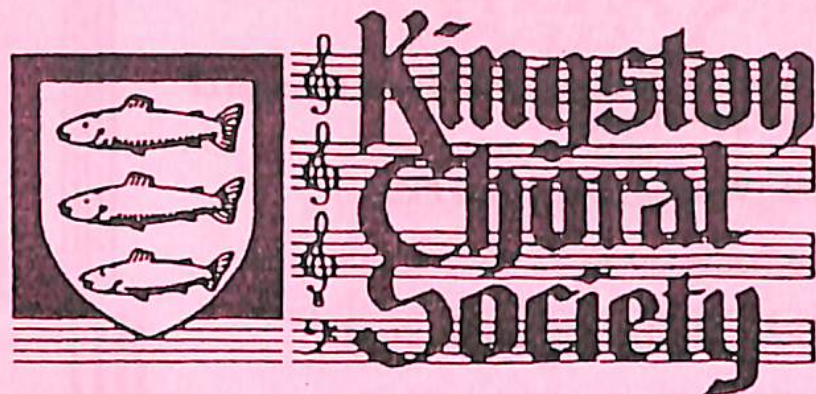




15 July 1995

KINGSTON PARISH CHURCH



A Summer Serenade of Music

featuring Gustav Holst, Percy Grainger
and popular songs of the 1930s and 1940s

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Our heartfelt thanks to our rehearsal accompanist, Andrew Massey.

Wine is available in the interval in exchange for tickets which must be bought before the concert starts. Fruit juice will also be sold.

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Summer serenade 1995

A concert of classical and popular songs

Conductor **Robin Page**
Piano **Helen Crayford**

Saturday 15 July

PROGRAMME

Holst
Dream Tryst
Ye little birds
Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee
Come to me

Ireland *
In a May morning

Grainger
Mo Nighean Dhu
O Mistress mine
Six Dukes went a-fishing
Mary Thompson

Grainger *
Irish tune for County Derry
Shepherds hey

Handle
Mater vetus Hubbardia
De sex denariis cantemus

INTERVAL

Summer serenade Part two

Confrey *

Kitten on the keys

Gershwin *

The man I love
I got rhythm

Kern

Smoke gets in your eyes
The way you look tonight

Kern *

All the things you are

Porter

Let's do it

Youmans

Tea for two

Arr. Garland

In the mood

* Piano solo

Gustav Holst (1874-1934).

British but of German descent - the family were professional musicians who settled in Cheltenham at the end of the 18th century - Gustav Holst was Director of Music at St Paul's Girl School from 1905 until his death. In composing, he achieved his greatest successes with the orchestral suite *The Planets* (1914-16) followed by *The Hymn of Jesus* (1917). However, the unfortunate coincidence of poor eyesight and painful neuritis in the arm, resulted in a musical style that was pared to the bone: the effort of writing compelled an artistic

economy which many found too austere. This prevented Holst's work from achieving general popularity throughout his life, though he succeeded in a more lyrical vein with the orchestral landscape 'Egdon heath' (1927) and his song settings of the late 1920s. Some of his most powerful and characteristic music was in his choral works such as the 'Choral Fantasia'. After his death, he was recognized firstly as a teacher of genius but latterly also as a composer who pre-figured much that was found to be admirable in the works of Britten and Tippett.

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John Ireland (1879-1962)

As a composer, John Ireland was always much attracted to Celtic legend and history, and he favoured a style relating both to English folk song and Tudor music. Apart from his songs, such as *Sea fever* (1913), he also wrote a Concerto, Sonata, choral and chamber works; and taught Benjamin Britten at the Royal College of Music.

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)

Australian-born, Percy Grainger came to London as a concert pianist, where he developed his interest in ethnic music, joining the English Folk Song Society in 1905. Over the next ten years he collected, transcribed and recorded over 500 English songs which appeared in his British Folk Music Settings. Grainger is so strongly associated with English folk music that it is a surprise to learn that he then left Britain for good. He spent the remainder of

his life in New York, teaching music and making occasional folk song collecting forays such as one to Jutland in 1928. In the 1930s, he set up the Grainger Museum at Melbourne University as a centre for ethno-musicological research and as the repository for his papers and own musical works. These, not surprisingly, were heavily influenced by sounds, natural and man-made, spoken or sung. Rarely played now, a number of critics regard these works to be unjustly neglected, as did Grainger. Although he thought of his folk song settings as 'fripperies', their charm ensures that his name is remembered.

ZeZ Confrey (1895-1971)

A pianist with Paul Whiteman, ZeZ Confrey eventually formed his own band and became known for his piano novelties. *Kitten on the keys* (1924) was the most famous and was premiered at the same concert as Gershwin's *Rhapsody in blue*.

Grateful thanks to the Manager of CHEZ MAX RESTAURANT who kindly donated a voucher which was successfully raffled in aid of the choir - and won by our Deputy Chairman

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Easily the most successful American composer, George Gershwin sought to fuse the popular and classical idioms. He had no interest in music as a child until his family bought a piano when he was 12. Within a few years, he wrote his first hit, *Swanee*. Normally collaborating with his brother Ira as lyricist, Gershwin reeled off a dazzling succession of show hits: *Lady be good*, *Fascinatin' rhythm* (1924), *Someone to watch over me* (1925), *S'wonderful* (1927), *But not for me*, *I got rhythm* (1930) and many more.

Concurrently, he was developing a serious composing side. Paul Whiteman, the big band leader, commissioned *Rhapsody in blue* for a New York concert in 1924, and this was followed by a Concerto in F and the Tone poem *An American in Paris*.

Finally, he presented his opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935). Although not successful when premiered, it has since received critical acclaim, was the first American opera performed at La Scala, and has been likened to Berg's *Wozzeck* and Britten's

Peter Grimes as an operatic portrait of human nature. However, many would say that Gershwin's true genius is best displayed in his songs, where the verbal sophistication of his brother's lyrics is matched by the ingenuity of Gershwin's melodies, in which he brought a distinctive subtlety to the jazz style of 1930s American musical theatre.

Jerome Kern (1885-1945).

To most Jerome Kern means romance, but he should also be remembered as a popular music innovator. Like most of the American writers of his period, he had been schooled in the tradition of European operetta, and throughout his career he remained true to those roots, producing melodies from the early *They didn't believe me* to *Long ago and far away*, taking in on the way such works as *Smoke gets in your eyes*, and *The way you look tonight*. Kern rang the changes continually: characteristics were a light trill of quick notes preceded by held notes - *Who? (Stole my heart away)*, changes in rhythm - *She didn't say yes*, and the swoop of *All the things you are* - the most recorded song of

all time. This was the traditional Kern at his best.

The innovative side was a composer who pioneered new musical comedies which retained some of the lyrical qualities of operetta but which absorbed indigenous elements from ragtime and jazz; and incorporated the songs as part of the action rather than as interludes within the show. Kern was the first to develop this entirely American idiom which influenced others like the Gershwins and Rodgers, who acknowledged him as the master. In 1929, Kern produced *Showboat*, in which was combined the operetta tradition - *Make believe*, *Why do I love you?* - with the gospel sound of *Ol' man river* and the bluesy *Can't help loving that man*. For some reason - it is hard to believe the producers were worried about the strength of the score - it even included *Just my Bill* from one of Kern's earlier reviews, with lyrics (courtesy of P.G. Wodehouse) which make it stick out rather in a saga of the American deep south. It was no coincidence that Kern chose that setting, for it enabled him to incorporate his own version of black music in the staging. *Showboat* was Kern's masterpiece and the most important

American musical of the century: perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that without it, neither *Oklahoma* nor *Porgy and Bess* would have been written.

Cole Porter (1891-1964).

If Kern equals romance, then Cole Porter means sophistication. Born to wealth and educated at Harvard, Porter was far removed from the poor immigrant background of most of his American song-writing contemporaries. He was also, apart from Irving Berlin, the only one to write his own lyrics. Both Porter's lyrics and music display the style and wit which delighted him. Hard as he worked, he never lost entirely the gloss of a socialite who wrote as much for his own entertainment as for money; and so could afford to flout convention by including a risqué subtext which others took care to avoid. An impish example is *Let's do it*, a song created in a typical Porter form which he named disparagingly his 'list songs'. In them, Porter enjoyed making fun of the social set in which he moved, and inserted topical references altered for differing audiences and the changing times

(understandably: the original European version of *You're the Top* included: 'You're a party given by Mrs Sweeney/You're Mussolini').

Supremely successful in the 1930s, with a string of hit shows, Porter was semi-paralysed in a riding accident in 1937, which resulted eventually in the loss of a leg. He lived up to his own sense of style by commenting when he came round from the fall: '50 million Frenchmen can't be wrong. They eat horses instead of riding them.' For a decade he seemed to have lost his touch, his European sensibility and brittle wit out of tune with the war years; but he achieved his greatest success in 1948 with *Kiss me Kate* and followed this with his last triumph, the appropriately titled *High Society* which gave him his only top ten hit - sadly the feeble *True love* rather than the feisty *Well, did you evah?* Scarcely capable of writing a bad lyric, even Porter's jokes, such as his pastiche on cowboy ballads *Don't fence me in*, were better than the originals. But it is for his string of show tunes such as *You do something to me*, *Anything goes*, *I get a kick out of you*, *Its de-lovely*, *Night and day*, *Just one of those things* to name but

a few, that Porter is remembered and now acknowledged as the supreme American musical composer.

Vincent Youmans (1898-1946)

A fine song-writer but poor musical producer, most of Youmans songs had the misfortune to grace flops. The exception was *No, no, Nanette* (1925) which included his best-known titles *Tea for two* and *I want to be happy*. After the failure of *Horse shoes*, modelled on *Showboat*, Youmans abandoned Broadway for Hollywood, where the pattern was repeated: early success with the first Astaire and Rogers movie *Flying down to Rio* (1933), which included *The Carioca*; followed by less happy ventures. However, *No, no, Nanette* remains a much-loved and regularly revived favourite.

In the mood

The origins of *In the mood* are obscure. Its main riff had been played by black bands for years before Joe Garland did a 1939 arrangement for the Glenn Miller orchestra. The most likely original was a number called *Hot and anxious* credited to Horace Henderson.

Helen Crayford.

Helen made her debut at the age of three, as a cornet soloist in Margate, and has not stopped playing since. After training at the Guildhall School of Music, Cambridge University and The Royal College of Music, she spent a year in Paris studying with Nadia Boulanger. An invitation to join the prize-winning all-female *Gallina Brass Quintet* followed, with varied engagements including the Covent Garden Piazza opening and a floating performance on the lake at Stourhead.

She has worked as coach/repetiteur with most of the major European opera companies including the ENO, Glyndebourne, and Aldeburgh, as well as assisting Simon Callow in his award-winning production of *Carmen Jones*.

She enjoys performing herself, and toured Europe playing Miss Dolly Dollars in the Victorian show *The handsome cads* which also broadcast on BBC TV and radio. In 1986, she devised her own solo show, *Rags to Riches*, tracing the history of virtuoso syncopated piano music from

ragtime to jazz. She has performed the show on both sides of the Atlantic and given foyer concerts at the Royal National Theatre, Royal Festival Hall, and the Barbican centre.

Since 1993, Helen has been a member of *Baroque'n'Roll*, a company that portrays the history of social dance. She has made three recordings on the Maxsound label, and future plans include a fourth, *Stridin' thru' Harlem*, and a tour of the USA later this year.

Robin Page, Conductor, is based in London where he is the Conductor and Musical director of Thames Symphony Orchestra, Thames Sinfonia, The Purcell Orchestra, and Kingston Choral Society. he has also worked with the London Symphony Chorus and has made many appearances at the Royal Academy of Music, conducting various orchestras and ensembles.

Robin travels throughout the UK, regularly to the Midlands in recent years as Principal Conductor to the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, to the Birmingham Conservatoire, the Halle Choir, Guildford

Philharmonic Orchestra and to the West Sussex Philharmonic Choir, where he is Musical Director. he has recorded for BBC Radio 3 with the Ulster Orchestra and has featured on Classic FM.

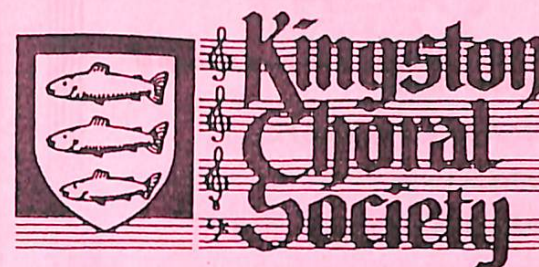
Robin specialises in the Nordic repertoire, giving acclaimed performances of Sibelius and Nielsen symphonies, and conducting the inaugural concert of the UK Sibelius Society. He has also given first UK performances of many Scandinavian works including such composers as Stenhammer, Rosenberg, Lidholm and Bortz. This season he will travel to Sweden as guest conductor with the Sundsvall Kammarorkester.

Robin has strong links with Eastern Europe. He is guest conductor to the Estonian State Symphony Orchestra, with whom he gave the Baltic premiere of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. He has also performed and broadcast in Poland and Hungary.

Robin was educated at Magdalen College School, and Cambridge University. He then studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and continued there as a professor until 1990. He lectures at Kingston University and has recently been appointed Principal Conductor to British Youth Summer Music.

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