



ALBION RECORDS

Ralph Vaughan Williams
Fair Child
of Beauty

The Bridal Day
Epithalamion

John Hopkins (*speaker*)
Philip Smith (*baritone*)
Joyful Company of Singers
Britten Sinfonia
Alan Tongue

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

CD 1

THE BRIDAL DAY. A MASQUE BY URSULA WOOD.

1	Scene I (<i>Andante con moto; allegretto</i>)	4'04
2	Scene II (<i>Allegretto; largamente</i>)	3'18
3	Scene III (<i>Allegro moderato; andante maestoso; allegro vivace</i>)	11'08
4	Scene IV (<i>Moderato; allegro; lento</i>)	3'21
5	Scene V (<i>Allegro; lento; andante con moto</i>)	7'04
6	Scene VI (<i>Andante sostenuto</i>)	6'15
7	Scene VII (<i>Andante sostenuto</i>)	4'23
8	Scene VIII (<i>Allegretto</i>)	1'55
9	Scene IX (<i>Lento</i>)	4'01
10	Scene X (<i>Molto adagio</i>)	2'16
11	Scene XI (<i>Andante maestoso</i>)	2'36

CD1 total playing time: 50'25

CD 2

EPITHALAMION – A CANTATA.

1	i Prologue (<i>Andante con moto; allegretto</i>)	3'37
2	ii Song: 'Wake Now' (<i>Allegretto; andante con moto; largamente</i>)	3'09
3	iii The Calling of the Bride (<i>Allegro moderato</i>)	1'54
4	iv The Minstrels (<i>Allegro</i>)	1'37
5	v Procession of the Bride (<i>Andante maestoso</i>)	2'16
6	vi The Temple Gates (<i>Adagio; allegro</i>)	4'07
7	vii The Bell-Ringers (<i>Andante con moto</i>)	1'37
8	viii The Lover's Song (<i>Andante sostenuto</i>)	6'42
9	ix The Minstrel's Song (<i>Andante sostenuto</i>)	4'04
10	x Song of the Winged Loves (<i>Allegretto</i>)	1'12
11	xi Prayer to Juno (<i>Molto adagio; allegro</i>)	4'41

CD2 total playing time: 35'01



Alan Tongue conducts the Britten Sinfonia Septet and Joyful Company of Singers

John Hopkins ~ Speaker in The Bridal Day

Philip Smith ~ Baritone

Joyful Company of Singers ~ Music Director Peter Broadbent

Britten Sinfonia Septet (for The Bridal Day):

*Thomas Gould, Ian Belton ~ Violins, Clare Finimore ~ Viola,
Caroline Dearnley ~ Cello, Roger Linley ~ Double Bass,
Laura Lucas ~ Flute and Piccolo, Iain Farrington ~ Piano*

Britten Sinfonia (Leader Thomas Gould) (for Epithalamion):

Alan Tongue ~ Conductor

FAIR CHILD OF BEAUTY

The Bridal Day and Epithalamion

Introduction

Not for the first time in his musical career, Vaughan Williams in early 1938 felt 'absolutely dried up'. He added in a letter to Douglas Kennedy that he had 'the feeling that I shall never write another note of music.' The winter of 1937 had seen the death of both Adeline's brother Sir William Fisher as well as Ivor Gurney on 26 December. His mood would not have been lightened by Hitler's increasingly belligerent actions, including, on 12 March 1938, German troops marching into Austria to annex the nation for the Third Reich.

Thirty years earlier, another period of compositional uncertainty had been redeemed by visiting Paris to study with the French composer, Maurice Ravel. In the spring of 1938, the inspiration to rekindle Vaughan Williams' musical imagination was to be a young poet named Ursula Wood. Ursula had heard and loved *Job* whilst a student at the Old Vic in London in the 1932/33 season. She remembered the composer and, whilst living in Westerham, Kent with her Army husband, Michael Wood, she wrote a scenario for a folk-ballet on the subject of Clerk Saunders and his sweetheart, Margaret. She found the courage to send this sad tale of love and death to Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music. The composer did not warm to this subject so Ursula suggested a new scenario for a work based on Spenser's *Epithalamion*. This proved to be a stimulating idea for Vaughan Williams who wrote to Douglas Kennedy (who was acting as a go-between for composer and Ursula) suggesting that the work needed a speaker to recite the lines, which 'might be a new art form and interesting'.

To move things forward, Ursula suggested a meeting with Vaughan Williams and they had lunch on 31 March, 1938. Ursula told me in a recorded interview on 23 November, 1998 that:

'On the first day we met, we were waiting for the light to cross and he put his arms around me and gave me a passionate kiss ... By the time I went to see him off I had fallen in love.'

Ursula had responded wholeheartedly to 'someone so large and beautiful' and Vaughan Williams, for his part, had been moved by this 27 year-old tall, good-looking, elegant poet with whom he could discuss, even at that first meeting, the poetry of Barnes, Shelley, Spenser, English madrigal verse and the plays of Shakespeare.

A few weeks later, Vaughan Williams was gently flirting with Ursula about her poetry: 'I loved your poems – the one about your hair especially; I also like the one about your thoughts...' Vaughan Williams told Ursula that he liked poems that were 'simple, sensuous and passionate'.

By 14 June, 1938 Vaughan Williams had copied out practically the whole of *Epithalamion* before he left England to receive the Shakespeare Prize in Hamburg. His ideas were crystallising and he felt certain that the Bride and Bridegroom must not dance, but must only move and mime.

Although composition of the *Masque* was competing with Vaughan Williams' *Fifth Symphony* and with the Henry Wood inspired *Serenade to Music* (1938) – both works reflecting the composer's deepening relationship with Ursula Wood – it was ready for a play-through on 27 April, 1939. This was arranged at Cecil Sharp House with Joseph Cooper as pianist, Eve Kisch as the important flute soloist and the augmented Leighton Quartet, including Jean Stewart. Vaughan Williams conducted, narrated and sang the baritone part. He was pleased with the rehearsal and a first performance was scheduled for the Autumn of 1939 featuring Ursula as the bride, a part that she 'would love to have played'. War intervened and the work languished until Hubert Foss, Head of Music at OUP, pushed for a première performance at Hampton Court in 1953. This did not materialise but the BBC expressed an interest and the first performance was a black and white televised production on 5 June, 1953. Ralph and Ursula (they had married on 7 February that year) felt that this format did not work. The speaker and baritone were Cecil Day Lewis and Denis Dowling, both excellent, but the settings and choreography disappointed.

This relative failure convinced Vaughan Williams that the *Masque* should be re-worked as a choral piece and this revision was finished in 1957. The speeches and dances were set for an enlarged chorus and, to maintain balance, the string quartet was increased to a full complement of strings. In the revised work, to be called *Epithalamion*, all eleven sections include the chorus rather than only six scenes from the *Masque*. This earlier work became known as *The Bridal Day*, a line taken from Spenser's other marriage poem, *Prothalamion*. Vaughan Williams' new music for *Epithalamion* is mainly in section III – 'The Calling of the Bride'. In its new format, the *Cantata* was premièred on 30 September, 1957.

The Text

Edmund Spenser (1552/3 – 1599) wrote *Epithalamion* to celebrate his marriage to Elizabeth Boyle on 11 June, 1594, the feast of St. Barnabas, and it was published, along with the related sonnet sequence *Amoretti*, in 1595.

The work consists of 24 stanzas, comprising a series of long and short lines, with each stanza describing a segment of the wedding day. The stanzas conclude with a variation of the pastoral refrain: 'That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.' The poet uses 365 long lines, representing the number of days in the year. The voice in Spenser's *Epithalamion* is that of the bridegroom, showing care, tenderness, excitement and frustration at the slowness of time before he can 'come unto my love'. The bride appears in stanza 9 (not set by Vaughan Williams); the wedding ceremony is at stanza 13 and love is consummated in stanza 20 in 'sweet snatches of delight, concealed through covert night'.

During the transition from darkness to daylight hours, Phoebus is invoked, along with Hymen (the God of Marriage) and Juno (the protector of women and Goddess of Love and fruitful Marriage). There is much rejoicing too, with pipes, tabor and a 'trembling croud' (a Celtic instrument of six strings), along with bonfires, feasting and drinking. In this context, the God of Wine and Fertility, Bacchus, is invoked.

Ursula Wood had known and loved *Epithalamion* since she studied it at finishing school in Brussels in 1928. She understood Spenser's references to Greek and Roman mythology and responded to the physical and spiritual elements of the wedding celebrations. She described the poem as follows:

'It is one of the few entirely happy love poems in the English language. Mortals and Immortals are called upon to take part in the ceremonies. The poet summons Hymen, God of marriage, nymphs of the sea, and of the woods to wake and adorn the bride...to escort her to church. Bacchus, the God of wine, the Graces, and the town bell-ringers join in the revels until the Evening Star at last heralds the 'night so long expected', and Juno, Queen of Heaven, is called upon for her blessings on the enchanted lovers.'

Ursula worked from A. H. Bullen's *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age* (1896) and Vaughan Williams, for his choral version of 1956/57, used *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, 1949 edition). He marked the stanzas in this book which would match the dances in *The Bridal Day*. Ursula noted that the 'words fitted the tunes with almost no alteration.'

Ursula's fascination with Spenser's poem was reflected in her own work. For example, she began section 3 of her *Prologue* (1941) with 'Ah, when will this long weary night have end' from stanza 16 of *Epithalamion* and wrote the poem *Taking Part in Spenser's Epithalamion as a Masque* in 1952.

The Music

CD 1 - The Bridal Day

By using the subtitle 'A Masque' for *The Bridal Day*, much as he had called Job 'A Masque for Dancing', Vaughan Williams was linking his works to a tradition of dancing and miming which had flourished in England in the 17th century. He was also distancing his ballets from the popular style involving dancing *en pointe* which he strongly disliked.

The Bridal Day has parts for dancers, mimers, singers (baritone soloist and chorus) and a speaker. The instrumental accompaniment consists of two violins, viola, cello, double bass, flute/piccolo and piano. Nowhere else in Vaughan Williams' music is this evocative combination utilised and it gives *The Bridal Day* an unusual sound quality, in turn lyrical, expressive and ecstatic. The solo flute suggests Pan, the Greek God of fertility and companion to the Nymphs. Vaughan Williams' use of the piano in *The Bridal Day* recalls Bach, with the instrument at times being highly declamatory and at other times offering a more restrained commentary. Of importance, too, is the solo viola, suggesting sensual and mysterious longing. This links the work to *Flos Campi* (1925) and Vaughan Williams would have been aware of Spenser's allusions to *The Song of Solomon* in his *Epithalamion*.

The Scenes in *The Bridal Day* are as follows:

- **Scene I** The opening bars are highly atmospheric and suggest Ravel or Debussy more than any other of Vaughan Williams' works. The rhapsodic writing for flute and piano is both fresh and romantic whilst the strings at the entrance of the nymphs of sea, river and forest are delicate in the composer's pastoral idiom.
- **Scene II** A jaunty 6/8 for flute and piano prefaces the first entry of the baritone soloist with 'Wake now, my love awake!' Here the flute is cast in the role that Spenser envisaged, representing the song-call of birds. The music becomes more expressive at 'Ah! My dear love'. Vaughan Williams had a heart and often showed it. This passage reminds us that he had only recently finished his 'Romantic Extravaganza' *The Poisoned Kiss* (1936). The ensuing choral passage 'For they of joy and pleasure to you sing', to a broad *largamente* harks back to the *Five Mystical Songs* of 1911.
- **Scene III** An *allegro moderato* 3/4 rhythm provides the setting for a dance of the bridesmaids and groomsmen, together and separately. The priest and

acolytes cross the stage, to a hymn-like passage on piano, marked *lento*, before the bride's father leads the bride into church against a broad and memorable melody. After the speaker's invocation to 'Open the temple gates unto my love', and a declamatory passage, *double forte*, the off-stage voices sing 'Ah' in music closely resembling *Flos Campi*. After a long speech beginning 'Now all is done', this remarkable scene ends with a rousing and joyous 2/4 *allegro vivace* for 'lo Hymen, with the flute, piccolo, piano and strings briskly capturing Bacchus and the Three Graces.

- **Scene IV** The solo viola cadenza for Bacchus' grotesque dance seems to have come from the pages of *Job* (1930). An elegant dance for the Three Graces follows with Bacchus joining in.
- **Scene V** A general dance, to a lively yet graceful 9/8 *allegro*. An expressive *lento* passage accompanies the procession to the church and the section ends, after the speaker's 'Ring ye the bells', with the 'Dance of the Bell-ringers'. The stage empties before the solo viola returns.
- **Scene VI** The flute and viola accompany the yearning 'Ah' from the contraltos before the baritone soloist enters with the lovely 'Ah! when will this long weary day have end'. The music becomes even more lyrical at the entry of the Evening Star. The emotional heart of the work is reached with the ecstatic 'Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of love' for baritone and then full chorus, one of Vaughan Williams' most ravishing songs, especially so given the evocative accompaniment, which Ursula always maintained was written 'for me'.
- **Scene VII** The seven instruments provide a haunting background to a mysterious *andante sostenuto* scene as the baritone sings of the welcome night, so long expected. The music here harks back to the *Four Hymns* (1914) as well as looking forward to the *Sons of Light* (1950).

- **Scene VIII** With winged loves flitting past the door of the bridal chamber, the delicate scoring and Mendelssohnian textures are reminiscent of the music for the faeries in Windsor Forest from the final act of *Sir John in Love* (1928). The speaker now invokes Juno.
- **Scene IX** An exquisite *cantilena* for flute, accompanied by piano and strings, prefaces Juno's entry. The meditative mood is sustained as Juno proceeds toward the bridal chamber. The stage mysteriously darkens.
- **Scene X** Juno is standing at the door of the bridal chamber. To an expressive *molto adagio* passage of considerable intensity, everyone kneels motionless. At the point where everyone rises, the crowd rush in with 'Io Hymen'.
- **Scene XI** The finale is a 'Prayer to Juno' and fittingly returns to Vaughan Williams' uplifting and beautiful melody heard earlier at 'Fair Child of Beauty'.

Vaughan Williams had, indeed, found an interesting and novel art form to capture the marriage ceremony described in Spenser's *Epithalamion*. He only used a speaker on two more occasions – *A Song of Thanksgiving* (1944) and *An Oxford Elegy* (1949) although he had used spoken dialogue in *The Poisoned Kiss*. The combination of reciter, flute, piano and string quintet has left us with a work quite unlike anything else in Vaughan Williams' considerable output which does not deserve its complete neglect.

CD 2 – Epithalamion

Subtitled 'A Song to Celebrate a Marriage', Vaughan Williams' choral version of the *Masque* dispenses with the speaker and most of the instrumental dances. The sections are as follows:

- **I Prologue** After a similarly atmospheric opening to the *Masque*, with the flute depicting the rising sun, the chorus makes an immediate impact, taking over the speaker's role in 'Early before the world's light-giving lamp', without

straining music to words. Similarly, the chorus assumes the dance of the nymphs to a new word-setting from stanza 3 of *Epithalamion*, a joyous and swaying *allegretto*.

- **II 'Wake Now'** The *allegretto* opening to 'Wake now, my love awake!' mirrors the *Masque* as does the arioso writing for the baritone soloist.
- **III The Calling of the Bride** The speaker's words from *The Bridal Day* – 'Now is my love all ready forth to come' becomes the choral opening to this section. An additional 14 lines from stanza 7 is set to new music, a rapid *allegro moderato*, with alternating passages for sopranos/altos and tenors/basses. The choral writing is now closer to *Hodie* (1954).
- **IV The Minstrels** The 'Minstrel's Chorus' is a new setting of stanza 8 for chorus rather than speaker as in the *Masque*. The beginning of the wedding festivities is announced with Vaughan Williams capturing the sounds of the pipe, tabor and 'trembling croud' to telling effect. The movement concludes, as in the *Masque*, with a joyous 'lo Hymen'.
- **V Procession of the Bride** This is a new choral setting of stanza 9, not set in the *Masque*. It is an *andante maestoso* re-working of the dance movement from scene 3, when the father and mother of the bride and groom proceed to church. Words and music are reminiscent of the lovely 'Have you seen but a bright lily grow' from *Sir John in Love*.
- **VI The Temple Gates** The chorus sing, in hymn-like fashion, 'Open the temple gates unto my love', replacing the speaker in the *Masque*. The 'Alleluia' passage is new, and quite beautiful, before the chorus takes over the speaker's 'Now all is done'.
- **VII The Bell-Ringers** 'The Bell-Ringer's Chorus' is joyous and vital, another example of the effectiveness with which the chorus replaces the speaker, to the same *andante con moto* melody as the *Masque*.

- **VIII The Lover's Song** This is virtually identical to scene VI of the *Masque*. In its beauty and sense of longing, it is an impressive reflection on love, with words and music perfectly matched.
- **IX The Minstrel's Song** Closely following scene 7 of the *Masque*, the baritone sings of the welcome night, so long expected, to a gentle *andante sostenuto*.
- **X Song of the Winged Lovers** Another example of the chorus taking over the speaker's words in the *Masque* to a light *allegretto*.
- **XI Prayer to Juno** The finale opens mysteriously with the baritone soloist singing, *molto adagio*, the words previously assigned to the speaker – 'And thou, Great Juno'. The final chorus is, happily, identical to the *Masque* and brings the work to a moving conclusion in a mood of gentle calm.

Without Ursula Wood entering Vaughan Williams' life in March, 1938, there would have been no *The Bridal Day* or *Epithalamion*. She was also the direct inspiration behind such works as the *Sons of Light* and the *Four Last Songs* (1958). She found the Shelley poems for him to set in the *Six Choral Songs in Time of War* (1940), introduced him to the Hardy poem *The Oxen* for the composer to set to memorable effect in *Hodie* and contributed text to *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1951/52). For Vaughan Williams, she was indeed an invaluable fair child of beauty for the last twenty years of his long life.

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Chairman Albion Records and Vice-President RVW Society

Further Reading

Hugh Cobbe (edited)

Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958, OUP, 2008

Michael Kennedy

A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, OUP, 1996

Roger Savage

Masques, Mayings and Music Dramas; Vaughan Williams and the Early Twentieth Century Stage, Boydell Press, 2014

Ursula Vaughan Williams

R. V.W. – A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams, OUP, 1964

Ursula Vaughan Williams

Paradise Remembered – An Autobiography, Albion Music, 2002

Stephen Connock (edited)

The Complete Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams, Albion Music, 2003

Kenneth J. Larsen

Edmund Spenser's Amoretti and Epithalamion, MRTS, 1997

Richard A. McCabe (edited)

The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser, OUP, 2010

CD 1

The Bridal Day. A Masque by Ursula Wood with Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Founded on 'Epithalamion' by Edmund Spenser.

1 Scene I

The stage presents a colonnade at the back; in the centre is a door to the Bridal Chamber. Back left is the entrance to the Church and front right is the bride's room.

Speaker. Early, before the world's light-giving lamp
His golden beam upon the hills doth spread,
Having dispersed the night's uncheerful damp,
Do ye awake: and, with fresh lusty-head,
Go to the bower of my beloved love,
My truest turtle dove:
Bid her awake:
For lo! The wishèd day is come at last,
That shall for all the pains and sorrows past,
Lend to her usury of long delight;
And, whilst she doth her dight,
Do ye to her of joy and solace sing,
That all the woods may answer and your echo ring.

(Stanza 2)

Nymphs of Sea, River and Forest enter and dance.

2 Scene II

The Bridesmaids enter in a processional dance.

Baritone: Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time;
Hark! how the cheerful birds do chant their lays
And carol of love's praise.
The merry lark her matins sings aloft;
The thrush replies; the Mavis descant plays;
The Ousel shrills; the Ruddock warbles soft;
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this day's merriment.
Ah! my dear love, why do ye sleep thus long?
When meeter were that ye should now awake,

(Stanza 5)

(Mavis=Song Thrush)

(Ousel=Blackbird)

T'await the coming of your joyous make, (make=mate)
And hearken to the birds' love-learned song,
The dewy leaves among!

The curtain draws back to show the Bride seated.

Baritone

and Chorus: For they of joy and pleasure to you sing,
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

Speaker: Now is my love all ready forth to come: (Stanza 7)
Let all the virgins therefore well await:
And ye fresh boys, that tend upon her groom,
Prepare yourselves, for he is coming straight.

3 **Scene III**

The Bridegroom enters escorted by Groomsmen who dance, with clashing of swords. This is followed by a dance of the bridesmaids before Bridesmaids and Groomsmen dance together. Priests cross the stage followed by the Bride and Groom's father and mother and other relations. The father leads the bride into the church.

Speaker: Open the temple gates unto my love, (Stanza 12)
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throats,
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer and their echo ring.

Some townspeople enter quietly and listen at the church door.

Chorus: Ah... (voices off stage)

Speaker: Now all is done, bring home the bride again; (Stanza 14)
Bring home the triumph of our victory:
Bring home with you the glory of her gain;
With joyance bring her and with jollity,
Never had man more joyful day than this,
Whom heaven would heap with bliss,
Make feast therefore now all this live-long day;

This day for ever to me holy is.
Pour out the wine without restraint or stay,
Pour not by cups, but by the belly-full,
Pour out to all that will,
And sprinkle all the posts and walls with wine,
That they may sweat and drunken be withal.
Crown ye God Bacchus with a coronal
And Hymen also crown with wreaths of vine;
And let the Graces dance unto the rest,
For they can do it best:
The whiles the maidens do their carol sing,
To which the woods shall answer and their echo ring.

Hark! how the minstrels 'gin to shrill aloud
Their merry music that resounds from far,
The pipe, tabor and the trembling croud
That well agree withouten breach or jar.
But, most of all, the damsels do delight
When they their timbrels smite,
And thereunto do dance and carol sweet,
That all the senses they do ravish quite:
The whiles the boys run up and down the street,
Crying aloud with strong confused noise
As if it were one voice,
'Hymen, lo Hymen, Hymen' they do shout;
That even to the heavens their shouting shrill
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;
To which the people standing all about,
As in approvance, do thereto applaud,
And loud advance her laud;
And ever more they Hymen, Hymen sing,
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

(Stanza 8)

(laud=praise)

A crowd collects outside the church. The excitement grows and everyone starts dancing and singing:

Chorus: 'lo Hymen, Hymen, lo Hymen, Hymen'

Enter Bacchus accompanied by The Three Graces. The Minstrels follow.

Chorus: 'lo Hymen, Hymen, lo Hymen, Hymen, lo'

4 **Scene IV**

*Grotesque dance by Bacchus followed by a graceful dance by The Three Graces.
Bacchus joins them.*

5 **Scene V**

A general dance.

At the sound of the organ, the dance stops dead. The church door opens and the procession begins to come out.

Speaker: Ring ye the bells, ye young men of the town, (Stanza 15)
And leave your wonted labours for this day:
This day is holy; do ye write it down,
That ye for ever it remember may.
Yet never day so long but late would pass.
Ring ye the bells to make it wear away,
And bonfires make all day;
And dance about them, and about them sing,
That all the woods may answer and your echo ring.

The Bell-ringers dance before the Bride and Bridegroom are led away by their respective attendants. The stage gradually empties and the lights dim.

6 **Scene VI**

Dance of the Hours. Mysterious veiled figures glide about in the half-light.

Chorus: Ah...

The Bridegroom enters. He stands still as if listening to the song.

Baritone: Ah! when will this long weary day have end, (Stanza 16)
And lend me leave to come unto my love?
How slowly do the hours, their numbers spend?
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move?

Enter the Evening Star, who dances with the Hours.

Baritone: Haste thee, O fairest Planet to thy home, *(Planet=Sun)*
Within the Western foam:
Thy tirèd steeds long since have need of rest,
Long tho' it be at last I see it gloom,
And the bright evening star with golden crest
Appear out of the East.

The Hours fade away and the Evening Star sheds her light into the bridal chamber. The processions of the Bride and Groom enter separately.

Baritone: Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of love!
That all the host of Heav'n in ranks dost lead,
And guidest lovers thro' the night's sad dread,
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,
And seem'st to laugh between thy twinkling light
As joying in the sight
Of these glad many, which for joy do sing,
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

The two processions meet, the Bride and Groom greet each other and take hands before moving to the door of the bridal chamber.

Chorus: Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of love!
That all the host of Heav'n in ranks dost lead,
And guidest lovers thro' the night's sad dread,
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,
And seem'st to laugh between thy twinkling light
As joying in the sight
Of these glad many, which for joy do sing,
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

The lovers embrace and enter the bridal chamber.

7 **Scene VII**

Four musicians enter and appear, in mime, to serenade the bridal chamber. Pairs of attendants cross the stage, embracing ceremonially.

Baritone: Now welcome night, thou night so long expected, (Stanza 18)
That long day's labour dost at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruel love collected
Hast summed in one, and cancelled for aye!
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,
That no man may us see;
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,
From fear of peril and foul horror free.

*Baritone
and Chorus:* But let still silence true night watches keep, (Stanza 20)
That sacred peace may in assurance reign,
And timely sleep, when it is time to sleep,
May pour his limbs forth on your pleasant plain.

Speaker: The whiles an hundred little wingèd loves
Like divers-feathered doves,
Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,
And in the secret dark, that none reproves
Their pretty stealths shall work and snares shall spread
To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
Concealed through covert night.

8 **Scene VIII**

Winged loves, slim young girls and boys, flit past the door of the bridal chamber. All await the entry of Juno.

Speaker: And thou, great Juno! which with awful might (Stanza 22)
The laws of wedlock still dost patronise;
And the religion of the faith first plight
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnise;
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,
And all thy blessings unto us impart,
Then I thy sov'reign praises loud will sing (Stanza 7)
That all the woods may answer and your echo ring.

9 **Scene IX**

*The music of Juno's procession approaching is heard. All turn towards the sound.
The procession enters, including Musicians, Nymphs and Graces and, finally, Juno, enthroned in her car.
The car stops and Juno descends, walking toward the bridal chamber. The stage darkens.*

10 **Scene X**

*Juno blesses the bridal chamber. Everyone kneels motionless.
The lights go up quickly. All rise and the crowd rush in singing:*

Chorus: lo Hymen, Hymen, lo Hymen, Hymen

11 **Scene XI**

Juno is drawn off stage, with everybody else following.

Chorus: O thou, great Juno! which with awful might, (Stanza 22)
The laws of wedlock still dost patronise
And the religion of the faith first plight,
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize;
And all thy blessings unto us impart,
Then I thy sov'reign praises loud will sing (Stanza 7)
That all the woods shall answer and their echo ring.

The stage is dark except for a rosy glow from the bridal chamber.

CD 2

Epithalamion – A Cantata with music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Adapted from Edmund Spenser.

1 **I Prologue (Chorus)**

Chorus: Early, before the world's light-giving lamp (Stanza 2)
His golden beam upon the hills doth spread,
Having dispersed the night's uncheerful damp,
Do ye awake: and with fresh lusty head
Go to the bower of my beloved love,
My truest turtle dove:
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake.

Bring with you all the nymphs that you can hear
Both of the rivers and the forests green,
And of the sea that neighbours to be near:
All with gay garlands goodly well be seen;
And let them also with them bring in hand
Another gay garland for my fair love, of lilies and of roses,
Bound true love wise, with a blue silk riband,
And let them make great store of bridal posies,
And let them eke bring store of other flowers
To deck the bridal bowers.
Which done, do at her chamber door await.
For she will waken straight;
The whiles do you this song unto her sing,
The woods shall answer and your echo ring.

(Stanza 3)

2 II Song 'Wake Now' (*Baritone and Chorus*)

Baritone: Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time;
Hark! how the cheerful birds do chant their lays
And carol of love's praise.
The merry Lark her matins sings aloft;
The Thrush replies, the Mavis descant plays;
The Ousel shrills; the Ruddock warbles soft;
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this day's merriment.
Ah! my dear love, why do ye sleep thus long?
When meeter were that ye should now awake,
T'await the coming of your joyous make,
And hearken to the birds' love-learnèd song,
The dewy leaves among!

(Stanza 5)

*Baritone
and Chorus:* For they of joy and pleasance to you sing.
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

3 **III The Calling of the Bride** (*Chorus*)

Chorus: Now is my love all ready forth to come; (*Stanza 7*)
Let all the virgins therefore well await:
And ye fresh boys that tend upon her groom,
Prepare yourselves for he is coming straight.
Set all your things in seemly good array,
Fit for so joyful day:
Fair sun! show forth thy favourable ray,
And let thy liful heat not fervent be,
For fear of burning her sunshiny face,
Her beauty to disgrace.
O! fairest Phoebus! father of the muse!
If ever I did honour thee aright,
Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,
Do not thy servant's simple boon refuse;
But let this day, let this one day be mine,
Let all the rest be thine.
Then I thy sov'reign praises loud will sing
That all the woods shall answer and their echo ring.

4 **IV The Minstrels** (*Chorus*)

Chorus: Hark how the minstrels 'gin to shrill aloud, (*Stanza 8*)
Thou merry music that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor and the trembling croud
That will agree withouten breach or jar,
But most of all, the damsels do delight,
When they their timbrels smite.
And thereunto do dance and carol sweet
That all the senses they do ravish quite.
The whiles the boys run up and down the street
Crying aloud with strong confused noise,
As if it were one voice:
"Hymen, lo Hymen
lo, lo, lo Hymen, Hymen
lo Hymen, Hymen" they do shout.

5 **V Procession of the Bride** (*Chorus*)

Chorus: Lo! Where she comes along with portly pace, (Stanza 9)

Like Phoebus from her chamber of the east;
Arising forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white that seems a virgin best,
So well it her beseems that ye would ween
Some angel she had been.
Her long loose yellow locks like golden wire,
Sprinkled with pearl, and pearling flowers atween,
Do like a golden mantle her attire.
And, being crowned with a garland green,
Seem like some maiden Queen.
Tell me, ye merchants' daughters, did ye see
So fair a creature in your town before?
So sweet, so lovely and so mild as she,
Adorned with beauty's grace and virtue's store.

(Stanza 10)

6 **VI The Temple Gates** (*Chorus*)

Chorus: Open the temple gates unto my love, (Stanza 12)

Open them wide that she may enter in,
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes,
The whiles with hollow throats
The choristers the joyful anthem sing.
Alleluia, alleluia.
Sing ye sweet angels, alleluia, sing
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

(Stanza 13)

Now all is done; bring home the bride again, (Stanza 14)
Bring home the triumph of our victory;
Bring home with you the glory of her gain,
With joyance bring her and with jollity.
Never had man more joyful day than this,
Whom Heaven would heap with bliss,
Make feast therefore now all this livelong day

This day for ever holy is.
Pour out the wine without restraint or stay,
Pour not by cups but by the bellyful,
Pour out to all that will,
And sprinkle all the posts and walls with wine
That they may sweat and drunken be withal.
Crown ye God Bacchus with a coronal,
And Hymen also crown with wreaths of vine,
And let the Graces dance unto the rest,
For they can do it best:
The whiles the maidens do their carol sing:
To which the woods shall answer and their echo ring.

7 **VII The Bell-Ringers** (*Chorus*)

Chorus: Ring ye the bells, ye young men of the town,
(Stanza 15)
And leave your wonted labours for this day:
This day is holy, do ye write it down,
That ye for ever to remember may.
Ring ye the bells, to make it wear away
And bonfires make all day,
And dance about them and about them sing,
That all the woods may answer and your echo ring.

8 **VIII The Lover's Song** (*Baritone and Chorus*)

Chorus: Ah
Baritone: Ah! when will this long weary day have end,
(Stanza 16)
And lend me leave to come unto my love?
How slowly do the hours their numbers spend?
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move?
Haste thee, O fairest Planet to thy home,
Within the Western foam:
Thy tirèd steeds long since have need of rest,
Long tho' it be at last I see it gloom,
And the bright evening star with golden crest

Appear out of the East.
Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of love!
That all the host of Heav'n in ranks dost lead,
And guidest lovers thro' the night's sad dread,
How cheerfully thou lookest from above,
And seem'st to laugh atween thy twinkling light
As joying in the sight
Of these glad many which for joy do sing,
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

Chorus: Fair child of beauty, glorious lamp of love!
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And guidest lovers thro' the night's sad dread,
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9 **IX The Minstrel's Song** (*Baritone and Chorus*)

Baritone: Now welcome night! thou night so long expected,
That long day's labour dost at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruel love collected,
Hast summed in one, and cancelled for aye!
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,
That no man may us see;
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,
From fear of peril and foul horror free.

(Stanza 18)

*Baritone
and Chorus:* But let still silence true night watches keep,
That sacred peace may in assurance reign,
And timely sleep, when it is time to sleep,
May pour his limbs forth on your pleasant plain.

(Stanza 20)

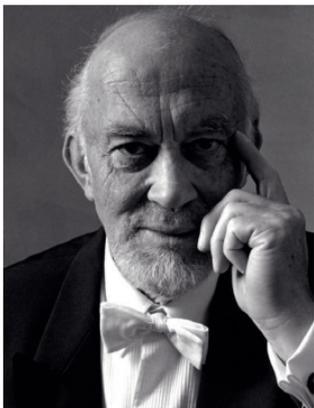
10 **X Song of the Winged Loves** (*Chorus*)

Chorus: The whiles an hundred little wingèd loves, (Stanza 20)
Like diverse feathered doves,
Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,
And in the secret dark, that none reproves,
Their pretty stealths shall work, and snares shall spread
To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
Concealed through covert night.

11 **XI Prayer to Juno** (*Baritone and Chorus*)

Baritone: And thou, great Juno! which with awful might (Stanza 22)
The laws of wedlock still dost patronise;
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,
And all thy blessings unto us impart.

Chorus: 'lo Hymen, Hymen, lo Hymen, Hymen', Ah –
O thou, great Juno! which with awful might,
The laws of wedlock still dost patronise,
And the religion of the faith first plight,
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize;
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,
And all thy blessings unto us impart,
Then I thy sov'reign praises loud will sing (Stanza 7)
That all the woods shall answer and their echo ring.



Alan Tongue

Alan Tongue's work as a conductor and musicologist was brought to worldwide attention with his 'rediscovery' and performances of Vaughan Williams' *A Cambridge Mass*. Michael Kennedy wrote that 'It was a bright day for English music when Mr Tongue lifted the score from the drawer'. Albion Records issued Alan Tongue's performance of this work in 2014 (ALBCD020).

Alan Tongue has been conducting English music abroad for over twenty years, including the Hungarian première of *The Dream of Gerontius* and the Argentinian première of *Belshazzar's Feast*. As well as the standard repertoire, he has

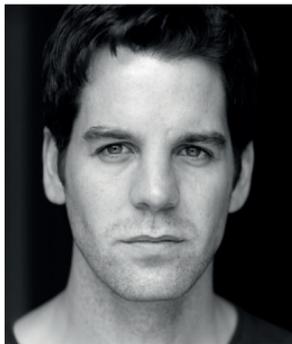
given Romanian premières of works by Doina Rotaru, Livia Teodorescu-Ciocanea, Arne Mellnas and Fred Popovici. His Vaughan Williams conducting includes *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* and a week of *Sir John in Love*. His semi-staging of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was a sensation when staged in Cambridge and at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon.

Alan was a pupil of Sergiu Celibidache and of Robert Shaw. He was born in Bath to a musical family. His music teacher at school was John Sykes, a virtuoso pianist and former composition pupil of Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music. After reading music at Cambridge, he worked for the BBC as a music producer, first in radio then in television, before leaving to go freelance as a conductor.

John Hopkins

John Hopkins is best known for playing Sgt. Dan Scott in *Midsomer Murders*. He starred in 14 episodes. He trained at RADA and read English at the University of Leeds. After graduating, he joined the Royal Shakespeare Company. His recent theatre work includes *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest*, playing alongside Patrick Stewart, both for the RSC. He played the key role of Richard Hannay for nine months in the West End production of *The 39 Steps*.

In 2004, John Hopkins starred in the British sci-fi thriller *Experiment* which won 16 awards at film festivals across the world. He has appeared in numerous films including *The Path to 9/11*, *Grand Junction* and *Wire in the Blood*.



Philip Smith

One time zoologist and National Otter Surveyor of England, Philip Smith hung up his waders to study singing first at Birmingham Conservatoire and then with Barbara Robotham at the Royal Northern College of Music, graduating with distinction in 2008. He is a Samling Artist, a Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme alumnus and Crear Scholar. He is also the recipient of a number of prizes including the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Prize for the singing of Richard Strauss. He continues to study with Robert Dean.



Philip has performed with world-class orchestras under such conductors as Sir Mark Elder, David Hill and Nicholas Kraemer. He has a thriving operatic career and appears in houses across Europe. In 2014, he sang his first *Don Giovanni* in the title role for Black Cat Opera as well as

Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* in Bari, Italy. In 2015, he makes his debut at the Royal Opera House in the roles of Endymion and Charon in Luigi Rossi's *Orpheus*. In recital, Philip has performed with internationally recognised pianists including Malcolm Martineau and Roger Vignoles.

Joyful Company of Singers

One of Europe's most prominent chamber choirs, the Joyful Company of Singers is renowned for its virtuosity and intensity of spirit, as well as for an astoundingly wide repertoire, ranging from the 16th Century to the present day. An important element of the choir's *raison d'être* is its commitment to contemporary and new music, including a high proportion of first performances. Many composers have written music for JCS, including David Bedford, Michael Berkeley, Judith Bingham, Jonathan Harvey, Alun Hoddinott, Roxanna Panufnik, Kaija Saariaho and Malcolm Williamson.

Formed in 1988, by conductor Peter Broadbent, the choir first came to prominence when it won the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1990. Since then it has maintained its profile in the music world, winning an impressive list of national and international competitions and maintaining a regular concert and recording schedule.

The choir has a most impressive discography and was a regular partner for Richard Hickox and the CLS for Chandos, including three releases in the complete *Percy Grainger Series*, Lennox Berkeley's *Ruth* and a recording of Vaughan Williams' Christmas choral music. On the ASV label are discs of music by Jonathan Harvey, Francis Poulenc and Samuel Barber, and for EMI Classics, *A Garland for Linda*, which comprises works by nine British composers including Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Richard Rodney Bennett and Sir John Tavener. The choir has recorded a selection of Vaughan Williams' choral works called *Where Hope is Shining* for Albion Records (ALBCD006).

Britten Sinfonia

The Britten Sinfonia was formed in 1992 and is based in Cambridge, UK. The orchestra has gained world-wide acclaim for the quality of its musicianship and a remarkable versatility. The orchestra collaborates with the finest international artists, including Ian Bostridge, Imogen Cooper, Paul Lewis and Joanna MacGregor. The Britten Sinfonia has performed in concert halls across Europe and is a regular at the BBC Proms. In 2007, the orchestra won the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Ensemble Award in recognition of its work.

The orchestra has a Creative Learning Department which provides innovative educational support to concerts and other projects including Family Music Days and projects specifically for young people and schools.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Chairman and Executive Producer: Stephen Connock MBE

Managing Director: John Francis

A & R Manager: Charles Padley

Fulfilment: Mark and Sue Hammett

Booklet Notes: Stephen Connock

Web-Master: Tad Kasa

Producer: Andrew Walton of K & A Productions

Engineer: Mike Clements of K & A Productions

Recorded at Henry Wood Hall, London on 15 – 16 June, 2015

Cover image: Ursula Wood in 1938

WITH SPECIAL THANKS

Robert Allan, Simon Coombs, Len Evans, Robert Field, John Francis, Peter Gillivar & Robin Darwall-Smith, Richard Hall, Francis Harrison, James Korner, Martin Murray, Benjamin Nossiter, Philip Robson, Seumas Simpson, David Trimble, The Richard Hickox Foundation.

ABOUT ALBION RECORDS

Since its formation in 1994, The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society – a registered charity – has sought to raise the profile of the composer through publications, seminars and sponsorship of recordings. The Society's successes include the publication of Ursula Vaughan Williams' autobiography and the sponsorship of significant performances, especially of the operas. More recently, the Society has been closely involved with important premières including *A Cambridge Mass*, *Willow Wood*, and *The Garden of Proserpine*.

With around 1,000 members, the Society created a recording label, Albion Records, in 2007 which is devoted to recordings of rare Vaughan Williams. Each CD contains at least one world première recording, and these abound among the many rare and beautiful songs to be found on our early recordings, *The Sky Shall Be Our Roof* and *Kissing Her Hair*.

Music in the Heart includes Vaughan Williams conducting his *Serenade to Music*. *The Garden of Proserpine*, a recording of an early work, spent five weeks in The Specialist Classical Chart in 2011 and also reached the Classic FM Top Forty. Other releases include *Symphony No. 6* arranged for two pianos and *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons*. *On Christmas Day*, a recording of folk songs and folk carols, was a seasonally popular release for Christmas 2011 but is a wonderful recording at any time of year. In 2012, we issued *Sons of the Morning*, a CD of piano music by Vaughan Williams and Gurney including the world première of *Job*, arranged by Vally Lasker. The pianist is Iain Burnside in his first solo recording. In 2013, *The Solent* reached No. 4 in the Specialist Classical Chart and remained in the top twenty for many weeks. This record was also nominated for a Grammy Award for 2015 in the Best Classical Compendium category.

For further information visit:

www.albionrecords.org or
www.rvwsociety.com



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