover (Anon. trad.)	20.11.28		86
Mother, I will have a husband	21.11.28		87
(Vautor)			
Sweet Suffolk Owl (Vautor)	21.11.28		88
[Untraced Song]			89
Peggy Mitchell (Stephens)	12.12.28		90
O Youth of the Bound Black Hair	14.12.28		91
(Hyde)			
I must live all alone (Anon. trad.)	1929 (sic)		92
I lie down with God (Hull)	21.12.28		93

END OF LISTING OF THE JANE VOWLES SONGS

Additional Pieces written during this period

Title	Medium	Date	Publ.	Source
Brigg Fair (arr.)	2P	1927		D
O Peter go Ring dem Bells (Spiritual)	V P	1928		D
Deep River (Spiritual)	V P	1928		D
Green Willow (? folk song arr.)	V P	?1928		D

Continuation of Catalogue

Cam' ye By (arr. Song 22)	2V P	1929	B	
Sonata	Vn P	1929	B	
Joseph and Mary (arr.)	V P	1929		D
Come unto Me	Ch	1930	B	
Six Anthems	Ch O	1930		
1 Blest are They			ST 1932	
2 Lord unto us				
3 I to the Hills				
4 O Hear my Prayer				
5 Teach Me, O Lord				
6 Lord, Thou my God				
Out of the Deep	Ch O		ST 1930	

(Ps. 130 first setting)				
Sonatina	Vc P	1930	A 1931	
Sonata 2	Vc P	1931		
Music for Leicester Pageant	1932		R	
String Quartet	Vn Vn Va Vc	1932		
Two Movements	Vn Vn Va Vc	?1932		
Movement 3 (unfinished Sonata 3)	Vc P	1932		
Lord, unto us be Merciful	Ch O	?1932	B	
Air (Song 49, Rachel, transcribed)	O	?1932	B	
When all the Attic Fire was Fled	Ch	1932	A 1933	
(Arne Song transcription)				
Sonata	Va P	1933		
Three Anthems	Ch	1933		
1 Jesu, Meek and Gentle (arr. 1912 version)				
2 Jesu, Meek and Lowly				
3 Jesu, the very Thought of Thee				
Rhapsody	2P	1934		D
Intermezzo	2P	1934	B 1949	
Sonata	P	1934	B 1941	
Rhapsody (No. 3 of 5 Psalms)	Ch O	1934	B 1947	
Accompaniments (Studies for Violin by Grace Burrows)	(Vn) P		A 1935	
Fugue (Buxtehude arr.)	2P	1934		D
Five Psalms	Ch O	1934	B 1947	
Prelude (Organ Solo)		- 1936		
1 God is Our Help and Strength (Ps. 46)				
2 Out of the Deep (Ps. 130 second setting)				
Hymn: Covenanters (arr, with two descants)				
3 The Lord's my Shepherd (Ps. 23 metrical version)				
4 By the Waters of Babylon (Ps. 137)				
5 When Israel came out of Egypt (Ps. 114)				
Let my prayer come before Thee	Ch	1935		
The Day draws on	Ch O	1936		
Accompaniments (Studies for Violin by Grace Burrows)	(Vn) P		A 1936	
Hear my Prayer	Ch	?1936	B	
Three Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving Ch O	1937	B		
1 Te Deum				

2 Benedictus

3 Benedicite

Three Anthems

Ch O

1938

B

1 Her Foundations are upon
Thy Holy Hill (Ps. 82 1,5)2 I was Glad when they said
unto Me (Ps. 122 1-7)3 The Hill of Sion is a Fair
Place (Ps. 2-3, 11-14)Music for the Communion
Service

Ch

1939

B

Blessed be He

Ch

B

Three in One and One in Three

Ch O

B

Under the Rose (folk song arrs.)

PD

B 1941

1 Under the Rose

2 The Northumbrian Bagpipes

3 The Beggar Boy

4 Gossip Joan

Piano Duets (folk song arrs.)

PD

B 1941

1 Shropshire Round

2 I'm seventeen come Sunday

3 The Broom

Deus Misereatur

Ch O

B 1942

Victoria Road (hymn tune)

Ch

B

Responses for Morning Service

Ch

B

Two Anthems

Ch

B

1 Sweet Day, so Cool (George
Herbert)2 Now God be with Us (Petrus
Herbert)A Little Anthem Book (ed.
Burrows)

Ch

B 1940

Thy Mercy, O Lord (Ps. 36 5-7)

Kathleen Crompton

O Lord, Support us (Cardinal
Newman) Henry Coleman

Before the ending of the Day

(transl. J.M.Neale) George Gray

He Came all so Still (15th c.
carol) C.T.Groves

Praise waiteth for Thee, O God

(Ps. 65 1-4) H.W.J.Cousen

Shew us Thy Mercy, Lord

(?words) T.H.Ross

Under the Silence of the Stars

(G.F.Bradby) T.H.Croxall

Come My Way, My Truth, My

Life (George Herbert) Clifford

Harker

They that Wait upon the Lord

(?words) Ernest Dawes

Grant, O Lord (words from a
collect) Donald J.Hughes

Organ Transcriptions	O			B
Rondeau (Couperin)				
Alla marcia (Couperin Les matelots provençales)				
Minuet - March - Minuet (Purcell)				
Three Minuets (arrs. of John Stanley)	O			B
Two Folk Tunes (arr.)	O			B
1 A Young Serving-Man				
2 (untitled)				
Five Little Pieces (ed.)	Hpschd			B
[reprinted from MS c. 1780 discovered by Burrows in a Leicester Bookshop]				
Seven Chorale Preludes (Set 1)	O			B
1 Rhosymedre				
2 Christus der ist				
3 Leoni				
4 Moriah				
Seven Chorale Preludes (Set 2)	O			B
5 Irish				
6 Martyrdom				
7 Southwell				
Folk Song Settings	String Orch	1943		
Under the Rose; The Beggar Boy; Northumbrian Bagpipes; Shropshire Round				
Georgie; Banks of the Clyde; A Young Serving-Man; Gossip Joan				
Folk-Song Settings	2P	1944 - 1945		B
1 Under the Rose				
2 The beggar Boy				
3 Admiral Benbow				
4 The Northumbrian Bagpipes				
5 The Broom				
6 Shropshire Round				
7 I'm seventeen come Sunday				
8 Banstead Down				
9 The Banks of the Clyde				
10 A Young Serving-Man				
11 Gossip Joan				
Rumba	2P	1944		B 1954
My Johnny was a Shoemaker(FS 12)	2P	1945		B 1954
Prelude	String Orch	1945		
Valse in E flat	P	1946		
Tango	P	1946		B 1946
Folk Tune (A Young Serving- Man)	P	1946		
God that Madest Earth and	Ch O	1946		B 1946

Heaven

O Waly Waly (FS 13)	2P	1946	B 1950	
Twelve Studies		P	1947	
1 Prelude in E flat				
2 Rumba in D			B 1948	
3 Chanson in A flat				
4 Vespers in C			B 1948	
5 Marionettes in B				
6 Autumn in A				
7 Paradies in G			B 1948	
8 Censers in F sharp			B 1948	
9 Cradle Song in D flat				
10 Musical Box in E				
11 March in E				
12 Arabesque in B flat				
Shackley Hay (FS 14)		2P	1946	B 1954
Five Valses (Numbers 2 and 5)		2P - 1948	1947 B 1949	D
Cold Blows the Wind (FS 15)		2P		B 1950
Three Dukes (FS 16)	2P	1947	B	
A Leicester Tune and Offshoots (Tune 1)	P	?1948		
In This World (Herrick)	Ch		B 1948	
Variations on an Original Theme	O P	1948	B 1948	
Seven First Pieces	O		B 1948	
Captain Grant (FS 17)	2P		B 1948	
Did you ever (FS 18) (The Beggar's Opera)	2P		B 1948	
Greensleeves (FS 19)	2P		B 1949	
Peas, Beans, Oats and the Barley (FS 20)	2P	1950	B 1950	
The Trees They are So High (FS 21)	2P	1950	B 1950	
Eggs in Her Basket (FS 22)	2P		B 1950	
The Thresherman and the Squire (FS 23)			B 1950	
The Spanish Lady (FS 24)	2P		B 1950	
Three Fugues	2P	1951	B 1952	
1 Allegro in C				
2 Pastorale in A				
3 Andante in B				
Three Irish Airs	2P	1952	B 1952	
1 Yemon o'Knock				
2 Drimen Duff				
3 The Irish Cry				
Were I the Wind (Welburn)	V P	1953	B 1953	
Three Scottish Airs	2P	1954	B 1954	
1 Mary Scott				

2 Corn Riggs are Bonny			
3 Through the Wood			
Three Welsh Airs	2P	1954	B 1954
1 The Tavern hath Two Doors			
2 Sweet Song			
3 Lullaby			
Suite in C	R P		S 1955
I Prelude: Moderato			
II Pastorale: Slow			
III Allegro Moderato			
I'll tell you of a Fellow	V Vn Vn		
(Folk Song arr.)	Va Vc	1957	
Quintet	Fl O Cl H B	1958	
1 Dorian Idyll			
2 Fugue			
3 Serenade			
4 Rondo			
Theme, Variations and Finale	Ob P	1958	
Three Pieces	Vc O	1961	
1 Slow			
2 Dorian Idyll			
3 A Young Serving-Man			

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 'Did you ever hear?' (BMS NEWS 41, p. 30, May 1989) Brian Blyth Daubney
 Benjamin Burrows and Some of His Poets, Brian Blyth Daubney (BMS Monograph 1, 1991, ISBN 1 870536 06 1)
 'A Brief Obsession' (Aspects of British Song), Brian Blyth Daubney (BMS 1992 ISBN 1 870536 09 6)

DISCOGRAPHY

Songs of Benjamin Burrows (BMS 403)

How should I your True Love know? (*D G Rossetti); At Daybreak (Siegfried Sassoon)*; Bredon Hill (A E Housman); Queen Djenira; Rachel*; Mistress Fell* (Walter de la Mare) The Dusty Miller* (Burns); The Oracles (A E Housman); I lie down with God* (Eleanor Hull); Mother, I will have a Husband* (Thomas Vautor); Love was True to me* (J Boyle O'Reilly); The Bailey* (anon.); Sonnet XXXIII (Shakespeare); Lake Isle of Innisfree (Yeats); The Bride Cometh* (anon.); The Wounded Cupid* (Herrick); Lennavanmo* (Fiona Macleod); The Kiss* (anon.); Sweet Suffolk Owl* (Vautor);

(and five songs by his pupil, Brian Blyth Daubney

Because I could not stop for Death (Dickinson); i thank you God (cummings); The Silken Tent (Frost); Autumn Sonnet (T Garth Waite); The Sip of Rio (de la Mare)

*Caroline Friend (soprano)
Dennis Sheppard (tenor)
Brian Blyth Daubney (piano)

Choral and Organ Music by Benjamin Burrows (ENV 026 orig. ENS 141)

Chorale Preludes: Martyrdom; Irish
Five Psalms

The Burrows Choir;
Peter White (organ)
Brian Blyth Daubney (conductor)
Leicester Music 88: Choral Music by Leicester Composers
(including Te Deum, Benjamin Burrows)

The Burrows Choir
Jacqueline Parker, soprano
Brian Blyth Daubney, conductor

All items available from:

British Music Society, c/o Mr Stephen Trowell
7 Tudor Gardens, Upminster, Essex RM14 3DE

APPENDIX II

Testimonies to Benjamin Burrows

The following comments about Benjamin Burrows were written by colleagues, friends and pupils in response to the author's request. They are included to corroborate statements made in the book as well as for general interest.

In view of his close friendship and long association with Burrows, Dr Gordon Slater's tribute is left until last. It is especially valuable as a pertinent summary of the man and musician whom he knew and respected for so long. The other testimonies are listed author-alphabetically.

Letter of 16 March 1978 from:

Clifford Harker, Organist and Master of the Choristers, Bristol Cathedral; conductor of Bath Choral and Orchestral Society and Bristol Choral Society

For several years I had correspondence lessons with [Burrows] and then during the short time I was organist at Rugby Parish Church I used to travel to Leicester for lessons. He was of course one of the finest teachers in the country and his filing system of fugue subjects, counter-subjects and solutions to every conceivable musical problem was quite remarkable.

Letter of 4 March 1977 from:

Rev. Dudley Hill, Vicar of Fulford, Yorkshire

[Burrows] was a marvellous teacher, as his successes show. A few words from him verbally or scrawled on an exercise, were worth books of others! He could be severe and encouraging at once, which I think is not common.

Letter of 4 March from:

Francis Jackson, York Minster

I am glad to hear that you are working on the life and music of Ben Burrows. He was absolutely first-class in directing my energies into the

first D. Mus. exam at Durham in the most economical way, as I am sure you know only too well. I have cause to be very grateful for his help.

Letter of 24 November 1976 from:

William Lovelock, composer, author, teacher:

I am very interested in your project about our old friend Ben Burrows. I only met him personally on two occasions, once when I induced him to come to London for the annual dinner of the UGM... and once when I spent a day with him in Leicester just before I sat the papers of the D. Mus. As you will expect, I found him both helpful and hospitable.

I started work with Ben in May 1931 on the advice of Kitson, anticipating taking the papers in December 1932; however he decided that I was capable of being prepared by the end of 1931 and we covered what was really a two-year course in six months... He was, as you know, unsurpassed in his type of work and his systematisation was brilliant. When I came to undertake a lot of degree preparation, especially after the war at Trinity College, I adopted an exactly similar system... and it worked like a charm...

What used to amaze me was the speed at which he could work... I don't think I could have emulated what he did at the D. Mus., submitting TWO workings of the eight-part papers! I gather it staggered the examiners more than somewhat.

As a London teacher and examiner, Dr Lovelock was well-placed to have heard what must have become a legendary reminiscence.

Ben's hobbies were amazingly wide in scope, and apt to be alarmingly erudite. At one time he was, I believe, interested in some branch of biology and I casually enquired how it was going. "Oh, I've given that up - my interests are now Relativity and Diatoms." No doubt he had a fantastic brain and I always felt it was a pity that he was more or less stuck in a sort of backwater.

Letter of 1 September 1977 from:

Eric Pask, Enfield Parish Church

Although I never met (Burrows), I feel that I know him well through his connection with my first master E. Percy Hallam of St Edmundsbury Cathedral and through his music.

A nonconformist organist in Leicester, Ben Burrows ran the best-known music correspondence course. I used this for a while and he was

highly organised and successful. On one of my later visits to EPH, Ben had sent him some suggestions, for comment, for changes to his books and handouts resulting from syllabus alterations. BB kept in touch with people around the country and seems to have been greatly liked.

Letter of 7 September 1977 from :

John Russell, RCM teacher and adjudicator

I was a correspondence pupil of (Ben Burrows) in the late 1940's, and we got on very well by post! Then once when I was playing in Leicester I called on him and found him quite delightful company with his enthusiasms for clocks and watches and home-grown tobacco. I was then a piano duo with Muriel Bowman-Smith and he never failed to send us copies of his two-piano music. I think we played it all, especially the one he inscribed to us - The Thresherman and the Squire... I liked working with him enormously and his music is so fastidiously well put together and imaginative.

Letter of 29 November 1978 from:

Neil Sutherland, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

I really think [Burrows] had a genius for predicting the kind of questions one could expect the board at London University to pose. I can remember a feeling of being 'drilled' in a very quiet and efficient way for that moment in life when you face the manuscript paper, and must write a reasonable fugue within a three hour time span. I think his genius as a teacher, and I do not use that overworked word lightly, was a straightforward ability to eradicate that kind of fuzzy, romantic thinking that is common amongst teenage would-be composers, and put you on tracks that may have appeared straight-laced at the time, but which gave you in the long run a true feeling for music's 'grammar', and most important of all they were tracks that led me right through the examinations. Later on, when I went to Cambridge, I lost completely the ability to deal successfully with examinations, mostly because my teacher there insisted on talking about life rather than parallel fifths. Perhaps they seemed more enjoyable at the time, but now, it is Ben's teaching I remember because he did the basic thing - he taught me how to use my brain in an organised, disciplined way. This kind of teaching extends beyond the specific. I would say without question that though I no longer have anything specific to do with music, Ben's teaching ultimately gave

me ability to think through most things, apply logic, and, I must say, earn a living!

I remember him with great affection and respect. I didn't realise at the time, but he was an enormous influence in my life. He was both an eccentric and a self-disciplinarian. He was an 'achiever'.

Letter of March 1977 from:

Allan Wicks, Canterbury Cathedral

I did several courses with Ben Burrows, but never met him. He was indispensibly helpful and got me through my F.R.C.O. with no trouble at Ben's minute script posed problems for all his pupils. On close analysis it shows his characteristics of directness and economy. I think his notes were among the most terse and helpful that I have ever come across.

Letter of 23 November 1976

Gordon Slater, Lincoln Minster

[Burrows] was ... a fine organ recitalist, and his programmes always reflected a wide and learned knowledge of the repertoire...

One very valuable aspect of his work was the training of musicians for degrees and diplomas. He used correspondence methods so that his very long list of successes includes names from all over the United Kingdom many who became well known occupying important positions and acknowledging the thorough training they had received from Dr Burrows. His influence has continued through those who worked under his guidance and he is remembered as one of the finest teachers of his times. One cannot speak too highly of his modesty, his integrity and of his expertise in all he undertook, and of his very high musical attainments as a performer, teacher and composer.

APPENDIX III

Concerts of Music by Benjamin Burrows

The concerts listed in this appendix are a selection

Major Events

29 October 1966 Victoria Road Church, Leicester

A Memorial Tribute

DR BEN BURROWS 1891-1966

Irish, Rhosymedre; Christus der ist; Leoni

John Cooper (organ)

Drop, Drop Slow Tears; Hear my Prayer, O Lord

Combined Choir: Jack Griffin (conductor)

Sonata in F sharp (1st movement)

Clare Costelloe (piano)

O Happy Lark; How should I your true love know? Eppie Adair; There is

Sweet Music Here; When I am One-and Twenty

Rhiannon Davies (soprano), Frederick Allt (piano)

Ben Burrows: Friend and Musician

A Spoken Tribute by George Gray

Martyrdom; Moriah; Southwell

John Cooper (organ)

Somebody; Music, when Soft Voices Die; Queen Djenira;

When First My Way to Fair I Took; I am Raftery

Harry Shaw (baritone), Frederick Allt (piano)

Leicester Tunes 1; Tango; Jig

Clare Costelloe (piano)

Lament and Gigue

Jennifer Boston (viola)

Ellen Dryden (piano)

Jesu, Meek and Lowly; The Hill of Sion*

Combined Choir: Jack Griffin (conductor)

*George Measures (tenor)

Sonata in One Movement

Grace Lee (violin)

Terence Dwyer (piano)

27 February 1978 Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester

*11 July 1978 Wheeler Concert Hall, University of
Evansville, Indiana

Melodies of a Midlander

a lecture-recital

*How should I your True Love know? *Bredon Hill; *Queen Djenira;
The Bailey; *The Kiss; *Mistress Fell; The Poplars; Old Shellover; *The
Oracles; *Lennavanmo; *The Dusty Miller; *The Bride Cometh; *Robin
Goodfellow; *Lake Isle of Innisfree;

Rosamund Illing and *Shirley Pyle (sopranos) Vivienne Parker
(contralto)

*Dennis Sheppard (tenor) Michael Freeman (baritone)
Robert Wright (reader) *BBD (speaker and piano)

20 July 1980: 3rd Festival of English Music, Bracknell

The Forgotten Composer: Ben Burrows

The Dusty Miller; Cam' ye by; Lennavanmo; The Bailey beareth the Bell
away;

My Ghostly Father; Sweet Suffolk Owl; Mother, I will have a Husband;
I listen for him; Rachel; I lie down with God; Mistress Fell

Caroline Friend (soprano), BBD (piano and speaker)

20 October 1991 Central Baptist Church, Leicester

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

A Service of Thanksgiving

for Benjamin Burrows October 20 1891- 28 January 1966

Music by Burrows

Choral: Introit: Drop, drop, slow tears; Anthem: The Hill of Sion+; Psalm
30: Out of the Deep*=

Songs: I am Raftery*; Is my team ploughing?*; Bartholomew; Lake Isle
of Innisfree

Piano Music: Leicester Tunes No. 1

Organ Music: Martyrdom; Moriah (Seven Chorale Preludes)

Congregational: Psalm Chant (unnamed)

Dr Arthur Kirkby (officiating Minister)

Jack Griffin Singers c. Jack Griffin

=Richard Archer (organ)

*Allan Hodder (baritone)

Marion Horsburgh (soprano)

Derek Nurse (tenor)

BBD (piano)

23 October 1991 Fraser Noble Concert Hall, University of Leicester
A Centenary Concert

Sonata for Viola and Piano; Sonata for Violin and Piano

Kenneth Page, violin and viola

James Walker, piano

Leicester Tunes 1; Rumba, Autumn, Arabesque (Twelve Studies); Tango

James Walker, piano

How should I your true love know; Queen Djenira; Three Cherry Trees

Mistress Fell; Cam' ye by; One and twenty; Somebody; The Dusty

Miller

Catherine Martin, soprano

BBD, piano

General Concerts

12 March 1951 University College, Leicester

Eggs in her Basket; Greensleeves; Gossip Joan;

Captain Grant; The Thresherman and the Squire;

The Three Dukes; Did you ever hear?

Benjamin Burrows and BBD (pianos)

May 1951 Bishop Street Church, Leicester

Variations on an Original Theme

Philip Lank (organ) and BBD (piano)

18 June 1951 University College, Leicester

Cold Blows the Wind; O Waly Waly; Under the Rose;

The Young Serving-Man; Intermezzo

Philip Lank and BBD (pianos)

25 November 1955, Robert Pattinson School, North Hykeham, Lincs.

O Waly Waly; Eggs in Her Basket; Greensleeves; Gossip Joan

Joyce Dixon and BBD (pianos)

9 May 1957 Robert Pattinson School, North Hykeham, Lincs.

Valse 2; Intermezzo; Rumba

Jean Buckley and BBD (pianos)

24 April 1958 Robert Pattinson School, North Hykeham, Lincs.

Three Fugues

Jean Straw and BBD (pianos)

30 April 1970 City of Leicester College of Education
Sonatina

Helen Dalby (cello), BBD (piano)

29 May 1975 City of Leicester College of Education
Sonata

Susan Brown (violin), BBD (piano)

13 June 1976 St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, Lincs.

14 June 1976 Bishop Street Church, Leicester

Music by Benjamin Burrows

*Te Deum

Rhosymedre; Christus der Ist; Martyrdom; Moriah; Leoni

*Five Psalms

*Combined Choirs City of Leicester College of Education and Grantham

*Philip Lank (organ)

*BBD (conductor)

26 January 1978 Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft, Leics.

Brigg Fair (transcription)

Campbell McQueen and BBD (pianos)

*16 February 1978 Leicester Polytechnic, Leicester

18 February 1978 North Kesteven School, North Hykeham, Lincs.

22 February 1978 Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft, Leics.

24 February 1978 Technical College, Loughborough, Leics.

26 February 1978 Harlaxton Manor, Grantham, Lincs.

Bredon Hill; Robin Goodfellow; Queen Djenira; Lake Isle of Innisfree;

*Sonata for Viola and Piano

Dennis Sheppard (tenor), BBD (piano)

*Susan Brown (viola), BBD (piano)

Melodies of a Midlander

4 March 1978 St Wulfram's Church, Grantham, Lincs.

13 March 1978 Harlaxton Manor, Grantham, Lincs.

20 March Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft, Leics.

31 March 1978 Sam Newsum Music Centre, Boston, Lincs.

John of Tours; Peggy Mitchell; The soldiers; Tewkesbury Road

Dennis Sheppard (tenor), BBD (piano)

6 February 1980 Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft, Leics.

Gossip Joan; O Waly Waly; Eggs in Her Basket

Ronald Reah and BBD (pianos)

5 October 1980 Wheeler Concert Hall, University of Evansville, Indiana
British Music of the Midlands

1. Prelude and Psalm 46 (Five Psalms)
2. Seven Shakespeare Sonnets
3. Variations on an Original Theme
4. Psalms 137 and 114

1 and 4 University of Evansville Choir, Sara Johnson (organ), BBD
(conductor)

2 Dennis Sheppard (tenor), BBD (piano)

3 Douglas Reed (organ), BBD (piano)

12 October 1980 Lander College, Greenwood, South Carolina
Seven Shakespeare Sonnets

Dennis Sheppard (tenor), BBD (piano)

29 June 1982 Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft Campus

Rhapsody; Rumba; Welsh Lullaby

Ronald Reah and BBD (pianos)

15 February 1983 Harlaxton College, Grantham, Lincs.

22 February 1983 Sam Newsum Music Centre, Boston, Lincs.

27 February 1983 Stoneygate Baptist Church, Leicester

Bredon Hill; Innisfree; Queen Djenira

Dennis Sheppard (tenor), BBD (piano)

18 April 1986 Bishop Street Church, Leicester

Music for Choir and Organ

The Hill of Sion; Drop, drop, slow tears; Four Chorale Preludes

Three Chorale Preludes; Five Psalms

The Burrows Choir

Peter White (organ)

Elizabeth Cox (soprano)

Michael Hewett (tenor)

Jeremy Hagan (bass)

BBD (conductor)

9 April 1992 Lidiard Theatre, Darlington

Three Cherry Trees (de la Mare);

Cam' ye by and The dusty miller (Robert Burns)

Teresa Troiani (soprano)

Eileen Bown (piano)

17 June 1992 Haldane Room, University College, London
[Oxford and Cambridge Music Club Concert]

*The Poplars (Housman); *The Culprit (Housman); *Grenadier
(Housman)

*My glass shall not persuade me I am old (Shakespeare); +How should I
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(Burns)

+Catherine Martin (soprano)

*Stephen Holloway (bass-baritone)

Christopher Reynolds (piano)

15 October 1992 Bede Tower, Sunderland University.

Three Cherry Trees (de la Mare);

Cam' ye by and The dusty miller (Robert Burns)

Teresa Troiani (soprano)

BBD (piano)

28 April 1993 Charles Wilson Music Room, University of Leicester

Twelve Studies:

Vespers; Musical Box; Cradle Song; March

Michael Jones (piano)

17 November 1993 Belvoir Room, University of Leicester

How should I your true love know? (Rossetti); Queen Djenira and

Mistress Fell (de la

Mare); When I am one-and twenty, Somebody and The Dusty Miller
(Burns) (soprano)

The Poplars; The Culprit; Grenadier; Sonnet XXII (bass-baritone)

Catherine Martin (soprano)

Stephen Holloway (bass-baritone)

BBD (piano)

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(ed. Burrows)

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O Lord, Support us (Cardinal Newman) Henry Coleman,
Before the ending of the Day (transl. J.M.Neale) George Gray,
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Praise waiteth for Thee, O God (Ps. 65 1_4), H.W.J.Cousen
Shew us Thy Mercy, Lord (?words) T.H.Ross,
Under the Silence of the Stars

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Come My Way, My Truth, My Life (George Herbert) Clifford Harker
They that Wait upon the Lord (?words) Ernest Dawes

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Blest are they

Blessed be He
Come unto me

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2 Out of the Deep (Ps. 130 second setting)

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3 The Lord's my Shepherd (Ps. 23 metrical version)

4 By the Waters of Babylon (Ps. 137)

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