

**AN IRISHMAN ABROAD:
NATIONALIST AND COSMOPOLITAN
CROSS-CURRENTS IN
STANFORD'S ORGAN MUSIC**

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A THESIS

**submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of PhD (Musicology),
Sydney Conservatorium of Music,
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STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I, Robert James Stove, declare that this project is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education, and to the best of my knowledge this project contains no material that has previously been published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of this project.

.....

Robert James Stove

7 September 2021

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ABSTRACT

Among the great, but mostly hidden, treasures of the late-Romantic organ repertoire is the oeuvre of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. The neglect of this music (even most organists are conversant with only a small portion, if any, of it) accords with the curious nature of Stanford's more general reputation. Although his name has never entirely faded from public consciousness – any encyclopaedia article about British musical history will include him – regrettably little of his output has won a big public, except for his contributions to Anglican choralism. Before his non-Anglican works began appearing in large numbers on Compact Disc during the 1990s, the situation was still worse.

The present thesis explores several factors that made Stanford's contributions to organ music distinctive. (Most of these contributions date from well after Stanford ceased playing the instrument on a regular basis.) His Irish upbringing put him at one remove from his English colleagues. Subsequently his German training differed a good deal from the tuition that most English cathedral organists experienced in his own time. Perhaps most important of all was Stanford's multifaceted activity as a conductor and, most conspicuously, as a pedagogue. Much of the neglect that still surrounds most of his creations is connected to numerous historians' over-emphasis upon his teaching: an over-emphasis that Stanford's own son deplored.

After supplying in Chapter Two biographical information which indicates the most significant of Stanford's formative influences, I furnish in Chapter Three details of organ composition in nineteenth-century Europe as a whole, and Victorian Britain specifically. I note the symbiotic relationship between increasingly elaborate organ construction – the impact of Aristide Cavallé-Coll's structural innovations could be felt well beyond France – and the increasingly symphonic character of much nineteenth-century organ music. In addition, I discuss the rise of concert organists, operating outside ecclesiastical environments, and Stanford's own refusal to undertake regular organ-playing duties after the 1890s. All these factors must be considered in any discussion of Stanford's works for (to quote Mozart's phrase) 'the King of Instruments.'

The fact that Stanford had so complex – not to say agonised – a relationship with both

his native land and his adopted land has made it necessary for me to allude, in Chapter Four, to several twentieth-century and twenty-first-century theorists of nationalism. Stanford's attitude towards music's past was likewise complex: he avoided both pastiche on the one hand, and on the other hand undue trepidation towards his precursors' achievements.

In Chapters Five and Six, I concentrate on detailed score-based analysis of as many Stanford organ works as the space constraints of a thesis permit me to consider. These two chapters represent the core of the present document (a complete list of Stanford's organ compositions can be found in an appendix on page 291). Much of the chapters' content derives from my own experience as an organist in Australia, one whose repertoire – in churches, in recitals, and on CD – has included various Stanford pieces. My approach to the analysis has been to divide the relevant material according to the functions that Stanford had in mind for it: he clearly intended some of it for church use, while some of it (in particular the five sonatas) he just as clearly intended for recital use.

With Chapter Seven I trace Stanford's reception history, which on several counts is unlike that of any other British composer. I examine the wider cultural factors which long made this history problematic, and still other cultural factors (of more recent origin) which suggest that at last Stanford's time has come. Vaughan Williams's 1952 prophecy 'I believe that he [Stanford] will return again' is more plausible in 2021 than it had been at any time since Stanford's own death ninety-seven years ago. The concluding Chapter Eight points to further profitable lines of Stanford-related research, and it stresses Stanford's own importance for those who would seek a more rounded view of Victorian-Edwardian music than habitually prevails.

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Without the Research Training Program scholarship which the Australian federal Department of Education generously awarded me, I would not have been able even to imagine undertaking a doctorate, let alone to complete one. Therefore, I must place on record my profound gratitude to those who granted this scholarship, which was made still more generous by the Sydney Conservatorium's financial assistance towards my research-related – and, mercifully, pre-coronavirus – visit to the United Kingdom in January 2020.

I owe a likewise profound debt to the staffers at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, above all to the staffers at two campus institutions there (the Carlton Lodge student accommodation office and the Robinson Library). At the Robinson Library there lives a comprehensive – and, to me, valuable beyond price – archive of Stanford manuscripts and early Stanford-related publications. Upon beginning to explore this archive, 'then felt I like a watcher of the skies / When a new planet swims into his ken.' Mr Michael Sharpe's aid in tracking down Robinson Library manuscripts for me was especially valuable.

The following persons read earlier versions of this thesis, and/or heard several of my presentations based on the thesis: Dr Gordon Atkinson, Dr Nessayah Buder-Gallagher, Mr David Clarence, Dr Bernard Colbert, Mrs Merrowyn Deacon, Professor James Franklin, Mr Valentine Gallagher, Dr John Garzoli, Professor Emeritus Paul Gottfried, Professor Emeritus John Griffiths, Dr Amanda Harris, Professor Emerita Margaret Kartomi, Mrs Anna Krohn, Mr Anthony Krohn, Professor Emeritus Ralph Locke, Dr Alan Maddox, Mrs Marina Marsden Parton, Dr Adrian McNeil, Dr Rhoderick J. McNeill, Professor Kerry R. Murphy, Dr Kathleen Nelson, Miss Jennifer Nowell, Dr Neal Peres Da Costa, Mr James Rogerson, Dr Wanda Skowronska, Ms Judith Stove, Mrs Margaret Swann, Professor

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Invidious though it is to single out individuals in this context, I cannot forbear to note here the unstinting help and encouragement provided to me by two experts with especially profound Stanfordian connections: Professor Jeremy Dibble, whom I met at Durham University during my early-2020 trip to England (as well as during his own 2015 trip to Australia); and Mr Daniel Wilkinson, Secretary of the Charles Villiers Stanford Society, which labours mightily to make Stanford's creative achievements better known. I can only hope that the thesis gives them even half as much satisfaction to read as I have felt through reading their own works on the topic.

Mr Geoffrey McConnell of Northern Ireland very kindly, and at great trouble to himself, lent me a copy (the only one now in existence, it seems) of his 2002 MA dissertation concerning Stanford's organ sonatas. Though in some respects I have arrived at interpretative conclusions that differ from his, I am thankful for the opportunity to have read his own findings.

The comments on Stanford's music which appeared in Germany and Austria before, during, and after the First World War have not, to my knowledge, been cited in any earlier Anglophone literature on the composer. I must here show my gratitude to Ms Nathalie Buratto for her characteristically expert translations (quoted mostly in my Chapter Two) of these documents.

Several portions of the thesis have already been printed. The section dealing with Stanford's *Sonata Celtica* reworks an article of mine in Britain's *The Organ*. In a comparable manner, my analyses of Stanford's First and Third Organ Sonatas originated in essays by me that appeared in the *Sydney Organ Journal*. Most of my comments on Op. 182 were initially published in *Spirited*, the gazette of the English Music Festival. From a profile that I wrote for *Organ Australia*, my comments regarding Samuel Sebastian Wesley derive. I

have recycled here my commentary on two works which Stanford composed in explicit homage to Sir Hubert Parry; this commentary has been accepted for publication by *The American Organist* for later in 2021. In addition, I have here cannibalised several paragraphs from a Stanford profile which the Sydney music monthly *Limelight* commissioned from me. Thanks, then, are due to *The Organ's* editor Mr Robert Matthew-Walker; to *Sydney Organ Journal* editor Dr Peter Meyer; to *Spirited's* commissioning editor Mr Daniel Mitterdorfer; to *The American Organist's* editor Mr Todd Sisley; to *Limelight's* editors Ms Jo Litson and Mr Clive Paget; and to *Organ Australia's* then editor, Mr Christopher Akehurst. With the *Sonata Celtica* material, although my interpretations have changed somewhat since *The Organ* used my article, the changes involved concern emphasis much more than they concern basic content.

To conclude, a sadly needful valediction. Fr Paul Stenhouse MSC, polymathic historian and tireless editor of *Annals Australasia*, read early versions of passages in this thesis. It had been my earnest hope that he would live long enough to see the entire document. That hope, alas, was never to be fulfilled. His death in 2019 – after dreadful physical sufferings which he bore with the utmost cheerfulness – ended an intellectual alliance and personal friendship that had lasted for more than a quarter of a century. I thus find myself adopting a variant of the epigraph which Stanford applied to his *Magnificat*, written on the over-optimistic assumption that its dedicatee Parry would see it: 'This work, which death prevented me from giving [Fr Stenhouse] in life, I dedicate to his name in grief.'

R.J.S.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Prologue

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) holds an anomalous, indeed an extraordinary, place within the annals of Britain’s music. His name has never entirely dropped out of public consciousness; and among those who love the choral singing of Anglican cathedrals, his output has always been cherished. Even the most limited and generalist encyclopaedia article about British musical history would perforce include him. Nonetheless, most of his actual oeuvre (the Anglican service music aside) fell into profound neglect after his death in 1924, until it began to undergo resuscitation on Compact Disc during the 1980s and 1990s. Perhaps only Holst, among British composers, can be likened to Stanford in the extent to which his name is generally recognised and the bulk of his music overlooked. Kevin O’Connell, a fellow Irishman, penetratingly remarked in 2005:

Wearing a pince-nez, Stanford fixes us from his Victorian enclosure with a cautious stare. Ignore me if you want to, his look appears to say: the loss will probably be yours. And ignore him is what we largely continue to do. Stanford’s fate has been the worst, short of complete obscurity, a composer can suffer: he is talked about as a ‘significant’ figure and precursor while his music is little performed or cared about.¹

Another Hibernian commentator, Joseph J. Ryan, had commented back in 1991:

Stanford occupies a peculiar place in Irish memory: admired but not honoured; recognised as somewhat detached, engaged with the old order, espousing a dilettante approach to a tradition only partly understood, and as one who treated this in a picturesque fashion. His musicianship and technical facility are not in question; but his achievement has not won for him the unalloyed acclaim of his countrymen.²

¹ Kevin O’Connell, ‘Stanford and the gods of modern music,’ *The Musical Times*, 146:1890 (Spring 2005): 33–44, at 33.

² Joseph J. Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland* (PhD diss., National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1991), 264–265.

In a similar fashion, Julian Onderdonk remarked (2003) that ‘he [Stanford] remains largely a forgotten figure, a shadowy presence inhabiting the margins of monographs on his more famous pupils, but rarely examined in his own right.’³ Stephen Banfield – eschewing Ryan’s and Onderdonk’s caution – came close (as recently as 2010) to writing off the entire musical environment in which Stanford flourished. Banfield’s condemnation of Victorian Britain’s composers *en bloc* was the academic equivalent of throwing up one’s hands in frustration. For him, these composers were:

disillusioned, too insecure, too secure, too ambitious, too unambitious, dissenters, crusaders, conformists, time-servers, their music in hopeless opposition or disappointing in one way or another, one has to make too many excuses for it and for them to celebrate their achievement in sustained, uncontingent terms. ... Nor do those nearer the end of the century – Parry, Stanford, [Dame Ethel] Smyth, Elgar – admit of a steeply soaring [graph] such as may be habitually viewed in other Victorian spheres or in other countries ...⁴

Such neglect and such rushing to intemperate judgement have been particularly ill-advised with regard to Stanford’s organ works, which are both numerous and consistently fine. His writing for solo organ began in the 1870s and did not end till 1923. I began – during mid-2018 – my PhD in musicology at the Sydney Conservatorium in the specific hope of making better known Stanford’s contributions to the organ’s repertoire. The experience of completing the PhD, far from having left me jaded with these contributions, only intensified and deepened the esteem for them which I had already come to feel. So did my performances as both concert and church organist. I write from experience of how a good deal of Stanford’s organ writing feels under the hands (and under the feet) of the player. When recording my 2019 CD, *Pax Britannica: Organ Music by Victorian and Edwardian Composers*, I included a Stanford piece (Op. 101 No. 6, discussed in this document’s Chapter Five).

Having devoted my Monash University BMus honours thesis to Stanford and the organ during 2017, I decided that I wanted to explore the topic in far greater detail than a mere undergraduate document permitted, more particularly since little has ever been

³ Julian Onderdonk, ‘[Book Review],’ *Notes* 60:2 (December 2003), 456–458, at 457.

⁴ Stephen Banfield, “‘What Do You Think of Stainer’s Crucifixion?’: Current Victorian Musicology,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15:1 (April 2010), 119–129, at 126.

published in English about the subject. (There has been nothing, so far as I can determine, in any other tongue; Edward J. Dent did make general references to Stanford's music in a 1930 German-language article for Guido Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, but he remained silent on the organ works.) While, fortunately, in 2017 everything that Stanford wrote for the organ became available on recordings, most of his organ pieces have remained unheard in recitals even within the British Isles.

At the risk of seeming self-revelatory to the point of narcissism, I might perhaps be permitted a few further words here about my Stanford-related background. Although I am unable to recall a period when I did not at least vaguely know Stanford's name, I had – unlike nearly all modern admirers of Stanford's work – no youthful experience (either as participant or as listener) of Anglicanism's musical traditions. Moreover, when I first did hear some Stanford music as a youth, I cannot claim to have been immediately taken with it. Never did it afflict me with anything like the various *coups de foudre* which I had already experienced upon discovering the music of Wagner, Bruckner, and Franck. Only by a gradual, almost insensible process, over months spent exploring Stanford's output, did I discern the full merit of it. Thereafter I found it increasingly hard to live without it, and increasingly unpleasant even to attempt so living.

1.2 Research questions

With a body of music both as substantial and, for the most part, as thoroughly unnoticed as Stanford's organ oeuvre is, two questions arise with particular force. First, what are the consistent features of this oeuvre? Second, what relations do they bear to the musical *Zeitgeist* of Europe more generally?

It is my contention (as it was already my contention, albeit, obviously, at much shorter length, in my Monash honours thesis) that Stanford, when writing for the organ, had a substantially greater awareness of Continental trends in music for that instrument than did most of his predecessors and contemporaries in England. Unlike many of them, Stanford never held a cathedral post. His long-term job at Trinity College, Cambridge, left him free to pursue outside employment in a way that almost no cathedral's director of music would have dared contemplate at the time. Besides, unlike

all of Britain's other leading organist-composers at the time, Stanford was not an Englishman.

By the very fact of his Irish birth and nurture – not to mention his Teutonic training – he could not help being considered, in Victorian-Edwardian England (more especially its ecclesiastical life), something of a man apart. Four years before O'Connell's 2005 essay, another specialist in Irish music, Axel Klein, shrewdly attributed posterity's mistreatment of Stanford's output to its internationalist musical character:

Too Irish for the English, too English for the Irish and too German for both, he fell between [*sic*] all stools, where only a new appreciation in a more multicultural environment will help his position.⁵

From his earliest to his last organ works, Stanford showed himself to be aware of wider European examples: not merely Mendelssohn and Brahms, indeed not merely Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger, Charles-Marie Widor, Alexandre Guilmant, and Max Reger among organist-composers, but also such less predictable influences as Dvořák, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, and Fauré. Of these last four, Saint-Saëns alone produced a significant body of organ music; with the other three, the stylistic traces were of a more general type, and related to Stanford's acquaintance with their orchestral and chamber music.

This acquaintance points to yet another factor which separated Stanford from England's other organist-composers of his day: his activities in secular musical spheres, as teacher, administrator, and conductor. His achievements on the rostrum included choral and operatic as well as orchestral performances. Such versatility over decades made it impossible for him to limit his musical perception to the organ loft and the choir stall. Even if Stanford's Hibernian origins had not sufficed to differentiate him from nearly all his organ-playing colleagues in England (with their tendencies towards that ecclesiastical politicking immortally conveyed in Anthony Trollope's Barchester novels), his quenchless interest in operatic, orchestral, and chamber-music genres would have been enough to do so.

⁵ Axel Klein, *Irish Classical Recordings: A Discography of Irish Art Music* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 45.

1.3 Literature review

As will have become apparent from the foregoing, little commentary has been published anywhere on the topic of Stanford's organ compositions. The biographies – both from 2002 – by Jeremy Dibble (*Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician*) and Paul Rodmell (*Charles Villiers Stanford*) treat these compositions only in passing, confine themselves to discussing only a small number of them in detail, and in Rodmell's case show little enthusiasm for the genre. (Dibble subsequently wrote the booklet notes for Priory Records' recent *intégrale* of Stanford's organ output, as well as for several other Stanford CDs.) Further information about these two books, and of the other secondary sources mentioned in the next two paragraphs, can be found in the present thesis's Bibliography.

Generalist histories of British music either disregard Stanford's organ music outright (Eric Blom, *Music in England*, 1947; Percy M. Young's *A History of British Music*, 1967; Henry Raynor's *Music in England*, 1980) or neglect most of it (Nicholas Temperley [ed.], *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain*, 1981; John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, 1999). Nor will readers who seek information on Stanford and the organ find themselves much better served by existing histories of the actual instrument. For example, Peter Hardwick's *British Organ Music of the Twentieth Century* (2003) is unenthusiastic and perfunctory when it comes to Stanford. The chapter on British organ writing which Andrew McCrae contributed to *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (1998, ed. Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber) has markedly more sympathetic coverage of Stanford than Hardwick's, but confines the composer to a mere paragraph. *Twentieth-Century Organ Music*, a 2011 survey edited by Reger specialist Christopher S. Anderson, omits Stanford entirely, as – more than three decades beforehand – did the late Peter Williams's *A New History of the Organ: From the Greeks to the Present Day* (1980). *The British Organ*, by Cecil Clutton and Austin Niland (1963), had likewise left Stanford out.

It is to the periodical literature, and to a handful of unpublished academic theses, that one must turn for coverage of Stanford's organ-related creativity. Harvey Grace, in an obscure British magazine called *The Rotunda*, gave substantial space to Stanford

when discussing (1926) modern British composers for the organ. Three 1962 articles on Stanford by Gavin Brown appeared in the *Quarterly Record of the Incorporated Association of Organists*; these scarcely do more than touch on the composer's organ output. More comprehensive and insightful treatment can be found in Geoffrey McConnell's 2002 master's thesis from the University of Ulster in Belfast (*Stanford's Preoccupation with the Organ Sonata, 1917–1918*), and in a much briefer document than McConnell's: Stephanie Burgoyne's 2016 essay for *The Diapason* in Illinois, an essay which (like McConnell's production) concentrates on the five organ sonatas.

Indispensable to an understanding of Stanford's compositional processes more generally is a vast doctoral dissertation from 2012 that deals principally with his piano music: Adèle Commins' *Charles Villiers Stanford's Preludes for Piano op. 163 and op. 179: A Musicological Retrospective*. It would be remiss of me if I failed to acknowledge here my debt to Dr Commins's researches, when it comes to a comprehension of Stanford's artistic character.

I have also benefited from certain historians who have concentrated on matters without direct Stanford connections, and in some instances without direct musical connections of any sort. Some of these historians have chronicled nationalism generally (Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Elie Kedourie); others have concentrated on nationalism in relation to music (Celia Applegate, Richard Taruskin); still others analyse internationalism, in both its musical and its wider artistic aspects (notably Sarah Collins and Dana Gooley). These and other authors are further discussed in Chapter Four, the most conspicuously theoretical section of the present thesis.

1.4 The study's scope and research methods

Fifty-five organ compositions by Stanford have come down to us. This is not a gigantic total, given that Stanford's list of opus numbers reaches 194 – vocal, chamber, and orchestral works form bigger proportions of his oeuvre than organ works do – but it is still a substantial corpus of music, in quantitative as well as qualitative terms.⁶ Some of

⁶ It hardly needs saying that the automatic equation of musical quantity with musical quality is always a problematic one. Were the former synonymous with the latter, then, for instance, Sibelius would be remembered primarily for his chamber and piano pieces – which dominate his

it consists of miniatures that take up only two or three pages each. At the other extreme come the five organ sonatas of the Great War years, the last four of which take over twenty minutes each to perform. Without a thorough knowledge of this material, it is impossible to discern in full the nature of Stanford's creativity.

In the pages that follow, I concentrate on the organ works which strike me as representing the composer's most distinctive productions in the medium. To this end, I have based the thesis primarily on the following methods:

- score analysis;
- surveying of primary sources, which are particularly rich when it comes to testimonies by Stanford's pupils (several of whom themselves became organists);
- a discographic overview (since the music in question has periodically turned up on recordings since the mid-1960s, although in very limited amounts before the twenty-first century); and
- practice-based research, the last-named deriving from my own interests as performer.

1.5 Significance of the study

It has been rare for composers to produce large quantities of organ music when their main fame has rested upon other attainments. Such composers, it is true, do exist (Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Franck, Messiaen); but the overall trend has been precisely the other way. The bulk of the organ music heard in recitals, when it is not by these five figures, is usually by figures known almost solely to organists themselves (including Rheinberger, Reger, Widor, Marcel Dupré, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Louis Vierne, Jean Langlais, and Petr Eben; strangely, neither Reger nor Karg-Elert, for all their dedication to producing organ music, ever played the organ well).

Viewed in this light, Stanford's contributions to the genre acquire an extra noteworthiness. They bespeak a man who was very much *au fait* with every variety of art-music experience during his lifetime: symphonic writing, chamber-music writing, choral writing, and – his greatest single love – operatic writing. Hence the prevailing idiom of Stanford's organ output, which is at least as apt to reflect several of these other

worklist, not least because of his youthful enthusiasm for both those genres – and only secondarily for his orchestral pieces.

media as it is to echo earlier organists' creations. I hope that my efforts will lead to a greater awareness of just how good most of this music is; how much it still has to say to listeners well beyond the usual milieu of organ recitals or celebrations of British music; and how, far from embodying any kind of parochialism, it exhibits (not least because of Stanford's own geographically pluralistic training) a genuinely European outlook.

1.6 Outline of the dissertation

Chapter Two provides a focussed epitome of Stanford's career, and explains the amalgam of musical and social circumstances by which Stanford's unique artistic synthesis was, in effect, forced upon him. These circumstances include the upbringing he enjoyed as a more than usually privileged member of Dublin's Protestant minority; the early prowess which he demonstrated as an organist; the later apprenticeship which he underwent in Germany; his insistence upon combining the composer's role with the conductor's and the professor's; and his eventual fall from fashion, when younger musicians increasingly dismissed him as a ludicrous reactionary, while in post-independence Ireland he came to seem no better than a renegade 'West Briton.'

Chapter Three gives background information about organ music in nineteenth-century Europe as a whole, and nineteenth-century Britain in particular: how the latter was influenced by, and how it differed from, Continental models of organ composition; the indispensable role of Anglican cathedrals in employing organists, but also the increasing frequency of concert organists, unaffiliated (or, at most, intermittently affiliated) with any church; and how these factors influenced Stanford's own approach to the organ, both as regular player (until the 1890s) and as composer.

Chapter Four deals with the vexed issue of how much Stanford employed vernacularist resources and how much he embodied an internationalist aesthetic. It also deals with Stanford's own attitude to music's past.

Chapters Five and Six constitute the heart of the dissertation, and discuss specific areas of Stanford's organ oeuvre, the former chapter being mostly devoted to Stanford pieces for ecclesiastical use, the latter chapter concentrating on Stanford concert works. Here, the intersection where Ireland overlaps England, and where both Ireland and England overlap Europe, is particularly prominent.

Chapter Seven traces the reception history of Stanford's creations, and above all of his creations for the organ, which underwent consistent revival on CD from the 1980s, even if a wider awareness of Stanford's compositional merits has yet to penetrate mainstream concert life.

The concluding Chapter Eight summarises the intrinsic merits and qualities of Stanford's organ output, and its importance for those interested in a more rounded picture of the composer's oeuvre or of music in Victorian-Edwardian society more generally. It also provides suggestions for fields where further research would shed useful light on Stanford the organist-composer.

CHAPTER TWO: STANFORD'S CAREER: A SUMMARY

2.1 Introduction

The character of Stanford's ancestry and upbringing made it likely, and perhaps even guaranteed, that he would look upon life (more especially upon musical life) from a markedly cosmopolitan angle. In few ways did his nature and nurture resemble what was expected of an eminent composer in mid-Victorian Britain. The resultant distinctive cultural amalgam marked Stanford's organ output no less than it marked his output in other musical media. As early as 1907, the historian Ernest Walker recognised Stanford's exceptional knack for turning a wide range of artistic stimuli to his own creative advantage: 'individual as his utterance is,' Walker wrote, 'it is, so to speak, a very composite blend.'¹ How this 'composite blend' emerged from Stanford's tutelage, and from his early years abroad, is the present chapter's main theme.

2.2 Boyhood and youth

Famous composers' childhoods are frequently marked by paternal aversion to the very idea of trying to earn a living from writing music, and a determination that the composer-to-be shall seek some more stable profession.² Stanford suffered from no such familial hostility to his choice of career. Nor did he suffer from the opposite: that unsparing parental pushiness which musical history associates with Leopold Mozart. Rather, the closest parallel to Stanford's upbringing is Mendelssohn's, in terms of both the affluence that it presupposed, and the kindly encouragement that Stanford's parents showed.

On both sides of his family tree, Stanford, born in Dublin on 30 September 1852, belonged to Ireland's Protestant ruling caste: or, to use the term current at the time (and

¹ Ernest Walker, *A History of Music in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 301–302.

² More often than not (as in the cases of Handel, Telemann, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Elgar, and Stravinsky) the chosen profession is the law, though in Berlioz's case it was medicine.

mentioned with nostalgic affection in Stanford's 1914 memoirs), 'the Quality.'³ His father, John James Stanford, served as Clerk of the Crown for County Meath as well as examiner to Ireland's Chancery Court; his mother Mary, whose maiden name had been Henn, was the granddaughter of William Henn, a judge of the Court of King's Bench in Ireland from 1768 to 1791.

Both John James Stanford and Mary Stanford displayed musical talent at a level that would have enabled them to be professional performers, but for the widespread supposition among their Irish and English contemporaries that obtaining an income – let alone a full-time income – from music somehow dirtied the moral code of gentlefolk. Mary played the solo part in at least one piano concerto (Mendelssohn's First) at Dublin concerts.⁴ John James, in addition to being a competent cellist, showed sufficient gifts as a bass singer to have taken the title role in the first-ever Irish performance of *Elijah*.⁵ Hospitable by nature as well as by the necessity of his legal eminence, John James cultivated visiting musicians from abroad. Thus, while still a child Charles Villiers met Joseph Joachim, Adelina Patti and Henri Vieuxtemps. These guests' very names indicate that Stanford's Dublin, far from being a musical backwater, could attract the greatest virtuosos. Paganini had performed there in 1831, Liszt nine years later. At the time of Stanford's birth, the city's inhabitants numbered approximately 300,000. (During the horrors of the 1845–1849 Great Famine, Dublin's numbers had actually increased, in utter contrast to the population of Ireland as a whole. The reason: so many starving peasants had fled to the capital, hoping for better prospects there or, if that hope failed, for an easier exit to foreign lands.)

Not long after his seventh birthday, Charles Villiers gave his first recital as a pianist. Afterwards he would take up the violin and would achieve a high standard with that instrument as well. His earliest compositions appeared at around the same time as his piano debut.

³ Charles Villiers Stanford, *Pages from an Unwritten Diary* (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1914), 1.

⁴ John F. Porte, *Sir Charles V. Stanford* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1921), 7.

⁵ Stanford, *Pages*, 32.

Following young Stanford's return from a long stay with his parents in London (where he had acquired a love of the visual arts which never left him,⁶ and where he had taken piano lessons from the Austrian émigré Ernst Pauer),⁷ he embarked on organ study. Here his teacher was Dublin's leading organist: Sir Robert Prescott Stewart (1825–1894), of St Patrick's Cathedral, once home to none other than Jonathan Swift. Stewart – the subject of a 2009 doctoral dissertation⁸ – ranks among the few musicians about whom Stanford, in *Pages from an Unwritten Diary*, spoke with genuine fondness. Nothing if not open-minded, Stewart even went to Bayreuth in a journalistic capacity for the initial (1876) *Ring* cycle:

His [Stewart's] propensities, like those of most Kelts [*sic*], were for the opera-house rather than the concert-room. The articles which he wrote for the *Dublin Daily Express* on the Nibelungen were, with those written by Mr Hercules MacDonnell for the *Irish Times*, almost the best which appeared in any of the public press. Written far away from the clash of party, and the intrigues of the foreign stage, they are especially valuable for their freedom from prejudice and their fresh, but not inexperienced, outlook.⁹

Recent revivals of Stewart's own works, above all the *Concert Fantasia in D Minor* for organ solo (which appeared on a 2016 British CD recorded in Stewart's own cathedral), show the impact that Stewart must have left on his most distinguished student.¹⁰ In the *Concert Fantasia* there can be found a baroque-romantic hybrid idiom – Handel-tinged yet at no point merely mimicking the composer so beloved of the Victorians – which anticipates Stanford's own manner, even as it periodically echoes Mendelssohn. Furthermore, in one respect Stewart unwittingly served Stanford as a warning, a cautionary tale of what an Irish musician with rare natural aptitude should *not* do:

⁶ '[T]he main attraction to me was the collection of pictures, where I made my first acquaintance with the works of [Lord] Leighton, [Sir John] Millais, [G.F.] Watts, and the French and Belgian schools' (Stanford, *Pages*, 70). Stanford's Sixth Symphony of 1905 bears the inscription 'In honour of the life-work of a great artist: George Frederick Watts' (who had died the preceding year).

⁷ Stanford, *Pages*, 71.

⁸ Lisa Parker, *Robert Prescott Stewart (1825–1894): A Victorian Musician in Dublin* (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2009).

⁹ Stanford, *Pages*, 50.

¹⁰ Priory PRCD1168.

A little more dead-in-earnestness, and a greater grasp of the big things in life and art, would have made Stewart an outstanding man. But his easy-going nature, and the sloppy *laissez-faire* atmosphere which surrounded him, prevented his attainment of the highest place. It was hard, even for one gifted with so brilliant a brain, to live in a circle of half-baked musicians without being affected by their standard, and still harder to occupy a position in which he had no rival to excel or to learn from. He left his mark however on the 'melancholy island,' which was responsible both for his witty and versatile gifts and for the lack of opportunity to give value and effect to them.¹¹

The above paragraph comes from Stanford's memoirs and is itself written in a kind of autobiographical code. No-one accused, or ever could legitimately accuse, the mature Stanford of lacking either 'dead-in-earnestness' or a 'grasp of the big things in life and art.' His railing at those whom he regarded as inhabiting 'a circle of half-baked musicians' in 'a sloppy *laissez-faire* atmosphere' would become celebrated. And a fear of having 'no rival to excel or to learn from' is itself enough to account for Stanford's own eventual decision to expatriate himself.

Under Stewart's instruction, the young Stanford began to tackle elaborate organ repertoire, demonstrating therein a retentive musical memory which would afford him admirable service in all his performing roles. One Sunday at the cathedral, Stewart, unable to wait till the service's end, decided that he needed to quit the organ loft (where Stanford had been aiding him, presumably by changing the stops, possibly as page-turner also; someone else would have been operating the bellows). With the brief, frightening injunction, 'Here, Charlie, play something', Stewart departed. Young 'Charlie,' unabashed by a command that brooked no disobedience or hesitation, 'promptly played the "*St Ann[e]*" Prelude and Fugue from memory.'¹² Any organist who has ever been confronted with the manual and pedal intricacies of Bach's masterpiece, which are daunting enough even while the printed text rests placidly on the music-stand, will salute the teenage Stanford's skill.

¹¹ Stanford, *Pages*, 50–51.

¹² Harry Plunket Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1935), 36. This work, usually known in the English-speaking world as *St Anne* – not a title which Bach would have recognised – derives this name from the fugue's entirely coincidental resemblance to the hymn-tune of that name (a hymn-tune habitually sung to words beginning 'O God our help in ages past').

Back in England from 1870, Stanford hurled himself into musical activity at Cambridge, in spite of his father's hopes that he would gain an all-round education there. (Those hopes gained substance from young Stanford's acquisition of a scholarship in classical languages, as well as an organ scholarship.) The musical undergraduate showed particular diligence in his efforts as choral conductor – ensuring that the hitherto all-male Cambridge University Musical Society choir began to admit women – and in organ-playing. When John L. Hopkins, organist at Cambridge's Trinity College, died after a long illness, Stanford succeeded him in the role, at an annual salary of 100 pounds.¹³ He kept Stewart abreast of Cambridge developments, writing to his former teacher in March 1872 that 'We sang some of your G service [Stewart's *Service in G Major*] at chapel last Sunday, and the men were delighted with it: so the scholars all drank your health at dinner today with full honours.'¹⁴ Meanwhile he toured continental Europe during his academic vacations, staying mostly in Germany, Switzerland, and France. He had, in short, already become an unusually adroit and cosmopolitan musician by the time he embarked on formal study at the Leipzig Conservatoire, beginning in mid-1874.

Perhaps this Leipzig sojourn, although Cambridge's own Sir William Sterndale Bennett had recommended it to Stanford, came too late to benefit him much. Undeniably he found little to praise, and much to deplore, concerning the attitude of Leipzig professor Carl Reinecke, to whom Sterndale Bennett had given Stanford a letter of introduction.¹⁵ In his 1914 memoirs, Stanford took his revenge on Reinecke, who had died only four years earlier:

Of all the dry musicians I have ever known he was the most desiccated. He had not a good word for any contemporary composer, even for those of his own kidney. He loathed Wagner, once describing Elsa [in *Lohengrin*] to me as a young woman without brains enough to make out the list of clothes for the wash, sneered at Brahms, and had no enthusiasm of any sort. But he enjoyed himself hugely when he was expounding and writing canons, and had a fairly good idea of teaching them. His composition

¹³ Dibble, *Stanford*, 56.

¹⁴ O. J. Vignoles, *Memoir of Sir Robert P. Stewart, Kt., Mus.Doc., Professor of Music in the University of Dublin (1862–94)* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. 1899), 99.

¹⁵ Stanford, *Pages*, 156.

training had no method about it whatever. He occasionally made an astute criticism and that was all. He never gave a pupil a chance of hearing his own work, the only really valuable means of training, and the better the music, the less he inclined to encourage it. He was in fact the embodiment of the typical 'Philister' [philistine].¹⁶

This all makes for curious reading, in view of the similar attacks later made on Stanford's own, likewise fundamentally conservative methods of tuition. (Quite possibly Stanford did Reinecke less than justice, given that the latter's *Undine Sonata* for flute and piano continues to be heard on occasion; given, also, that Reinecke's other eminent pupils included Grieg, Janáček, Max Bruch, Isaac Albéniz, and Dame Ethel Smyth.)¹⁷ For other German teachers with whom Stanford studied – the organist-pianist Robert Papperitz in Leipzig itself, and Friedrich Kiel in Berlin – he had much kinder words. Papperitz he called 'a broad-minded sympathetic teacher'; Kiel he remembered as 'that most delightful of men.'¹⁸

As Stanford's esteem for Wagner and endurance of Reinecke's anti-Wagnerism combine to indicate, Stanford himself had already become open to music from both sides of the 'War of the Romantics': a war bloodless but, during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, embittered. He met Brahms on a trip to Bonn, and also heard Brahms's antipode Liszt play in Leipzig. Of the conscious artifice that marked Liszt's keyboard approach during old age, Stanford left a perspicacious account, admiring but clear-eyed:

When Liszt raised his arms above his head, he did so, to be frank, simply to make a theatrical display which would catch the eyes of an audience. He was quite capable of showing off, with his tongue in his cheek. All the same he had brains enough to know that the poise of a hand, whether at the distance of two feet or two inches above the keys, makes no difference to the tone. A careful observer of his playing would have noticed that no matter how high was the upward lift of his arms, the downward fall was always in time to allow of his hands being in the same position to strike

¹⁶ Stanford, *Pages*, 156–157.

¹⁷ Sadly few are those composers who have demonstrated adequate reverence towards those who taught them. It is well known that Bach's sons underestimated their father and teacher; that Beethoven showed Haydn insufficient respect; and that Debussy undervalued Franck. Stanford was neither the first nor the last composer who can be faulted for unfairness towards a pedagogue.

¹⁸ Stanford, *Pages*, 157.

the keys as if the brachial flourish had not been made at all. To hit the key from a height would be to risk wrong notes and damage to the instrument. It was magnificent but it was humbug. Liszt knew it; he always played for musicians with an immovable body and a quiet repressed dignity, reserving his acrobatic performances for audiences whom he in his heart despised.¹⁹

Neither then nor subsequently did Stanford lack a solid German following. Many of his compositions appeared in Breitkopf and Härtel's lists before any British publishing imprint issued them. Both Hans Richter and Hans von Bülow liked his music and conducted it whenever they could. ('Good gracious! What wonderful progress your country is making owing to your genius!', is how Bülow responded to Stanford's First Piano Trio.²⁰) In January 1889, there occurred in Berlin a concert entirely devoted to Stanford's output, with Joachim playing the solo part of Stanford's Op. 32 *Suite for Violin and Orchestra* (and with Stanford himself on the podium). It is hard to imagine any subsequent composer from the United Kingdom, except presumably Britten, ever becoming so popular in central Europe that Germans would ask him to give a concert consisting exclusively of his own music when he was not yet thirty-seven years old.²¹

Other Continental maestri who publicly performed Stanford's works included Willem Mengelberg, Fritz Kreisler, and Enrique Fernandez Arbós (the last-named being the dedicatee of Stanford's First Violin Concerto). In 1911, no less a figure than Mahler

¹⁹ Stanford, *Pages*, 59.

²⁰ Porte, *Stanford*, 40.

²¹ As evidence (of which more subsequently) that Stanford was less popular among Austrians than among Germans, a harsh review from a Viennese critic in 1884 deserves to be cited: 'As a composer, Stanford is on approximately the same level as Cowen – but only approximately, the latter being more inventive at least. At best, one could say that the five movements of Stanford's serenade reveal a certain formalistic talent which, supported by a remarkable gift for emulation, excels at reproduction. Devoid of any ingenuity, the movements burble along in the waters of musical imitation. There is not a single original idea, not a single self-invented theme. The Allegro is not lively, the Scherzo not cheerful, the Nocturne not gloomy, and the Intermezzo, with its fidgeting violin figures, was only received more graciously because of the orchestra's astounding virtuosity.' 'W.Fr.', 'Theater und Kunst,' *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 18:70 (11 March 1884), 6. 'Cowen' refers to Sir Frederic Hymen Cowen (1852–1935), born in Jamaica and trained in Germany but for the most part domiciled in England. Although Cowen's early pieces won praise on the Continent as well as in Britain (like Stanford, he had taken lessons in Leipzig from Reinecke), he achieved more lasting fame by his conducting, notably of the Hallé Orchestra.

conducted Stanford's Third (*Irish*) Symphony in New York.²² (The symphony's first American performance had taken place four years beforehand, under Walter Damrosch, with the New York Symphony Orchestra.)²³ Australian audiences had encountered the *Irish* Symphony as early as 1890, when the Victorian Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Clarke – best known for compiling the overtures to several Gilbert and Sullivan operas – performed it at the Melbourne Town Hall.²⁴ Stanford had written the piece only three years earlier. The Italian composer-conductor Giuseppe Martucci introduced his compatriots to the same symphony in an 1898 Bologna concert, 'to a rapturous reception.'²⁵ Also during 1898, a much more celebrated Italian than Martucci expressed his pleasure at the Anglo-Irishman's choral music. Verdi (who had met Stanford at the 1893 first night of *Falstaff*) wrote to the younger composer as follows, in slightly garbled English:

Very flattered to have received your *Requiem*. It has made an excellent impression on me. It is very well written: written like a master, as a rule I would have expected it [*sic*] from a composition signed Stanford.²⁶

2.3 Composer, conductor, teacher, and knight

After Stanford returned to England in 1877, he soon settled into what would become a lifelong routine of combining teaching with conducting, organ playing, administration, and composing: except that 'routine' is scarcely the right word to use in connection with so mercurial and volatile a temperament as his. During 1883 he became professor of composition at the newly-established Royal College of Music, where – with mostly

²² Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years, Chronicles and Commentaries*, Vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 379; Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 4: A New Life Cut Short (1907–1911)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1147.

²³ Critical responses in America to the *Irish* Symphony were polite rather than wildly enthusiastic. Richard Aldrich, *The New York Times'* music correspondent since 1902, told his readers: 'It is not great music nor wholly original in style, but it is charming, of sustained interest and made with much dexterity and skill in the manipulation of its material.' Richard Aldrich, *Concert Life in New York 1902–1923*, ed. Harold Johnson (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1941), 193–194.

²⁴ Thérèse Radic, 'The Victorian Orchestra 1889–1891: In the wake of the Centennial Exhibition Orchestra, Melbourne, 1888,' *Australian Music Research* 1 (1996), 13–101, at 18–19 and 76. Sir Frederic Hymen Cowen was the Melbourne performance's conductor.

²⁵ Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 299.

²⁶ Letter from Verdi to Stanford, 21 October 1898: MS 4253; archives of the Royal College of Music; quoted in Dibble, *Stanford*, 300.

student casts – he conducted numerous operas, notably the first uncut *Dido and Aeneas* performance since Purcell's lifetime, and a *Falstaff* production in 1896, only three years after the work's La Scala premiere. From 1887 he simultaneously held the music professorship at Cambridge. By the time he obtained a knighthood from Edward VII in 1902, Stanford had already been given honorary doctorates from Oxford (1883) and Durham (1894). In 1904 he would acquire another honorary doctorate, this time from the University of Leeds;²⁷ the same year he became a member of Prussia's *Königlichen Akademie der Künste* (a privilege which became a source of embarrassment to him after 1914). Moreover, he took an important role in obtaining similar awards for others. During the early 1890s he organised the Cambridge process whereby Saint-Saëns, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Max Bruch, and Arrigo Boito had honorary degrees bestowed on them.

None of these accomplishments – nor Stanford's happy marriage to Jennie Anna Maria Wetton, daughter of a property developer, which produced two children (Geraldine and Guy) – mollified a temper at once eloquent, wrathful, and genuinely mystified by his own capacity for engendering fear in others. Sir George Grove lamented, after being subjected at length to the rough edge of Stanford's tongue during an RCM board meeting, that

somehow the spirit of the devil himself had been working in Stanford all the time – as it sometimes does, making him so nasty and quarrelsome and contradictory as no one but he can be! He is a most remarkably clever and able fellow, full of resource and power – no doubt of that – but one has to purchase it often at a very dear price.²⁸

Harry Plunket Greene, in his 1935 biography of Stanford, tried his best to minimise the hurt that his old friend's abrasiveness could and did cause. His best was not much. Still, if ever musical history contains a validation of Mark Antony's lament in *Julius Caesar* ('The evil that men do lives after them, / The good is oft interrèd with their bones'), Stanford is that validation.

²⁷ Dibble, *Stanford*, 358.

²⁸ Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002), 169.

The greatest personal influence which Stanford exercised was as composition teacher. Most of those who had regular dealings with him face to face were his pupils. His closest Continental counterparts, in terms of his pedagogy's lasting consequences, were all French-based: Franck in the late nineteenth century, Vincent d'Indy in the early twentieth century, and Nadia Boulanger after 1918.

A list of Stanford's students comprises a formidable roll-call indeed, including as it does Holst, Vaughan Williams, John Ireland, Herbert Howells, Frank Bridge, E.J. Moeran, Arthur Benjamin, Edgar Bainton, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Gordon Jacob, Ivor Gurney, William Hurlstone, George Butterworth, Hamish McCunn, Rebecca Clarke, Charles Wood (a fellow Irishman), Sir George Dyson, Sir Eugene Goossens, and Sir Arthur Bliss. As Goossens pointed out, 'it is hard to name any reputable English composer of the period between 1900 and 1924 who was not at one time or another a Stanford pupil.'²⁹ Most of these artists recalled Stanford with admiration. Occasionally admiration became something close to worship, as with Coleridge-Taylor, who went so far as to keep a portrait of Stanford atop his piano.³⁰ More frequently Stanford's students granted him a reluctant, guarded respect. Goossens described Stanford as 'strict and often intolerant', but also as 'a great teacher.'³¹ Vaughan Williams stressed the fact that Stanford's nature scorned deceit and nuance: 'if a thing was right it was right; if it was wrong it was wrong.'³² Overall, Vaughan Williams felt gratitude, if not unalloyed pleasure, when he remembered Stanford's ministrations:

Stanford was a great teacher, and like all great teachers he was narrow-minded. A broad-minded teacher is useless. ... Once, when I was his pupil, I showed him what I considered was a world-shaking masterpiece;

²⁹ Eugene Goossens, *Overture and Beginners: A Musical Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1951), 80. Nevertheless Stanford failed to detect the young Gerald Finzi's potential. 'Stanford tested him [Finzi], noted his lack of facility, and advised him against a musical career' (Diana McVeagh, *Gerald Finzi: His Life and Music* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005), 14.

³⁰ Michael Trend, *The Music Makers: Heirs and Rebels of the English Musical Renaissance, Edward Elgar to Benjamin Britten* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985), 52.

³¹ Goossens, *Overture*, 81, 80.

³² Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 19.

he looked at it and then said curtly: 'All rot, my boy.' He was quite right. It was. But it took me some time to discover it.³³

While Gordon Jacob regretted Stanford's lack of interest in music after Dvořák, he remembered Stanford with approval on the whole. In old age he described his erstwhile pedagogue thus:

a good technician, a lovable Irishman with the poetic imagination of his race and a good knowledge of, and love of, good literature and art and a great sense of fun, if not of humour.³⁴

Jacob, according to his 1995 biographer, recognised a truth all too easy for subsequent generations to neglect: namely, Stanford's lack of any desire to force students into the one mould. Stanford, however authoritarian his didactic methods might have been, wanted no mere epigones:

When he came up against obstinacy, pride and the self-willed desire to follow the latest fashion ... his fiery Irish temperament would flare up ... He was, however, genuinely proud of his 'children' and pleased that they all wrote different sorts of music.³⁵

A 1924 editorial tribute in *The Musical Times* likewise stresses the diversity of idioms which Stanford's 'children' demonstrated. The following extract's last two sentences are almost Stanfordian in their curt, no-nonsense wording:

... stringent as he was, he developed rather than suppressed the individuality of those who studied with him. What trace of Stanford is there in the music of such widely diverse composers as, for example, Ireland, Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, Holst, and Hurlstone? He provided the best of answers to the statement that 'composition cannot be taught.' It is, of course, as teachable a subject as any other practical department of music, and it could hardly be better taught than by Stanford.³⁶

³³ Ralph Vaughan Williams, 'Charles Villiers Stanford,' in *Some Thoughts on Beethoven's Choral Symphony with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 159–163, at 161–162.

³⁴ Letter of Gordon Jacob (date not given) to Rhoderick J. McNeill, quoted in Rhoderick J. McNeill, *A Critical Study of the Life and Works of E.J. Moeran* (PhD diss., University of Melbourne, 1982), 5.

³⁵ Eric Wetherell, *Gordon Jacob: A Centenary Biography* (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), 25.

³⁶ Anon. 'Walter Parratt, February 10, 1841 – March 27, 1924, and Charles Villiers Stanford, September 30, 1852 – March 29, 1924,' *The Musical Times*, 65:975 (May 1924), 401–403, at 402.

Sir George Dyson emphasised what Jacob's recollections merely implied. That is, Dyson pointed out the fruitful creative dialectic which emerged from students' work, as they processed – before (often) reacting against – Stanford's harmonic and structural traditionalism:

It is said that some of them occasionally concocted a deliberate imitation [of Stanford's own style] in order to please him. Some certainly wrote in the knowledge that they would be condemned from the first bar. In a certain sense the very rebellion he fought was the most obvious fruit of his methods. And in view of what some of these rebels have since achieved, one is tempted to wonder whether there is really anything better a teacher can do for his pupils, than drive them into various forms of revolution.³⁷

Edgar Bainton, who after protracted piano-teaching in Newcastle-upon-Tyne would move to Australia (1934) and become the Sydney Conservatorium's director, echoed Dyson's sentiments:

It is a curious paradox that in spite of his dominating personality (at times aggressively dominating) hardly one of his many pupils' works shows any influence of Stanford ... And this fact in itself is surely the finest tribute to his teaching, that he kept his own personality in the background and helped them whether they were conscious of it or not to express themselves, to say clearly what they had to say.³⁸

Rebecca Clarke, one of Stanford's few female composition pupils (she had first come to Stanford's notice when her father had sent to him various songs that Rebecca had written), benefited from advice which a stranger had given to her before the first lesson. The advice contained shrewd psychological insight:

I was dithering with nervousness [Clarke recalled] and must have looked it, for as I waited outside Stanford's room, a pleasant young woman came up and asked if this were my first day? Yes, I said. 'Do you know Sir Charles?' she asked. I told her, no. 'Well,' she said, 'I'll give you a tip: don't let him see you're afraid of him. If he criticises you, answer him back.' I swallowed, and thanked her.

³⁷ Henry Walford Davies et al., 'Charles Villiers Stanford by some of his pupils,' *Music & Letters* 5:3 (July 1924), 197–198.

³⁸ Edgar Bainton et al., 'Sir Charles Stanford and his Pupils,' *The RCM Magazine* 20:2 (1923–1924), 55–61, at 55; quoted in Rodmell, *Stanford*, 367.

Sir Charles was a very tall, loosely built man, with a friendly though slightly caustic expression. Producing the songs Papa had sent him he began to dissect them with fascinating accuracy and justice. I could see why he was considered the finest composition teacher in England, and I was enthralled. Presently he grumbled 'But of course it's difficult to make out your very illegible writing.' Suddenly I remembered the advice the girl in the passage had given me. 'I thought my writing was pretty clear,' I said with an attempt at bravado, but even to my own ears my voice had a quaver in it. Sir Charles looked at me with his quizzical downturned smile. He was quite aware of what I was up to; and we became friends on the spot.³⁹

Women seem to have been consistently better than men at noticing the milk of human kindness beneath Stanford's haughty exterior. Myopic from boyhood days, he would often give the false impression of administering conscious snubs when, in truth, his short-sightedness prevented him from recognising people's faces. Here is Plunket Greene on the topic:

That grim stare (quite unconscious on his part) actually frightened some people. We were once at a dinner-party together, and when we 'joined the ladies' a woman rushed up to me in a fever of excitement and said: 'I've been sitting next to the most fascinating man I've ever met. How *dare* they say a word against him!' She told me that when she heard that he was going to take her into dinner she had nearly sunk through the floor, and that when he had been introduced to her and looked down his nose at her in the well-known way she had almost made a bolt for home: but that when she had gone into dinner she had found herself sitting beside the best-informed, most gentle, courtly, brilliant and amusing man she had ever met, and had the evening of her life.⁴⁰

Generous treatment of students behind their backs is not a quality always to be found in distinguished musicians, but this quality Stanford possessed. Plunket Greene once more ('Friskin' refers to James Friskin, former Stanford composition pupil though afterwards recognised chiefly as a pianist):

I wonder if those ... at the College who came under the lash of his [Stanford's] tongue knew that when their backs were turned he fought for them like a tigress for her young? I could not give a better illustration

³⁹ Rebecca Clarke, *I Had a Father Too (or The Mustard Spoon)*, unpublished manuscript (1969–1973), 153; Dibble, *Stanford*, 376.

⁴⁰ Harry Plunket Greene, 'Stanford as I knew him,' *RCM Magazine* 20 (1923–1924), 77–86, at 84.

than the story which [critic] Robin Legge told of him the other day in the *Daily Telegraph*. (I quote from memory.) He and Stanford, he said, used to meet continually in the Savile Club and were the best of friends. But one day Stanford met him and passed him like a stranger, and this estrangement lasted for weeks. Then suddenly, one afternoon, he went up to Legge and said: 'You wrote a damnable notice of Friskin in the *D.T.*' 'Friskin!' said Legge, 'I never wrote a word about him.' 'Ye did, my boy,' said Stanford, 'for I saw ye in the Concert-room. Come and play piquet.' Exactly. A wrong, fancied if you will, not to himself but to one of his 'children.'⁴¹

The South African Percival R. Kirby, already well established as a professional timpanist before he began (during 1911) RCM composition lessons with Stanford, testified to his teacher's generous impulses. Kirby had just informed Stanford that he would soon be leaving Britain for his homeland:

... having accepted an appointment as Music Organizer to the Natal Education Department, I confess that I had a lump in my throat. I think that old 'Charlie' must have had one too, for he said to me, 'Me bhoy, ye're going into exile.' And then, putting his hand into the pocket of his overcoat, he drew out a small parcel, and handed it to me rather shyly. It contained a pocket wallet, made from the finest Russian leather, with my initials on it in gold lettering. ...

I have said that I was appointed to a post in Natal, and in my application I was permitted to name Parry, Stanford, and Charles Wood as references. None of them three, of course, would write me a testimonial, since that was contrary to College custom. Not until about ten years later, after I had been invited to occupy the Chair of Music at the University College, Johannesburg, which later became the University of the Witwatersrand, did I learn that Stanford had actually replied when requested by the High Commissioner to say what he thought of me. At a social function on the Rand I was introduced to the late Sir Reginald Blankenberg, of the Chamber of Mines, who expressed his pleasure in meeting me. He had, he said, been watching my career for some years, since at the time of my appointment he had been Assistant Secretary to the High Commissioner in London. 'You had some very fine references,' he said. I then asked him if Stanford had actually put pen to paper on my behalf. 'He did,' said Sir Reginald, 'and it's so long ago I don't mind telling you what he wrote.'

⁴¹ Plunket Greene, 'Stanford as I knew him,' 82–83.

The wily old Irish devil had written only three words and his initials on a postcard, but the words were 'Double the Salary'!⁴²

Bliss alone proved utterly hostile to Stanford. This comes as no surprise, since from the start he clearly regarded himself as a latter-day Berlioz to Stanford's Cherubini:

I prefer to forget the hours I spent with Stanford: they were not many and from the first moment when he scrawled on my manuscript 'He who cannot write anything beautiful falls back on the bizarre,' I felt the lack of sympathy between us. He was a good teacher when in the mood ... but his own disappointments as a composer perhaps affected his outlook and he had a devitalising effect on me.⁴³

When Bliss – in 1970 – came to write that last sentence, a certain *post hoc* rationalisation could well have coloured his memories. With the notable and unquestionable exception of operatic writing (of which more in a moment), Stanford suffered no serious 'disappointments as a composer' before 1914. On the other hand, by 1970 the general musical public had largely forgotten – or never realised – Stanford's wider compositional significance; and his music had ceased to be heard, save for a few of his contributions to the Anglican choral repertoire. At any rate, Bliss's rather churlish remarks helped confirm the prevalent underrating of Stanford's creative endeavours.

Numerous descriptions of Stanford's teaching dwell on his Hibernian accent, which, even after four decades' residence on English territory, remained as thick as if he had never in his life left the Emerald Isle. Perhaps he exaggerated this for histrionic effect, conscious that reproofs which his charges would merely ignore if he enunciated them in a bland, mainstream Oxford accent were far likelier to be usefully punitive if he delivered them in the raucous tones of a stage Irishman. Indubitably his regular iterations of 'my boy' emerged as 'me boy' (or in some accounts, 'me bhoy'). Then again, he might have wanted to acquire standard Received Pronunciation speech-patterns – the better to fit in with the English establishment – but simply have been unable to do so. Whatever the truth in this regard, on one famous occasion he rebuked John Ireland for alleged Germanic insipidities in a manuscript, and delivered the much-

⁴² Percival R. Kirby, 'Stanford – as I knew him Fifty-five Years ago,' *The RCM Magazine* 62:3 (Christmas 1966), 78–84, at 83 and 84.

⁴³ Arthur Bliss, *As I Remember* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), 28–29.

quoted verdict: 'All Brahms and water, me boy, and more water than Brahms.'⁴⁴ Ireland nevertheless remained much more thankful for Stanford's severity than might have been expected:

After one or two further tentative experiments on me he said, one day, 'I shall have to try another way with you, me boy, but ye'll find it a hard one.' He then started me on an exhaustive study of the modes, and modal counterpoint, based on Palestrina. He kept me at this for a whole year, not allowing me to write a bar of music, even secretly, except in this strict style. Stern discipline indeed – but I have since had every reason to bless him for it.⁴⁵

From Ireland's own pupil Geoffrey Bush comes the following, which echoes Coleridge-Taylor's devotion to Stanford's didacticism:

Even though Stanford could be quite harsh, it did not affect Ireland's own attitude to him. Ireland admired Stanford so much that he kept his photograph beside until the day he died [in 1962].⁴⁶

All these recollections paint a consistent picture of Stanford's pedagogy, different though they are in detail. Some pupils who expected (and who had good cause to expect) that Stanford would insult them found that he could display a surprising reserve of compassion. From this compassion, Yorkshire-born pianist Samuel Liddle benefited:

[Liddle's] nerves had been getting more on edge every day. Suddenly one morning he threw down his music and said he was damned if he would stand it any longer and rushed out. The next day when he turned up at College the porter told him Sir George Grove wanted to see him. When he was shown in Grove said: 'Liddle, Dr Stanford tells me you've been working too hard and are in need of a rest. Here's five pounds. Go to Brighton and come back in a week.' He came back in a week and the first person he saw was Stanford, standing on top of the steps. He said, with

⁴⁴ Lewis Foreman (ed.), *The John Ireland Companion* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 400.

⁴⁵ Foreman, *Companion*, 400.

⁴⁶ Geoffrey Bush, interview with Lisa Hardy, 19 April 1993; quoted in Lisa Hardy, *The British Piano Sonata 1870–1945* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001), 179.

that twinkle in his eye we all knew so well, 'Are y'better m'boy?' and took him by the arm; and from that moment [Liddle] was his devoted slave.⁴⁷

Young Percy Grainger, improbably enough, played the piano on at least four occasions in Stanford's home before 1914. At the time he described his host as his 'kindest friend and greatest helper in England.'⁴⁸ (Later, when war broke out, Stanford – like many other eminent musicians – found unpardonable Grainger's decision to leave Britain for America. Grainger's emotion, recollected in hostility, regarding his erstwhile benefactor festered as late as 1949: '[Stanford] gave me the cold shoulder the moment I made any sign of being a great man in my own right.')⁴⁹

The most specific surviving account of Stanford the creator, as opposed to Stanford the teacher, comes from yet another student: Thomas F. Dunhill (1877–1946). In a 1926 essay, Dunhill stressed the unglamorous discipline, the quotidian grind, which underpinned Stanford's artistic authority.

Until practically the end of his life the fresh morning hours of every day were set aside for musical composition. The writing of music thus became a regular habit with him. ... He scarcely ever made a sketch. Even complicated orchestral works were written straight into the score, in ink, without previous preparation.⁵⁰

With this extreme dutifulness went a vigilant desire for adequate emolument. Both the systematic industriousness and the concern for financial reimbursement recall the outlook of Richard Strauss, whom Stanford thoroughly detested. English music critic Alfred Kalisch noted, in his preface to Ernest Newman's 1908 Strauss biography, the German master's concern with receiving sufficient payment for his creations and performances.

One would have more respect for the outcry against Strauss's monetary successes if one had any sort of confidence that those who protest most vehemently would ever refuse a good fee if they had the chance. Not that

⁴⁷ Thomas F. Dunhill, 'Charles Villiers Stanford: Some Aspects of His Work and Influence,' *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 53rd Session (1926–1927), 41–65, at 45–46.

⁴⁸ Anne-Marie Forbes, 'Grainger in Edwardian London,' *Australasian Music Research* 5 (2000), 1–16, at 6.

⁴⁹ Forbes, 'Grainger,' 8.

⁵⁰ Dunhill, 'Stanford,' 63.

they are to blame; for it is difficult to see why musicians, of all people, should be expected to do everything for the love of Art or the good of mankind.⁵¹

It should hardly need stressing that in Stanford's and Strauss's Europe, the concept of a welfare state with guaranteed pensions for the aged and infirm was unimaginable. This fact sharpened the edge of both composers' zeal for obtaining decent remuneration. Outside music, a clear parallel to Stanford's approach exists in the deliberately humdrum authorial methods of Anthony Trollope. (Trollope's reputation notoriously took decades to recover from his autobiography's frank admissions of how much he relished financial reward. Strauss's reputation likewise suffered for decades because of his allegedly mercenary nature.)⁵²

Some could hear in Stanford's musical language little or nothing more commendable than efficient anonymity. One such was George Bernard Shaw, whose anti-Stanford agitation – much of it gleeful *ad hominem* rhetoric rather than genuine artistic analysis – has done more than any other single factor to harm Stanford's repute. No amount of contrary data could overcome Shaw's conviction that Stanford, Parry, and their Scottish colleague Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1847–1935) constituted a clique of academically trained mutual back-scratchers plotting against Elgar the autodidact. The best-known instance of Shaw's invective on the topic (ostensibly a review of Stanford's oratorio *Eden*) is this passage, charging its targets with closed-circle cronyism:

[W]ho am I that I should be believed, to the disparagement of eminent musicians? If you doubt that *Eden* is a masterpiece, ask Dr Parry and Dr Mackenzie, and they will applaud it to the skies. Surely Dr Mackenzie's opinion is conclusive; for is he not the composer of *Veni Creator*, guaranteed as excellent music by Professor Stanford and Dr Parry? You want to know who Parry is? Why, the composer of *Blest Pair of Sirens*, as

⁵¹ Alfred Kalisch, 'Richard Strauss: The Man', in Ernest Newman, *Richard Strauss* (London: John Lane, 1908), xviii.

⁵² Recently Scott Warfield, professor at the University of Central Florida, has defended Strauss's commercial attitudes from another standpoint to Kalisch's: '[T]he image of Richard Strauss as a "money grubber", Warfield writes, 'held for much of the last 100 years and only recently has begun to fade ... Strauss's own concerns about earning a living as a musician were hardly unreasonable or unique. As the son of an ordinary court musician, he was heir to no fortune and raised in modest affluence.' Scott Warfield, 'Strauss and the business of music,' in Charles Youmans (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 242-256, at 242-243.

to the merits of which you only have to consult Dr Mackenzie and Professor Stanford.⁵³

Echoing Shaw's aversion to Stanford was Elgar himself, hypersensitive to imaginary as well as genuine personal slights, and angered at the comparative ease with which Stanford had acquired European audiences at an age when Elgar remained stuck in Worcestershire. Writing to his publisher friend August J. ('Nimrod') Jaeger, Elgar fumed:

... the stuff I hate and which I know is ruining any chance for good music in England is stuff like Stanford's which is neither fish, flesh, fowl nor good red herring!⁵⁴

Stanford, most of the time, behaved more graciously towards Elgar than Elgar did towards him. Not only did Stanford conduct in concert at least three of Elgar's works – *Sea Pictures*, *Cockaigne*, and the *Enigma Variations* – but he also helped Parry in ensuring Elgar's election to the Athenaeum Club. For his pains, he received from Elgar little but contumely. Elgar took spectacular umbrage at a private letter that Stanford had sent to him. Though the letter's contents have not survived, Elgar called it 'odious'. Possibly the offending epistle touched a raw theological nerve; Stanford is said to have asserted elsewhere – his religious prejudices temporarily and disastrously overriding his aesthetic judgement – that *Gerontius* as a whole 'stinks of incense.'⁵⁵ Let it be recorded that Stanford's final judgement on the oratorio showed a much greater generosity of spirit. Late in life he told Herbert Howells: 'I would have given my head to have written Part I of *Gerontius*.'⁵⁶ In any case, Elgar had his revenge when he delivered his inaugural lecture at Birmingham University in 1904. There he poured scorn on Stanford's *Irish Rhapsodies* for orchestra, while cleverly avoiding any mention of Stanford by name.⁵⁷

Audiences in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, Elgar's gripes notwithstanding, eagerly listened to what Stanford had to offer. As early as 1886 Stanford had become, in

⁵³ Louis Crompton (ed.), *The Great Composers: Reviews and Bombardments*, by Bernard Shaw (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 341.

⁵⁴ Percy M. Young, *Letters to Nimrod* (London: Dobson, 1965), 31.

⁵⁵ Dibble, *Stanford*, 348.

⁵⁶ Diana McVeagh, *Edward Elgar: His Life and Music* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1955), 93.

⁵⁷ Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 449, 459.

terms of frequency of performance, one of the top seven composers at the Leeds Choral Festival;⁵⁸ even forty years later he stayed in the top nine.⁵⁹ The *Irish Rhapsodies* to which Elgar took such strenuous objection at Birmingham could be regularly found in concert programs, as could his *Songs of the Sea* and *Songs of the Fleet*. Even greater was the acclaim given to Stanford's choral music, mostly devised for Anglican liturgies, though his three Latin motets (*Iustorum animae*, *Coelos ascendit hodie*, and *Beati quorum via*) were equally viable in a Tridentine Catholic context. His writing for solo organ, as will soon become obvious, ran like a *Leitmotiv* through his career.

In one further genre, now little regarded, Stanford shone: incidental music to then-beloved plays, notably Tennyson's *Becket*. Supplying incidental music proved as beneficial to the fame and bank-balance of many a composer (Delius and Sibelius included) during those days – when the cinema and the record-player as we know them today scarcely existed – as supplying film music would prove to later generations of composers. Stanford's contribution to the vast, if evanescent, popularity of Tennyson the dramatist belongs in even the briefest account of his life.

Only with operatic writing did Stanford find himself thwarted in a consistent, public fashion. For his operas' intrinsic merit, high claims have been made. Rodmell devotes much of his biography to the subject, while in 1935 *The Spectator's* critic Dyneley Hussey commented: 'Stanford had enormous talent and, had he worked under the conditions which prevailed in Italy, there is no question that he would be reckoned among the great composers of opera.'⁶⁰ Alas, of his eleven operas (thirteen if two unpublished scores are included in the total), only *Shamus O'Brien* of 1896 achieved a commercial breakthrough, and that short-lived. The others were tepidly received, and one – *The Travelling Companion* – remained unheard until after Stanford's death.

⁵⁸ Trend, *Music Makers*, 15.

⁵⁹ Trend, *Music Makers*, 15.

⁶⁰ Dyneley Hussey, 'C. V. Stanford,' *The Spectator*, 9 August 1935, 223. Others have been thoroughly sceptical, including composer and biographer Charles Willeby, who in 1893 complained of Stanford that 'The faculty of dealing with the more tender feelings of mankind is not his. His emotional capacity is his smallest capacity, and of real love-music he has never written eight consecutive bars. Thus his efforts in the sphere of opera are handicapped' (Charles Willeby, *Masters of English Music* [London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1893], 293).

Several Stanford operas which failed in Britain fared better in Germany, a phenomenon frequent in the careers of other British composers born during the 1850s and 1860s, despite the potential for linguistic problems that such transplantation entailed. Delius and Dame Ethel Smyth both repeatedly enjoyed greater success at pleasing German operatic managements than British ones.⁶¹ One Stanford opera, *The Veiled Prophet*, received its première in Hanover (1881); another, *Savonarola*, in Hamburg three years later. *Shamus O'Brien* attracted a censorious notice from a Viennese magazine when it was staged, with the composer present, at Breslau (present-day Wrocław) during 1907; but even this notice admitted that the opera had been well received in Vienna itself.⁶² The Hamburg-born, London-domiciled impresario Carl Rosa gave what encouragement he could to English composers of opera; and he did this in the most practical way possible, via his own eponymous opera troupe (which in 1884 staged Stanford's *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, and which the previous year had also staged Sir Alexander Mackenzie's opera *Columba*). Alas, from Rosa's death in 1889, when only forty-seven, the Carl Rosa Opera Company never recovered.

Today's music-lovers will be unable to determine the precise worth of Stanford as operatic creator until recordings are released or, better still, live performances are repeatedly mounted. Fortunately, *The Travelling Companion* had four renditions (three

⁶¹ Dame Ethel applauded in 1934 the receptiveness to new operas – even ones by foreigners – which Hohenzollern Germany had shown: 'Men like [Karl] Muck, [Artur] Nikisch, [Hermann] Levi, [Felix] Mottl, and later Bruno Walter, had authority enough to push any work they thought worth while under the distrustful, yet, when all's said and done, inquisitive noses of the German public' (Ethel Smyth, *Female Pippings in Eden* [London: Peter Davies Ltd., 1934], 39).

⁶² 'What I can say for sure is that the German stages in general and the Breslau stage in particular would not have suffered a great loss if *Shamus O'Brien* had remained in a deep slumber forever. This might come as a surprise to you as a large number of Viennese newspapers – some of them rather receptive to free collective telegrams-to-the-editor – have been going into rhapsodies about the outstanding successes of the outstanding performances of this outstanding opera. But things are the way I tell you. ... Compared to this supposed "Irish Folk Opera" (which was composed twelve years after Wagner's death), Maillart's *Les dragons de Villars* or Boieldieu's *La dame blanche* are masterpieces of musical and dramatic refinement, not to mention their far superior tunes.' Erich Freund, 'Breslauer Bühnenbrief,' *Der Humorist* 12 (20 April 1907), 6. 'Maillart' refers to France's Aimé Maillart, several of whose operas achieved considerable if brief popularity in Europe and America during the 1850s; 'Boieldieu' was François-Adrien Boieldieu, whose *La dame blanche* ranks with the most beloved operas of the nineteenth century's second quarter (it influenced Bellini and Donizetti) and has not been totally forgotten even now, at least by French audiences.

staged at London's Cadogan Hall, the fourth in concert at Saffron Walden, Essex) during November and December 2018;⁶³ and a CD recording of this opera appeared in December 2019.

Since Stanford conducted some of his own operatic first performances – and even recorded the overture to *Shamus O'Brien*⁶⁴ – we are compelled to wonder how well he conducted others' music, whether operatic or not. Answering this question involves guesswork based on his own contemporaries' reportage, since no gramophonic evidence of Stanford conducting others' music survives. The likelihood is that sheer overwork made his executant attainments more variable than they should have been. His direction of an 1894 *St Matthew Passion* performance at the Queen's Hall in London incurred a less than reverential critique from the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

Now that all is over, one can scarcely realize the depth of disappointment in which one grovelled ... Mr Stanford is a most excellent musician, a man of singular musical refinement and cleverness, a man of delicate musical sympathies and of occasional musical exquisiteness: but is he – well, is he? – quite the ideal conductor of Bach's music?⁶⁵

Others had happier memories of Stanford's acute hearing, and of his resultant ability to perceive orchestral mistakes, even when circumstances forced him to follow a work via a piano reduction of the orchestral parts. The following (admittedly second-hand) account of Stanford at a practice session contains enough circumstantial detail to be plausible:

Ideally a conductor should be able to stop a choir and orchestra in a fortissimo passage and say: 'Third horn, you played your third quaver a quarter of a tone too sharp. Take care there next time.' Stanford, who was a great, though not a virtuoso conductor, had this sort of ear. There is a story told of him attending a rehearsal of a new work by one of his pupils, who, though a first-rate musician, was making rather heavy weather of

⁶³ John Covell, [untitled], *Stanford Society Newsletter*, May 2018, 1–2.

⁶⁴ This recording was reissued, along with all other surviving recordings of Stanford conducting his own works, as an LP to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the composer's death (Pearl GEM123). More about these productions can be found later in this thesis.

⁶⁵ Anon., 'The Bach Choir at the Queen's Hall,' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 March 1894, 3; quoted in Paul Watt, *The Regulation and Reform of Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century England* (Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2017), 17–18, where the writer of the critique is tentatively identified as Vernon Blackburn.

the unaccustomed job of directing an orchestra and choir through unfamiliar music. In a resonant empty hall, it all sounded confused. Stanford, who had only a vocal score, called out 'See what that second oboe is playing, me bhoy,' and so began the process of restoring order.⁶⁶

2.4 Wars, European and Irish

Once the Great War had erupted, the very devotion that Stanford had felt for Germany before 1914 intensified his new-found hatred for the place. Dignified Teutonophilia turned practically overnight into snarling Teutonophobia, with all the vituperation appertaining to any other untidy divorce. Here, as so regularly in other aspects of his career, he proved to be Saint-Saëns's closest British analogue. Just as Saint-Saëns did himself no good by his wartime theory that for a Frenchman to tolerate Wagner's music after 1914 was morally equal to applauding 'a marvellous singer who had assaulted one's mother',⁶⁷ so Stanford did himself no good by his public denunciations of Richard Strauss and the latter's colleagues as the musical essence of bullying Hohenzollern *Schrecklichkeit*. Such observations as these typified Stanford's acrimonious post-1914 mood:

The modern developments of German music since the death of Wagner and Brahms throw a light, if a lurid one, upon the trend of the German character ... The essence of German militarism has been reliance upon numbers, rapidity of concentration, perfection of machinery, repression of individual initiative, and in action the attack in close formation of which this repression is the necessary corollary. In their recent music, all these elements can be traced. Richard Strauss is the counterpart of [Friedrich von] Bernhardi and the General Staff.⁶⁸

To the young Goossens (exempted from military service through having failed his medical examination), Stanford described *Elektra* as 'pornographic rubbish.'⁶⁹ His own 1915 escape from death at German hands scarcely sweetened his temper on the subject of Teutons' moral failings. Thanks to the good offices of his American admirer Horatio Parker, Stanford had hoped to receive an honorary doctorate at Yale; and to this end, he

⁶⁶ Frank Howes, *Full Orchestra: A Guide to Orchestral Music* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1942), 154–155.

⁶⁷ James Harding, *Saint-Saëns and His Circle* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1965), 217.

⁶⁸ Stanford, 'Music and the War,' 397; Rodmell, *Stanford*, 289–290.

⁶⁹ Goossens, *Overture*, 82.

booked a transatlantic return voyage with Lady Stanford on the *Lusitania*. Husband and wife had already arranged that their *Lusitania* departure would occur on 15 May 1915. Eight days before this planned leaving date came the dreadful news that the ocean liner had been torpedoed by a German U-boat, with the loss of 1,198 lives. 'Double Damn those Huns,' Stanford spluttered to Parker in a letter of 9 May. 'It [the *Lusitania's* sinking] has upset the whole thing.'⁷⁰

It is only fair to acknowledge that on the topic of Stanford's wartime pronouncements, certain aggrieved Germans gave as good as they got. Edgar Istel, a contributor to the Leipzig-based *Signale für die Musikalische Welt*, came close to matching Stanford's hauteur in a 1915 article entitled 'A "collegial" judgement about Richard Strauss':

As of this year, G. Schirmer in New York is publishing a musical quarterly journal bearing the title *Musical Quarterly*, the editor being O. G. Sonneck, head of the musical department at the library of the US Congress in Washington. This remarkably well-edited review seems to be the perfect example of neutrality as it provides a platform for every country currently at war with one another. Recently, it published an essay by the well-known English composer Sir Charles Villiers Stanford entitled 'Thoughts about folksongs and nationality.' Stanford completed his training largely in Germany, where he also made his first major breakthrough. Now, even this old gentleman has been a victim of war-psychosis [*Kriegspsychose*]. He is raging against the new Germany, in which he travelled shortly before the outbreak of the war. Let's see what Stanford told the Americans:

'Prussian influence has begun its insidious work of centralisation, taking over every single interest. A large number of smaller residences have been turned into quasi-provincial towns, impeding initiative everywhere. Its poison is working slowly but surely. The spirit of the nouveau-riche, which entered the newly established empire along with the French billions, has even started to change the townscapes. Quaint philosophical towns such as Weimar have literally become cities of the dead, the homes of many a great man mummified into display museums, and there is no man of this time filling them with new life.'

One year ago, there would have been outrage about such words. Today, we accept them with humour. It might therefore also be considered a prank what Stanford says about Strauss' war music: 'Only few people outside Germany have seen Richard Strauss' arrangements of songs for

⁷⁰ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 288.

the German army. But those that have wonder whether the performance of them on the march has to be enforced by the revolvers of the officers in the rear.'

Now, none of this would matter if Stanford were just another composer from 'enemy territory'. But he is still a member of the *Königliche Preussische Akademie der Künste* [Royal Prussian Academy of the Arts] in Berlin and therefore a close co-worker of Richard Strauss. Says Shakespeare: And there's the humour of it.⁷¹

At one low wartime point, Stanford wrote for the *Morning Post* newspaper an open letter mocking Max Bruch, despite the two men's cordial dealings over the Cambridge doctorates two decades earlier. With the coming of wartime jingoism, Bruch had publicly repudiated his own award. Stanford shared the widespread but mistaken belief that Bruch was Jewish, and his open letter displays singularly unfortunate ethnic spite:

Like your compatriot Moses, whom you tried to celebrate in song, you have seen the Promised Land from a respectable distance, but you have not been permitted to enter it. Even the gullible and foreign music-worshipping section of English taste knows this, and you resent it; but you need not err by comforting yourself with the delusion that your adopted country does not know it also ...⁷²

Because Stanford needed to make do with payment by the hour for the lessons that he gave at the RCM, the dramatic wartime shrinkage of the student body hurt him in a direct economic sense. His efforts to solve this problem did him no honour. He cultivated an unlovely habit of invoicing the RCM not only for lessons that he had

⁷¹ Edgar Istel, 'Ein "kollegiales" Urteil über Richard Strauss,' *Signale für die Musikalische Welt* 49 (8 December 1915), 678–679.

⁷² Dibble, *Stanford*, 420. Stanford did allow himself, on mercifully rare occasions, to be carried away by anti-Jewish sentiment. The Australian-born Arthur Benjamin, himself Jewish, records an occasion where Stanford recklessly told Howells: 'I don't know why I like that boy Benjamin. He's a Jew, you know!' (Arthur Benjamin, 'A Student in Kensington,' *Music & Letters*, 31:3 [July 1950], 196–207, at 203). It is only fair to record that such casual scorn played a much greater role in pre-1933 Western societies' conversation – right across the political spectrum – than we now, post-Hitler, find it agreeable to realise; and that Benjamin specifically acquitted Stanford of conscious malice (Benjamin, 'Student in Kensington,' 203). That Benjamin's view of his old taskmaster remained predominantly favourable is indicated by his statement that 'Stanford was, without the shadow of a doubt, a great teacher' (Benjamin, 'Student in Kensington,' 201). Fortunately, indeed providentially, Stanford never learned either of Benjamin's homosexual orientation or of his eventual allegiance to socialism.

given, but also for lessons that had never actually taken place. Parry, the embodiment of rectitude, became enraged when he discovered Stanford's recurrent fiscal dishonesty.⁷³

Nor did the period after the Armistice win back for Stanford the cultural credit which he had forfeited during 1914–1918. His last years were consistently sad. Politics worsened the misery which his physical decline – unaccompanied by any enfeebling of his cognitive powers – caused. Belatedly, in 1921, Trinity College Dublin offered him an honorary doctorate of its own. Alas, his obedience to his doctor's orders, and his dread of being caught in military crossfire (for the Anglo-Irish War, which had erupted in 1919, continued to rage), kept him in England, so the college withdrew its offer rather than grant him the doctorate *in absentia*. The loyal Plunket Greene reports an occasion where Stanford, heretofore super-confident in his manner on the rostrum, had become so sick from stage fright that he needed to take 'two strong doses of *sal volatile*' – which Plunket Greene himself thoughtfully supplied – before his nerves were calm enough to permit him to conduct at all.⁷⁴

Home Rule for Ireland, soon followed by civil conflagration, represented the triumph of all the ideological forces that Stanford had opposed throughout his adult life. One wonders whether, contemplating the fratricidal mayhem which disfigured the land of his birth, he ever thought of W.B. Yeats's famous and prophetic lines ('The Second Coming') from 1919. As it is, we cannot say whether Stanford even encountered these lines:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; ...
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

When Parry died in October 1918, Stanford hoped desperately – not least because of his straitened financial circumstances – to obtain the RCM's directorship. To his disgust, the job went instead to a man seventeen years his junior: Sir Hugh P. Allen (organist at New College, Oxford, and Parry's own preferred candidate). Allen, much

⁷³ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 297.

⁷⁴ Plunket Greene, 'Stanford as I Knew Him,' 82–83.

inferior to Stanford in creative flair, far surpassed Stanford in courtesy and administrative skill. He needed both assets. After 1918, partly because of the government's frantic desire to keep down the unemployment rate (particularly the rate for returned servicemen), RCM student numbers greatly swelled. Amid the war they had sunk to two hundred; now they grew to six hundred, including disproportionate numbers of 'inexperienced, barely qualified if well-intentioned amateurs whose suitability for the musical profession was often seriously in doubt.'⁷⁵ Allen's propitiatory disposition coped with the requirement for such novelties as RCM classes in basic aural training. Stanford, if he rather than Allen had been given the directorship, would have found such classes – and the pedagogical patience necessitated in running them – anathema.

One of Stanford's post-1918 composition students, Thomas Wood (British-born but, like Bainton and Goossens, long Australian-resident) expressed regret that he had not come to know his teacher before 1914. He found Stanford still formidable, and still possessed of abundant didactic gifts, but fundamentally sour:

In short, a great man. When I knew him he was already an old one, still tall, but stooping a little in the shoulder and bent at the knee; and his fires were burning low. Yet there was heat in them. I never had dealings with anyone of whom I was more thoroughly scared ...

If I could have gone to him ten years earlier I should have less uncomfortable memories and this would make more pleasant reading. It is honest in showing the Stanford that I knew, but he was not the Stanford of the legends. The old truculence was there, but not the warmth or the tenderness or the wit. These had died in the War. He had changed. So had we all. I found him bitter. He seemed to think me nervy and enthusiastically reckless, and so probably I was at Armistice time and after it, when I went to him. We were both on edge. He made me angry, he made me unhappy, he made me rebel, but he taught me my job; and I still do not know whether he wholeheartedly wished to do so or whether he could not help himself. He was Irish; and the Irish have ever been the puzzlers.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Dibble, *Stanford*, 444.

⁷⁶ Thomas Wood, *True Thomas* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), 195, 199.

Publishers' readers, once deferential to Stanford, now exhibited in their adjudications no overwhelming desire to spare his sensibilities. A grim 1922 letter from an agent whom he had hired is unusual solely in the directness of its language:

I very much regret to say that although I have now offered your manuscripts entitled *Concert Pieces for Organ Solo* [recte: a single concert piece for organ and orchestra] in several likely quarters, not one of the publishers to whom I have submitted them has seen his way to make me any proposal for their publication. Under these circumstances, and as I do not see any immediate prospect of my being successful in effecting a sale, I have decided reluctantly that I had better return the manuscripts to you.

You will be interested to know that since you were good enough to place the manuscripts in my hands they have been submitted to the following publishers:

Messrs Augener Ltd
Messrs Novello
Messrs Enoch & Son
Messrs Joseph Williams
Messrs Metzler & Co.
Messrs J.B. Cramer & Co. Ltd
Messrs Stainer & Bell
Messrs Boosey & Co.

Again regretting that in this particular instance my efforts on your behalf should not have been attended with success, I am,

Yours sincerely,
H. Ward.⁷⁷

From Goossens comes a poignant anecdote about Stanford in his last years. Goossens had been conducting, in 1922, *Parsifal* at Covent Garden:

Stanford sat behind me during the whole evening, and afterwards came back to tell me how much he'd enjoyed the performance. So affected was he by the music that he burst into tears – something I'd never seen him do before! (I was much moved by the sight and had difficulty restraining my own.) 'Damned beautiful, me bhoy, but ye took the Grail March a mite too fast. Maybe though 'tis myself's being playing it too slow these last years.

⁷⁷ Dibble, *Stanford*, 451–452.

The Old Man's spirit surely hovered over ye this night.' And he wiped his glasses, took up his hat, and left. That was the last time I saw him.⁷⁸

On St Patrick's Day 1924, Stanford suffered a massive stroke. Less than a fortnight later, on 29 March, he died. Shaw had insisted in 1920 (clearly intending to belittle Stanford again) that among living British composers, 'Elgar alone is for Westminster Abbey';⁷⁹ but it is actually Stanford, not Elgar, whose remains are buried there. His ashes lie beneath a tablet which gives his dates of birth and death, and adds to these data the simple words 'A GREAT MUSICIAN.'

Much in the tale of Stanford's subsequent *Rezeptionsgeschichte* can be extrapolated from that terse phrase. However unpopular he might have become with most of his colleagues after the Great War, his obituarists on both sides of the Irish Sea showed towards him considerable deference. The journalist (and Parry biographer) whose *éloge* to Stanford took the form of rhyming couplets in iambic pentameter will be discussed, along with other aspects of Stanford's posthumous repute, in Chapter Seven. As for Parry himself, he had predeceased Stanford by six years; only months before he died the two men had, after a fashion, patched up their old friendship – thanks above all to Lady Stanford's peacemaking initiatives – and Chapter Five will deal at length with Stanford's acts of elegiac homage to Parry.

Meanwhile, the single most memorable tribute which Stanford's passing inspired – although it dealt chiefly with his didactic role, and dealt only secondarily with his composing function – came from Holst. 'On the day of his [Stanford's] death,' Howells observed, 'Holst said to me: "The one man who could get any of us out of a technical mess is gone from us".'⁸⁰ Stanford's ability to 'get [others] out of a technical mess' extended to an impressive skill for overcoming his own artistic obstacles. As subsequent chapters of this dissertation will make clear, his unfailing adroitness of craftsmanship left a particular impact on his writing for the organ, an instrument which has been apt to bring out the worst in less able creators.

⁷⁸ Goossens, *Overture*, 149.

⁷⁹ George Bernard Shaw, 'Elgar,' *Music & Letters*, 1:1, January 1920, 7–11, at 10; reprinted in Crompton, *Reviews and Bombardments*, 350–355, at 355.

⁸⁰ Herbert Howells, 'Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924): An address at his centenary,' *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 79th Session (1952–1953), 19–31, at 31.

CHAPTER THREE:

BACKGROUND: THE ORGAN IN STANFORD'S TIME

3.1 Introduction

Nothing would more greatly misrepresent Stanford's contribution to organ music than to suggest that because it was distinctive and original, it was altogether without precedents. In truth, Stanford benefited from developments that were wider than his immediate circle; that affected the organ's general role throughout late-nineteenth-century Europe (as well as, to a lesser extent, North America); and that left an inescapable impact upon organists themselves.

These developments were symbiotic. They occurred in three areas above all. First, novelties in the construction of nineteenth-century organs clearly marked them off from organs of earlier periods. Second, there arose in the Western world an increased public awareness of – and enthusiasm for – the organ *per se*. Third, organists' own job prospects underwent more dramatic changes between 1850 and 1900 than they had done in several hundred years before this. All three developments profoundly influenced Stanford's outlook.

3.2 Nineteenth-century organ-building

In the eighteenth century the most honoured organ-builders had been of primarily North German stock. The two leading figures among such builders lived a generation apart: Arp Schnitger (1648–1719) and Gottfried Silbermann (1683–1753), the latter having been a colleague of Bach, who greatly admired Silbermann's instruments. It was in North Germany that the full pedal-board first became a permanent, rather than merely occasional, feature of the organ.

Until well past 1800, pedal-boards remained either limited or non-existent on organs from other lands. (As a consequence, French baroque organ works by Couperin and his school contain far simpler pedal parts than anything by Bach and Buxtehude, when they contain pedal parts at all.) In England, where no organ in the average-sized church had a pedal-board attached – and where as late as 1810 only two cathedral

organs, Hereford and Westminster Abbey, had pedals of any type¹ – at least one player took a perverse pride in his lack of foot dexterity. This was Weber’s friend Sir George Smart, who, when asked in old age to perform upon an instrument with pedals, indignantly replied: ‘My dear sir, I never in my life played on a gridiron.’² Meanwhile, in France, the Paris Conservatoire’s practice organ on which the adolescent Franck had been trained during the 1830s had no pedal department whatsoever. In 1845, organist Jean-Bonaventure Laurens lamented that among his compatriots

the great organ music of Bach, that is to say that which most completely reveals Bach’s specialty, is still unknown ... No [French] publisher has ever been able to engrave a single line [of Bach’s organ pieces], for the simple reason that these compositions always demand the obligatory use of the pedals, and that practically no-one is capable of using them.³

The situation in Paris began to change for the better at around the very time of Laurens’s complaint. Visiting German virtuoso Adolf Friedrich Hesse showed Parisian organ-lovers what flamboyant pedal performance could sound like (he is said by one awed hearer to have played ‘better with his feet than most organists do with their hands’).⁴ In 1852 a Belgian, Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, showed himself similarly skilled in pedal management. On English organs, the requisite improvement had occurred slightly earlier, thanks overwhelmingly to Mendelssohn’s stimulus. Mendelssohn, with his Teutonic upbringing, would simply refuse to play on an English organ unless he was certain that it had been equipped with a full and functional pedal division.

Nevertheless, it was not from Germany but from France that the single most remarkable nineteenth-century organ-builder came. Of part-Spanish origin, Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811–1899) combined the expertise of an engineer – when still only twenty-two years old he won an industry award for a new circular saw that he had devised – with the spirit of an artist. (Vincent d’Indy admiringly summed up Cavaillé-

¹ Erik Routley, *The Musical Wesleys* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1968), 54. The situation in Ireland must have been still worse than that of England, since ‘[o]rgan pedals were first introduced into Dublin in 1831’ (Vignoles, *Memoir*, 10).

² Edwin Liemohn, *The Organ and Choir in Protestant Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1968), 104.

³ Jean-Bonaventure Laurens, ‘Prélude et Fugue de J.-S. Bach’, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* (2 November 1845), 362–363.

⁴ Laurence Davies, *César Franck and His Circle* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970), 76.

Coll as *ouvrier-poète*: 'craftsman-poet.'⁵) Even when Cavallé-Coll did not actually invent devices, he improved them and subordinated them to his vision: this vision – sharpened by his friendship with Berlioz – being to endow the organ with a quasi-orchestral power and timbral variety. 'My new organ? It's an orchestra!'⁶ Franck exclaimed delightedly in 1853, on being confronted at his Paris church with a product of Cavallé-Coll's workshop.

Each of Cavallé-Coll's instruments not only had a full German-style pedal-board; it also had an entirely separate pedal to operate the swell manual. The musical significance of this mechanism cannot possibly be overstated. It enabled composers from the mid-nineteenth century to incorporate crescendi and diminuendi into organ writing: expressive indicators which to Bach and his precursors had been wholly unavailable, and which Mendelssohn, as organist, probably never used. (Certainly Mendelssohn never demanded them in his own organ compositions, though they would suit well enough various passages in those compositions.) While swell pedals had existed before Cavallé-Coll's advent, none had been standardised as he standardised them.

Nor did Cavallé-Coll's innovative work end there. He greatly expanded the overall range of stops, including abundant new stops that to a greater or lesser extent imitated strings, woodwinds and brasses. To compensate for the resultant increase in wind-pressure and in heaviness of key-action, he incorporated the Barker lever (so-called after its English inventor, Charles Spackman Barker). In addition, he ensured that each manual would have fifty-six keys (earlier on, organ manuals had greatly – and, for players, frustratingly – varied in the number of keys that they possessed). Perhaps most notably of all, he confirmed the convenience of pistons for effecting dramatic tonal changes not only in mid-piece but in mid-*phrase*. Foot pistons took an especially crucial role in this regard. One American musicologist's pithy sentence sums up the developments involved: 'Because all dynamic nuances were controlled by the feet, the

⁵ Vincent d'Indy, *César Franck* (Paris: Alcan, 1906), 15.

⁶ Franck's original French words were '*Mon nouvel orgue? C'est une orchestre!*'. Jean Gallois, *Franck* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 59.

hands need never leave the keys to touch a stop or a mechanical accessory during the course of a movement.⁷

Where Cavaillé-Coll led, other organ-builders followed, and not in France alone. He sold organs to churches and municipalities in Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Denmark, not to mention Argentina, Venezuela, and Brazil. His influence extended across the Rhine too: Germany's Walcker firm adopted many of Cavaillé-Coll's techniques; another prominent organ-builder, Ludwig Sauer (1831–1916), had actually trained in Cavaillé-Coll's own workshop before returning to his German birthplace and promoting the 'symphonic organ' among his countrymen. As for England, merely to examine the stop-lists of the chief organ-builders from the 1860s onwards is to appreciate the impact which Cavaillé-Coll's symphonic imagination had on even manufacturers without any formal connections to him. The biggest manufacturing names in this context include Willis and Sons; William Hill; Norman and Beard (later Hill, Norman and Beard); and Hook and Hastings. An expert in 1990 bluntly and correctly stated: 'between 1840 and 1870, English organ-building was more directly influenced by the continent than at any other time between the 1660s and the 1950s.'⁸

Once organists and organ-lovers had discerned the technical conveniences and tonal novelties of Cavaillé-Coll's approach, they usually fell in love with them. Not till the 1920s did an overt reaction against Cavaillé-Coll – and against the symphonic organ more generally – set in, when the German-derived *Orgelbewegung* ('Organ Reform Movement') demanded that the organ return to its contrapuntal and non-orchestral roots. But the *Orgelbewegung* triumphed only when Cavaillé-Coll and Stanford were dead; and even where it did triumph, it remained very much the ideal of a coterie rather than a cause for general public enjoyment.

⁷ Rollin Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), 52.

⁸ Nicholas Thistlethwaite, *The Making of the Victorian Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 180. The dates at the end of this passage are carefully chosen, because it was in the 1660s that Charles II's restoration to the throne made church organ-building in England viable again (after the Civil War and the eleven-year Cromwellian-Puritan republic); and it was in the 1950s that neoclassical organ-building styles on the Continent first acquired a serious English following, the earliest major result of this following having been the Royal Festival Hall organ of 1954.

3.3 Nineteenth-century organists' changing function and repertoire

During Stanford's time (and long afterwards) 'the king of instruments'⁹ attracted a mass audience, in a way that for most Western nations of the twenty-first century – France remains a partial exception – is unimaginable. The organ then performed (as the domestic piano also performed) a crucial function, in disseminating many kinds of music, which it has now lost. Since the 1920s this function has been associated instead with gramophone recordings, with radio broadcasts, and, latterly, with online streaming services. Most listeners in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, as well as on much of the Continent, obtained their first exposure to symphonic and operatic masterpieces not via orchestral concerts or the theatre, but in one of three ways: through piano-duet arrangements suitable for home use;¹⁰ through listening to (and/or playing in) brass bands; and through attending organ recitals. This meant that every organist who hoped to win over the public needed to include in recitals numerous transcriptions of music which had been written for entirely different forces. If such a preponderance of transcribed material meant – as it generally did mean – slighting works that had been written for the organ in the first place, then this was a penalty that organists of Stanford's epoch willingly paid.

Stanford himself, especially at first, proved no exception. He began his career as organ recitalist by concentrating on playing works that had originally been meant for other media. When he devoted himself less and less to performing arrangements, more and more to performing original organ compositions, he did so with a cautious, tactful gradualism that he seldom displayed anywhere else.

⁹ Contrary to what most music-lovers suppose, the description of the organ as 'the king of instruments' did not originate with Mozart (though it occurs in his correspondence, and though he could well have thought that he had invented it). Machaut might or might not have coined the appellation in the fourteenth century; the evidence for and against Machaut on this score is ambiguous. Amédée Gastoué, *L'orgue en France, de l'antiquité au début de la période classique* (Paris: Éditions de la Schola, 1921), 56; Lawrence Earp, *Guillaume de Machaut: A Guide to Research* (London: Routledge, 1996), 233.

¹⁰ Thomas Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 52:2 (Summer 1999), 255–298.

The second major issue confronting Stanford and his organ-playing contemporaries related less to what they played, than for whom they played it. Stanford emerged in a culture where the organist's own status was altering more dramatically than it had done for centuries past. Some of these metamorphoses occurred in Britain alone, while others occurred across the Channel also.

An organist born, like Stanford, in 1852 possessed occupational choices of which he would have suspected nothing if he had been born even in 1802, let alone in 1752 or 1652. This novel variety of options by no means automatically made him happier than his musical ancestors; an expansion of choices in any artistic endeavour usually connotes losses as well as gains. But it did reinforce existing tendencies for organists to be independent artistic agents, in a manner that a Couperin, a Buxtehude, or a Bach certainly had never been and probably had never wanted to be. (However angry Bach became at Leipzig's musical shortcomings, there is not a scrap of evidence indicating that he craved an independent life, either as organist or in any other instrumental capacity. What he wanted was an appointment just as circumscribed as his Leipzig job, but with better pay and with more artistically sensible people overseeing it.)

Mendelssohn, during the 1830s and 1840s, had prefigured the late nineteenth century's freelance tendencies among organists. Though his own brilliance at the console could have gained for him any permanent European organ post that he wished, he preferred operating as 'the greatest amateur organist in history', to use David Yearsley's description.¹¹

Stanford exhibited a somewhat similar approach. While he died far too soon to learn of that quintessential twenty-first-century coinage 'the gig economy', he embodied a great deal that the coinage involves. The casualisation; the frantic overworking as a way of life; the enthusiasm for non-organ-related musical activities; the decision, or inward compulsion, to forgo a fixed occupational infrastructure (even while recognising such an infrastructure's importance for musical life in general): all these things marked Stanford as organist, as they had previously marked Mendelssohn as organist.

¹¹ David Gaynor Yearsley, *Bach's Feet: The Organ Pedals in European Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 228.

What did that occupational infrastructure, thus foregone, entail? It entailed, to start with, musical networks that possessed, for Stanford and his contemporaries, a visibility which is hard to imagine in our time. Rollin Smith, is right to emphasise how seldom, nowadays, those who write about outstanding composers' careers bother to consider their subjects' organ-playing:

Few lines, if any, in musicians' biographies describe their activities as organists, although many began their career as organists or held organ posts to supplement their incomes. The lives of Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, Liszt, Bruckner, Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Gounod, and Puccini scarcely mention their association with the organ.¹²

Smith's list is by no means complete. He could have added to it Fauré (who in 1896 took over Saint-Saëns's old job at the Madeleine), Dvořák (an organ student in boyhood, though later he concentrated on playing the violin and viola), Janáček (director at Brno's college of organists for almost four decades), Sibelius (who, after Finland's government had legalised Freemasonry, played the organ at his local Masonic lodge), Holst (whose early musical employment included the organist's role at a Gloucestershire village church), John Ireland (for twenty-two years organist at an Anglican parish in Chelsea), Charles Ives, Adolphe Adam, Léo Delibes, and Vaughan Williams, as well as Stanford himself, not to mention Parry. A handful of world-famous composers have proven to be exceptions to the rule – it is impossible to write at any length about Bach, Handel, Franck, and Messiaen without discussing the organ's unmistakable importance in their musical careers – but otherwise the historiographical picture remains precisely as Smith painted it, more than a quarter of a century ago.

Heightening the problem in Stanford's case is the unusual nature of his own organ-playing activity. Notwithstanding his long-term position at Trinity College, Cambridge, which involved choral direction as well as organ performance, he never held any cathedral or cathedral-like post (unless one counts his impromptu deputising for Sir Robert Prescott Stewart in Dublin). He was among the earliest organist-composers not to follow this path. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of an organist who acted as a contract worker – rather than a salaried official in a religious establishment –

¹² Rollin Smith, *Saint-Saëns and the Organ* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), xvii.

remained largely inconceivable. The clear majority of, if not indeed all, professional organists before Stanford's time simply had to be affiliated with some sacred building or other, whether the mightiest of cathedrals or the most intimate of monarchical chapels.

In Stanford's youth, the best-known among English organists perfectly illustrated this ecclesiastical association: to wit, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, who from 1832 to 1876 served at successive cathedrals (Hereford, Exeter, Winchester, and Gloucester, plus seven years at Leeds Parish Church, a very much grander edifice than its modest name implies). He did so not through preference, nor through outstandingly devout temperament – he had acquired much of his early musical training in the salacious atmosphere of Hanoverian London's playhouses – but because other and more appealing livelihoods had been closed to him.¹³ They would have stayed closed to him even if his own unruly temper had not been notorious.¹⁴

Comprehensive musical schooling at a tertiary level, such as the Paris Conservatoire and the École Niedermeyer already provided in France, did not yet exist in Britain. Music degrees at Oxford and Cambridge in Wesley's day amounted to little more than gentlemanly rewards for dutifully completing sessions in harmony and counterpoint (Parry acquired a BMus while still a schoolboy). They were – as indeed, in the early twenty-first century, they continue to be – devoid of instrumental tuition. Theoretically, aspiring instrumentalists could study in London at the Royal Academy of

¹³ 'He was deeply committed to the role and dignity of music in worship, but does not otherwise seem to have been noted for extraordinary piety. He was probably a believer in the routine sense.' William J. Gatens, *Victorian Cathedral Music in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 129. Twice Wesley sought the music professorship at the University of Edinburgh when it fell vacant during the 1840s; each time he failed, though his musical abilities were at least as high as were those of the successful applicants, Sir Henry Bishop and Henry Hugo Pierson. Wesley likewise applied in vain for the music professorship at Oxford (1847) and at its Cambridge equivalent (1856; on the latter occasion Sterndale Bennett defeated him). The unavoidable inference from this record is that his choleric estranged many who would otherwise, on the strength of his talents, have been prepared to offer him help.

¹⁴ Wesley's artistic successes included having set the bar for invective so high that even Stanford could not consistently surmount it. An otherwise sympathetic critic wrote, in 1899, of Wesley: 'There was an officious minor canon at Gloucester [Cathedral], who was of an amiable but meddling disposition. One afternoon after service he came up to Wesley and said: "I think the anthem went very badly today. I also consider that it was taken too fast." "Sir," said Wesley, drawing himself up, "I am at the *head* of my profession; *you*, Sir, are a nobody. I am *amazed* at your audacity. *Good afternoon, Sir*."' (James Kendrick Pyne, 'Wesleyana,' *The Musical Times* 676:51 (June 1899), 376–381, at 380.

Music (partly a brain-child of the violin-playing Duke of Wellington); but that school, fitfully funded, came near to closure in 1866 (its long-term rival, the Royal College of Music, would not open until 1882). So Wesley could not, as Franck and Widor in Paris could, augment his earnings as an organ performer by teaching.

The circumstances for British organists started to alter at the very time when Stanford obtained from Stewart his initial organ lessons. From that stage dates not only the beginning of professionalised British education for musicians in general, but the rise of the virtuoso concert organist, with few or no long-term church connections. The central relevant British name is that of William Thomas Best, the leading concert organist in Britain, and probably in the world, from the 1850s until the 1890s.¹⁵ Best's musical headquarters was no church but an impeccably secular institution, St George's Hall in Liverpool. The hyperactive Best gave in that hall three recitals every single week for almost four decades, save when on foreign travels, which included visits to Australia (he inaugurated the Sydney Town Hall's instrument) and Italy (Liszt helped to organise a Rome concert where Best performed). Hans von Bülow expressed to the *Glasgow Herald*, in slightly stilted English, the highest admiration for Best's playing:

If I would longer listen to an organ like this and a player like Mr Best, I would, were I not grown too old, jeopardise my pianistical career, and begin to study the organ ... I listened with the most eager attention from the first to the last note of Mr Best's recital.¹⁶

Much of Best's repertoire consisted, not of pieces originally written for the organ – though he played those when he needed to – but of orchestral and operatic transcriptions: sometimes his own, sometimes others'. Best's mantle as organist-composer fell most conspicuously upon Edwin H. Lemare (1865–1934), who settled in America and who also toured repeatedly throughout the British Empire. Like Best, Lemare specialised in both writing and playing transcriptions. Lemare's arrangements

¹⁵ Biographical information on Best can be found in Orlando A. Mansfield, 'W.T. Best: his life, character and works,' *The Musical Quarterly*, 4:2 (April 1918), 209–249; John Joseph Mewburn Levien, *Impressions of W.T. Best (1826–1897), organist at St. George's Hall: Liverpool, the Handel festival, &c.* (London: Novello, 1942); and Iain Quinn, *W.T. Best: Magic Music Man* (Colfax, NC: The Leupold Foundation, 2016).

¹⁶ Levien, *Best*, 31–32.

of Brahms, Elgar, Wagner, Verdi, and Saint-Saëns achieved a prominence among recitalists which has not yet died out.

A third figure who demands mention in connection with the concert-hall environment is Sir John Stainer, who during the 1860s – before he concentrated on the cathedral and academic duties for which he became best known – gave recitals at London’s Crystal Palace.¹⁷ Bruckner improvised on the organ at the same venue, while on his 1871 trip (never repeated) to London. He did so, according to Fuller Maitland, with less than felicitous results:

During the same visit to England, while he was playing at the Crystal Palace, he was so carried away by the course of his ideas in improvisation that the exhausted blowers could not maintain the supply of wind, and the piece came to an abrupt end.¹⁸

Neither Bruckner nor Stainer arranged for organ other men’s music, as Best and Lemare did. In the second half of the twentieth century, critics tended to sneer at Best’s and Lemare’s reworkings, as somehow having violated the organ’s Platonic essence. Typical is the 1963 censure by two English historians: ‘the organ became popular during the latter half of the nineteenth century as a medium for playing arrangements of orchestral works. This is now regarded rightly as being in very poor taste.’¹⁹ The above-cited *Orgelbewegung* particularly deplored these arrangements. Such contempt, not entirely silent even now, displays notable ignorance of history. Innumerable music-lovers owed their first aural experiences of *Tannhäuser* highlights, for instance, to Best and to Lemare. A recent article by British organist Samuel Bristow makes the point thus:

¹⁷ Jeremy Dibble, *John Stainer: A Life in Music* (Woodridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 112–113.

¹⁸ Fuller Maitland, *Masters of German Music*, 252.

¹⁹ Cyril Clutton and Austen Niland, *The British Organ* (London: Methuen, 1963), 43. In Best’s own time (and much to Best’s annoyance), critic Henry F. Chorley had condemned very idea of organ transcriptions, as had Stanford’s colleague Sir Walter Parratt. Jeremy Dibble, ‘Romanticism, pedagogy and the English organ: the discourse of concert and ecclesiastical repertoire – Best, Stainer, Stanford and Parry,’ in Iain Quinn (ed.) *Studies in English Organ Music* (Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 265–295, at 269.

It is impossible to comprehend today just how useful an organ transcription could have been ... for some audiences, it was the only plausible way of hearing this music [of Wagner's]. Outside of actually going to the opera house on the rare occasion a particular work was being given, arrangements were the most 'on demand' a piece of music could be.²⁰

Former Durham University music professor Arthur Hutchings, born in 1906, admitted that he 'first came to know Wagner at Lemare's recitals.'²¹ Stanford, in his Trinity College role (particularly its early years), would adopt the Best-Lemare repertoire policy. J.A. Fuller Maitland's description of Stanford as organist is fitting:

He was by no means a stickler for confining the music he chose, whether for services or recitals, to works originally written for the organ; he loved arrangements, and to translate the scores of symphonies and overtures into the language of the organ without preparation. It is only the purist who could object to such preferences in days when we had so few opportunities of hearing the larger kinds of music.²²

Nor were British organists alone in this pragmatic, eclectic attitude. Alexandre Guilmant, although he held church (and academic) posts, attained his greatest renown as a concert recitalist, in Britain, Canada, the United States and his native France.²³ At his finest, Guilmant the arranger demonstrated undeniable mastery, just as Liszt did with his solo-piano transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies. So when Stanford the organist appropriated much-loved music from other media, he did no more and no less than his job required and his contemporaries expected. (Stewart in Dublin also relied largely on non-organ music, having enlivened one cathedral occasion by playing – directly from the orchestral score, as was his habit and would be Stanford's habit afterwards – the *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture.)²⁴

Regardless of this, distinguished European organist-composers often stayed loyal to the ancient model of regular ecclesiastical employment. Franck's almost forty years of

²⁰ Samuel Bristow, 'Richard Wagner and the Organ: The "Bridal Chorus" composer's unlikely marriage to the King of Instruments,' *The Organ* 391 (February-April 2020), 8–11, at 9.

²¹ Arthur Hutchings, *Church Music in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1967), 116.

²² J.A. Fuller Maitland, *A Door-Keeper of Music* (London: John Murray, 1929), 60.

²³ During 1904, while in Missouri, Guilmant gave no fewer than forty recitals on what at that time was the largest organ in the world: the St Louis Exposition instrument, subsequently overhauled to form the basis of the Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia, which continues to give pleasure in 2021.

²⁴ Stanford, *Pages*, 49.

tenure at Sainte-Clotilde in Paris have already been noted. Widor remained in harness as 'temporary' organist at another Parisian church, Saint-Sulpice, for more than six decades. The French government's anti-Catholic laws after 1901, culminating in the formal 1905 proclamation of national *laïcité*, made no practical difference to Widor's – or other leading French organists' – position. Rather than the Catholic Church paying their salaries, the national Ministry of Cults and Religion did so. There occurred in 1905 nothing remotely analogous to that wholesale national destruction of organs, vandalism of churches themselves, and paganisation of liturgies which the French Revolution had notoriously accomplished.

With the Teutonic lands, as with France, ecclesiastical employment remained common. This is hardly surprising when one remembers that just as Anglicanism was the legally established and privileged church in Britain, so Catholicism was the legally established and privileged church in Austria, Bavaria, the Rhineland, Liechtenstein, and various Swiss cantons. Bruckner's tenure as Austrian monastery organist is renowned. Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger, born in Liechtenstein but mostly resident in Bavaria, worked as church organist and professor in Munich. He ended his days as *Kapellmeister* to Bavarian royalty: first to no less renowned a patron of music than Ludwig II, and then to Ludwig's brother Otto. Unlike Saint-Saëns, Guilmant and Widor, Rheinberger never visited Britain; but his name had become familiar to British musicians between the 1880s and his death in 1901, a fact confirmed by the epoch's periodicals, where he is always mentioned with respect.²⁵ When Fuller Maitland wrote his 1894 book, *Masters of German Music* (he used the adjective 'German' to include Austria, which enabled him to discuss Bruckner's work), he devoted an entire chapter, similarly courteous in tone, to Rheinberger's life and achievements.²⁶ Rheinberger's twenty organ sonatas inspired, in 1925, an entire eulogistic monograph by Chichester Cathedral organist Harvey Grace.²⁷ This supplies proof of how fondly Rheinberger continued to be recalled in the United

²⁵ As early as 1881 an anonymous reviewer referred to 'Joseph Rheinberger, of Munich, whose name is well-known in this country.' Anon., '[Review of Rudolph Palme (ed.), *Ritter Album for the Organ*],' *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 22: 464 (October 1881), 526.

²⁶ J.A. Fuller Maitland, *Masters of German Music* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1894), 173–198.

²⁷ Harvey Grace, *The Organ Works of Rheinberger* (London: Novello, 1925).

Kingdom, even without either Protestant allegiance or personal British connections on his part.

There had also arisen, during Stanford's youth, a third method by which organists could earn their keep. This was the method of the all-rounder, for whom organ-playing constituted merely one valued musical discipline and income-stream among several. Two other important figures, both French, exemplify this approach: Saint-Saëns and the much lesser known Gabriel Pierné.

Saint-Saëns, amid all his other musical responsibilities, found the time to serve at Paris's Madeleine church from 1857 to 1877. Liszt revered Saint-Saëns's organ-playing skill, and assured his friend Olga von Meyendorff that among organists 'Saint-Saëns is not merely in the first rank but incomparable.'²⁸ In 1893 – as noted earlier – Stanford actively involved himself in the process by which Saint-Saëns obtained an honorary Cambridge doctorate, the other composers likewise paid homage having been Tchaikovsky, Boito, and Bruch (Grieg and Gounod were both too ill to attend). Confronted with this heterogenous musical assembly, Stanford included in his welcome speech a jocular expression of fear that 'with so many representatives of the Great Powers, he [Stanford] should drop a word which might endanger the peace of Europe.'²⁹ Yet although Saint-Saëns maintained his frenetic schedule of composing, conducting and pianism to the end of his life, his days as regular organist were by 1900 over, although (in another point of resemblance with Stanford) he wrote most of his organ works long after ceasing to play the instrument regularly in public.

The similarities between Stanford and Saint-Saëns do not end there. Both musicians displayed redoubtable gifts for verbal sarcasm, and inspired trepidation more often than love. Goossens knew both Saint-Saëns and Stanford, worked closely with the two, and seems to have been the first person ever to compare them.³⁰ Another link binding the two musicians is the routine disapproval that they incurred from historians for

²⁸ Edward N. Waters (ed.), *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff, 1871–1886* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Press, 1979), 300-301; Stephen Studd, *Saint-Saëns: A Critical Biography* (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), 36. Saint-Saëns's *Organ Symphony* – the sole contribution of his to the organ genre that gained the slightest general renown – bears on its title-page the inscription 'à la mémoire de Franz Liszt.'

²⁹ Brian Rees, *Camille Saint-Saëns: A Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), 304.

³⁰ Eugene Goossens, *Overture*, 80.

allegedly writing too much and too fast (the Germans speak of an unduly prolific creator as a *Vielschreiber*). Sir Donald Francis Tovey charged Saint-Saëns with ‘thin, mundane lucidity’ and ‘slick classicism’;³¹ one can readily envisage him disparaging Stanford in similar terms, although in fact he appears never to have written about Stanford’s work.

Pierné, unlike Saint-Saëns, never – as far as can be determined – met Stanford. Still, the resemblances between his career and Stanford’s cannot be gainsaid. Born in 1863 at Metz, Pierné belonged to the generation after Saint-Saëns and was much closer than Saint-Saëns to Stanford’s own age. Just as Stanford’s Irish origins made him something of an alien in England, so Pierné’s Lorrainer birth made him something of a foreigner in France. (The Germans controlled Lorraine from 1871, in which year the Pierné family moved to Paris.) Moreover, Pierné had been a pianistic child prodigy, as Stanford had been. Like Stanford, Pierné concentrated on the organ rather than the piano during his adolescence. When Franck – his Paris Conservatoire organ teacher – died in 1890, Pierné, then a mere twenty-seven years old, succeeded him as *organiste titulaire* at Sainte-Clotilde. This job he bequeathed, in 1899, to fellow Franck disciple Charles Tournemire. Thereafter, like Stanford at a slightly later age, Pierné ceased to play the organ on an established, acknowledged professional basis. He achieved (once again like Stanford) national celebrity as a conductor, though Pierné specialised in orchestral and ballet direction instead of the operatic and choral direction that played such great roles in Stanford’s timetable. As composer, Pierné cultivated an unobtrusive, abidingly professional idiom that seldom if ever tore passion to tatters. The following 1968 description of Pierné’s creativity could with equal justice be applied to Stanford’s:

His style was elegant; sensitivity and refinement characterised his speech; his thought was touched by poetic beauty ... While discovering no new world, while content to live in a familiar one, he said what he had to say with freshness and appeal.³²

In short, the examples of Saint-Saëns and Pierné proved that it would still have been possible for Stanford to reach considerable heights as an organist without being

³¹ Donald Francis Tovey, *A Musician Talks...* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), xii.

³² David Ewen, *The World of Twentieth-Century Music* (London: Prentice Hall, 1968), 548.

thus constricted as a creator. Like Stanford, Saint-Saëns and Pierné were fundamentally generalists, not specialists. All three masters exhibited, in their organ output as in their other output, something else also: the art of being a musical patriot without at all being – except, in Saint-Saëns’s and Stanford’s cases, under the temporary emotional strain of 1914–1918 – a musical chauvinist.

3.4 Stanford’s own organ-playing

The similarities in character between Stanford’s organ music on the one hand, and on the other hand that of Saint-Saëns, Guilmant, Widor and Rheinberger, prompt a series of questions: as to how much Stanford knew of that music; when, if ever, he performed it; and the extent to which he was consciously influenced by it. (No evidence exists to indicate that Stanford ever met Guilmant, Widor and Rheinberger, although during the Great War, as will appear in the next chapter, Stanford and Widor corresponded.)

One thing is sure: Mendelssohn’s six organ sonatas, published in 1845, had rapidly become extremely popular, and stayed popular even after much of Mendelssohn’s other output had faded from general view. In Britain as well as in Germany, every subsequent organist-composer of consequence, during the next fifty-odd years, needed to contend with the legacy of those sonatas. They could not be ignored, any more than could the works of Bach (whose own importance to Mendelssohn’s organ writing is repeatedly manifest). Nor did organists wish to ignore them: traces of Mendelssohn’s idiom served for decades afterwards as, so to speak, the highest common factor in the varying styles of all the leading British-trained and German-trained composers for the instrument. Sir Robert Prescott Stewart harboured a special fondness for the six sonatas, and championed them with delight,³³ having publicly performed the First Sonata as early as December 1847.³⁴

³³ ‘He [Stewart] went straight away to Christ Church Cathedral, and, locking himself in with the blower, he worked at these sonatas day by day till he knew them by heart. On the Sunday following, after he had played No. 1 of this set, his friends came rushing up to the organ loft to ask what he had been playing, and great was their astonishment when they saw no music on the desk. He [...] refused to give them any information, and teased them about their ignorance in not knowing such classical works!’ O.J. Vignoles, ‘Brief Sketch of the Career of Sir Robert P. Stewart’, *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 24th Sess. (1897–98), 95–107, at 101.

³⁴ Parker, *Stewart*, 41–42.

Fortunately, when it comes to Stanford's organ-playing, comprehensive records survive of his music lists during his Trinity College tenure from 1872 to 1890. Likewise, the music lists of his organist colleagues are also available in many cases (only the years 1891–1892, and some of 1872, are missing).³⁵ A representative recital program of Stanford's dating from May 1872, when he was still assistant to John L. Hopkins, included only one piece originally for organ: Stewart's 1868 *Fantasia*. Otherwise the program comprised arrangements of non-organ music by Mendelssohn (the *Ruy Blas* Overture, identified in the printed program under the bland nomenclature '*Overture in C Minor*, Op. 95'); Weber (the Adagio from the Op. 24 *Piano Sonata in C*), Schumann (two *Lieder*, namely *Widmung* and *Mailed*), Beethoven (the Second Symphony's slow movement), Chopin (the *Nocturne in C Minor*, Op. 55 No. 1), and a flute concerto by the Darmstadt-based Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770–1846).³⁶

From the 1880s Stanford gradually wound down his more time-consuming Trinity commitments. He made his public farewell as Trinity recitalist during June 1890 with his own arrangement of the Transformation Scene from Act I of *Parsifal*.³⁷ In 1892 he severed his official College connections, annoyed (predictably) at how little he was paid for his services, and thoroughly derisive towards the clergy with whom he had to deal. Here follows a typical specimen of Stanford's outspokenness concerning his paymasters:

The real root of the mischief is ... the trammelled position of the man who is responsible for the performance of the music, and who is, perhaps, in many cathedral bodies the only representative of thoroughly trained knowledge of the subject – the organist. In most cases the responsibility for the choice of music is not centred in him, the expert, but either altogether in the hands of one of the clergy, or divided between a precentor and the organist ... The organist is the learned and cultivated musician, and the clerical official has not (save in a very few instances) qualified either by study or research for a task demanding exceptional musical skill and routine. But he retains a power for which he has in the lapse of time lost the necessary equipment, and the

³⁵ Jeremy Dibble, 'Stanford and the organ recitals at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1872–1890: A documentary study,' *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies*, 18 (1995), 158–170, at 160.

³⁶ Dibble, 'Organ Recitals', 163.

³⁷ Dibble, 'Organ Recitals,' 167.

result is a far-spread amateurishness of taste, which if it is permitted to rule, will inevitably destroy the best traditions of English church music.³⁸

(As early as 1899, even the emollient Sir John Stainer bridled at Stanford's anticlerical remarks, delivered that year in a conference paper to the Church Congress. Writing to his friend F.G. Edwards, Stainer complained: 'Stanford's quiet and calm hint that the Precentors should hand over their functions to "experts" that is, students of the R.C.M., when they get a cathedral organistship, is really too cheeky!')

Strangely, very little of Stanford's surviving organ music dates from his Trinity years. The bulk of it came much later, when he no longer had regular organ-playing commitments. Paul Rodmell suggests that Stanford abandoned the regular organist's life through increasing boredom with the instrument.⁴⁰ This hypothesis is implausible, not least given how Stanford returned over and over again to organ-writing after 1892. Physical exhaustion through the combined workloads of his teaching (two concurrent professorships, it will be remembered) and of his conducting (which included the Bach Choir 1885–1902 and the Leeds Festival 1898–1910) is much likelier than any emotion of tedium to account for his cessation of routine organ-playing duties.

3.5 Conclusion

Neither a purely ecclesiastical employee nor a purely secular employee, Stanford remained open to artistic trends that largely escaped the more exclusively church-bound and concert-hall-bound musicians of his day. As often elsewhere in his life, so in playing the organ, he blended the new and the old. Or, to express the same sentiment in different words, he proved a conservative radical. Instead of making an overt breach with current fashion by entirely avoiding organ arrangements, Stanford preferred to perform these alongside original organ works.

Occupying the commanding heights of secular musical administration in London and Cambridge, rather than being compelled to function under obedience to any bishop or monarch, afforded to Stanford various advantages. He avoided the daily grind and

³⁸ Charles Villiers Stanford, *Studies and Memories* (London: Constable, 1908), 61–69.

³⁹ Quoted in Dibble, *Stainer*, 280.

⁴⁰ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 166.

the innate narrowing of repertoire which overtaxed cathedral musicians, needing to maintain discipline among fractious juvenile choristers, were – and, for that matter, still are – likely to face. Above all, he could resist any temptation to provincialism. (As recently as 1967, Arthur Hutchings deprecated the continuing allure of this temptation for the average Anglican musician, even at high levels. ‘Unless he constantly refreshes his mind with opera, chamber music, etc.,’ Hutchings warned, ‘the anglican [*sic*] cathedral organist deteriorates quickly with his insular round.’)⁴¹

How Stanford responded as composer to nineteenth-century Continental trends in organ writing, including the organ symphony genre codified by Widor, will be the focus of Chapters Five and Six. Before that, though, it is time to consider the role which national consciousness and historical consciousness played in shaping Stanford’s output.

⁴¹ Hutchings, *Church Music*, 87.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEMATIC CONSIDERATIONS: NATIONALISM AND HISTORICISM

4.1 Introduction

Earlier chapters of this thesis have concentrated on supplying the background to Stanford's life, and on explaining more general developments (both within Britain and elsewhere) in the history of organ manufacture during the late nineteenth century. The present chapter takes a different approach, by attempting to view Stanford's output in relation to several larger themes.

There is, first, the whole topic of musical nationalism, a topic impossible to omit in any discussion of Stanford's music. We need to explore what sort of role nationalist considerations had in Stanford's thought. Similarly, we cannot avoid the issue of how much nationalist assumptions by later historians (assumptions often enough taken for granted rather than explicitly acknowledged) have affected criticisms of Stanford.

Second, there is the subject of Stanford's complex relationship to past music, and of how much his creative outlook can be called historicist. He undeniably knew at first hand – particularly through his functions as organist and conductor – a great deal of music from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well as from the eighteenth and nineteenth; so we are forced to consider how the 'anxiety of influence' (to borrow Harold Bloom's useful phrase) affected him, and indeed whether he suffered from any such anxiety at all.

First, nevertheless, some more general issues should be broached. These issues will be analysed separately in what follows, though the separation is somewhat artificial, given that Stanford's relationship to music of the past involved the criss-crossing of national boundaries.

4.2 Nationalism and historicism: the background

Ernest Gellner, the Czech-born but British-domiciled political scientist, pondered questions of nationalism and national identity all his adult life. In his best-known book, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), he offered this succinct definition:

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.

Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.¹

Gellner drew attention to how recent a phenomenon in the history of thought nationalism is: a product, fundamentally, of the French Revolution and its aftermath. Another important political scientist, Elie Kedourie (who worked alongside the Czech-Jewish Gellner at the London School of Economics, and whose Iraqi-Jewish background made him likewise an outsider in the British context), arrived at a similar conclusion to Gellner's about the contingent nature of nationalism. He expressed this conclusion still more strongly than Gellner did: 'Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.'²

Granted, traces of nationalist sentiment can be found in the sixteenth century, especially in those countries that proved hospitable to Protestantism. Benedict Anderson attributed the dawning of national consciousness partly to technological factors: specifically, to the use which Protestant leaders made of the printing press, and to their enthusiasm for publicising their doctrines in vernacular tongues rather than in Latin. ('In the two decades 1520–1540,' Anderson tells us, 'three times as many books were published in German as in the period 1500–1520, an astonishing transformation to which Luther was absolutely central.'³)

¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd edition (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 1.

² Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1960), 9.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 39.

Still, to compare the cultural assumptions – the *mentalités*, as Fernand Braudel called them – of the sixteenth century with those of the nineteenth is to appreciate anew how little the former were tinctured by nationalism, compared with the latter. Luther, it needs to be remembered, spent his whole career in Germanic states ruled by men who ultimately answered not to a national but to a supranational power: the power of Habsburg Emperor Charles V. (Being a Catholic, Charles V would have argued that he himself ultimately answered – at least in matters spiritual – to yet another supranational power: the papacy.)⁴ The complexities of affiliation which these nested loyalties produced among Charles V's contemporaries were considerable: 'men felt that they had more in common with foreigners who held their views than with their own fellow-countrymen who differed from them.'⁵

Notwithstanding the 1648 Peace of Westphalia which concluded the Thirty Years' War (and which has traditionally been interpreted as codifying the principle of individual nations' sovereignty), the Habsburg Empire, though considerably weakened, commanded the fundamental devotion of millions; and for as long as it did so, nationalism was bound to be a side-issue. The Thirty Years' War itself had been primarily a war among religions, and only to a very limited extent a war among nations, even in the rare instances (such as Portugal) where the nations concerned had generally acknowledged borders.

What made the crucial difference to nationalism's fortunes was the French Revolution. Kedourie described the change thus:

... the French Revolution introduced new possibilities in the use of political power, and transformed the ends for which rulers might legitimately work. The Revolution meant that if the citizens of a state no longer approved of the political arrangements of their society, they had the right and the power to replace them by others more satisfactory. As the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen had it: 'The principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation; no body of men, no individual, can exercise authority that does not emanate expressly from

⁴ This is a different matter from saying that Charles V's Catholicism invariably moved him to treat individual pontiffs with the deference they expected. In 1527 mutinous troops, at least notionally under Charles's command, pillaged Rome (at least six thousand defenders of the city lost their lives) and threw Pope Clement VII into prison.

⁵ Charles Petrie, *Don John of Austria* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), 13.

it.' Here, then, is one prerequisite without which a doctrine such as nationalism is not conceivable.⁶

Specifically, this Revolution disseminated its innovative concept of a nation in arms, a concept with two clear and prophetic corollaries. First, there could not be a nation in arms without such a thing as a permanent, discrete, unitary nation *per se*. Second, the concept implied that the condition of being a nation in arms would be permanent, that a standing army (unknown to mediaeval and Renaissance sovereigns, with their arduous levying and demobilising of short-term troops) would be essential. The reign of Napoleon represented the nation-in-arms concept in its purest form – and Napoleon eventually had the concept turned against him, not least by an even more populous nation-in-arms, namely Russia – but it arose well before his government. It became indispensable to France's republican rulers from 1792, when they stood alone in Europe against a monarchist international coalition, and when accordingly they imposed conscription on their able-bodied male subjects.

Other European countries, most conspicuously the kingdom of Prussia, showed towards France the flattery of imitating it by conscripting their own peoples. Prussia did so with a vigour that even Frederick the Great, half a century beforehand, had never dared to show. Nor did such conscription perish with Napoleon's final defeat. It had proven itself to be simply too good a weapon for national cohesiveness to be abandoned lightly, or, in most European lands, to be abandoned at all.

Confronted by nations in arms, older supranational creeds found themselves forced ever more on the defensive. The intellectual history of the nineteenth century is, then, very much the intellectual history of nationalism triumphant emotionally, even when – as in Hungary and Poland – it failed to attain more than brief successes militarily. It is the history of Italian unification against rule by Austria and the Papal States; the history of German unification against (most immediately) French influence and against (less directly) Austrian influence; the history of Giuseppe Mazzini, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Lajos Kossuth, Charles Stewart Parnell and Adam Mickiewicz winning the hearts of millions – particularly British and American liberals – who knew about them only through the

⁶ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 12–13.

newspapers. This, in turn, assumes millions literate enough to be able to read newspapers, and newspapers affordable enough to permit mass reading.⁷

But whence did the Mazzinis, the Garibaldis, the Kossuths, the Parnells, and the Mickeiwiczs derive their aura of public legitimacy? Their charisma, to borrow Max Weber's term? As Gellner noted, 'nationalism does not have any very deep roots in the human psyche.'⁸ Indubitably intellectual influences played a part. These influences Kedourie accentuated, locating the principal generative force of nationalism within the discourses of Johann Gottfried Herder in the late eighteenth century and of Johann Gottlieb Fichte in the nineteenth.

Herder's writings gave German-speakers – and were very much intended to give them – a new pride in their distinctive linguistic-literary heritage. France's cultural influence on the German territories so irked Herder that in one poem he demanded of his compatriots the following: 'Spew out the ugly slime of the Seine! / Speak German, O you German!'⁹ The versified adaptations of mediaeval German-language folk-tales which Herder published in 1773 inspired later initiatives by two much younger poets, Achim von Arnim and Clemens von Brentano, whose anthology *Das Knaben Wunderhorn* is now best known through Mahler's settings.

It would be entirely wrong, though, to regard Herder as wanting to spread a pan-German gospel throughout the world. He favoured cultural diversity as such, arguing that 'Every nation has its own inner centre of happiness, as every sphere its own centre of gravity.'¹⁰ Against heedless chauvinistic pride, he explicitly warned: 'national glory is a deceiving seducer; when it reaches a certain height, it clasps the head with an iron

⁷ 'The employability, dignity, security and self-respect of individuals, typically, and for the majority of men now hinges on their *education* ... A man's education is by far his most precious investment, and in effect confers his identity on him' (Gellner, *Nations*, 35). Later Gellner remarks that after the French and Industrial Revolutions, 'the high culture is so much greater and so much more onerous, [that] it cannot dispense with a political infrastructure' (49). Gellner then refers sardonically to a bestselling 1939 pulp novel – the subject of a famous Orwell essay from five years later – by the Englishman James Hadley Chase: 'As a character in *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* observed, every girl ought to have a husband, preferably her own; and every high culture now wants a state, and preferably its own' (49).

⁸ Gellner, *Nations*, 34.

⁹ Quoted in Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 59.

¹⁰ Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1976), 186.

band.’¹¹ Elsewhere, Herder lamented: ‘One fatherland ranged against another in bloody battle is the worst barbarism in the human vocabulary.’¹² Besides, Herder’s writings, however influential they became among those who spoke and read German as a first language, had surprisingly little impact elsewhere (unlike those of various subsequent Teutonic philosophers: Kant, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Nietzsche). John Stuart Mill definitely knew about Herder’s published work,¹³ but otherwise it seldom impinged upon Anglophones’ consciousness before Sir Isaiah Berlin discussed it at length from the 1960s.¹⁴

No such squeamishness as Herder had displayed hampered his former disciple Fichte, who in his celebrated series of *Addresses to the German Nation* (begun in 1807, four years after Herder’s death, and completed in 1808) proclaimed defiance in its very title. For as Kedourie points out, there existed at the time no fixed, recognised political unit known as the German nation which Fichte could have addressed:

The German-speaking parts of Europe had the most diverse political arrangements, and the fact that Prussians and Bavarians, Bohemians and Silesians all spoke German was not considered of great political moment, certainly not enough to warrant the disruption of so many settled institutions. ... The French Revolution, as has been seen, gave currency to the principle that individuals and communities have the right to secede from one and adhere to another state. No less revolutionary in its consequences is this other principle that the boundaries of states are natural, and correspond with the linguistic map of a territory.¹⁵

Fichte viewed control of the schooling system as imperative for conveying and preserving national consciousness. This control would ensure the primacy of the German language, in a way that no government (however ambitious) could ever have achieved under the pedagogic status quo operating when Fichte gave his lectures. At

¹¹ Robert R. Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 264.

¹² Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, 158.

¹³ Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, 199.

¹⁴ Isaiah Berlin, ‘Men and Ideas (II): J.G. Herder,’ *Encounter* 25:2 (August 1965), 42–51; Berlin, *Vico and Herder*. Before Berlin’s writings aroused public interest in Herder, there had, admittedly, been a few English-language treatments of him (Roy Pascal, *The German Sturm und Drang* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953]; Harold Nicolson, *The Age of Reason 1700–1789* [London: Constable & Co., 1960]).

¹⁵ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 59.

that time, and for the preceding hundred years, Germanic states' schools gave much of their instruction in French and in Latin. Such weakening of native linguistic confidence Fichte regarded as indefensible. 'By means of the new education,' Fichte announced, 'we want to mould the Germans into a corporate body.'¹⁶

In 1814 Fichte died. Little more than a generation later, during 1848 and 1849, creeds of nationalist insurrection ignited almost the whole of Europe. Sometimes consciously, more often by default, this insurrection's leaders – even if they knew little of, and cared still less about, what Fichte had written – invoked the same principles of particularist bellicosity that Fichte had enunciated. That such particularist bellicosity might of itself incur a substantial body-count did not produce undue disquiet in Mickiewicz, for one. We are told that he 'found himself imploring God to bring about universal war in which Poland might once again secure independence';¹⁷ non-Poles could have been forgiven for failing to share Mickiewicz's millenarian glee.

Meanwhile the insurrectionists of 1848–1849 often strove to ensure that the nationalist ideologies which they championed would be transmitted in only one direction. Other peoples might (if left to themselves) have craved universal war for securing their own independence, not least their own linguistic independence; so how could their desires be curbed? When Kossuth had briefly but spectacularly set Hungarian politics aflame, he soon dashed any hopes that non-Hungarians – and in particular the Serbs who inhabited Hungarian-administered territory – might draw benefits from the new, Kossuth-dominated order. To a Serb delegation which approached him specifically in the hope of obtaining such benefits, he bluntly replied: 'The sword will decide between us.'¹⁸

A crude retort, but hardly an illogical one, given Kossuth's first political principles. Indeed it is hard to conceive of any other sanction *except* the sword which he had at his disposal. Like Europe's other nationalist leaders of the mid-nineteenth century, he did not derive political strength from anything as amorphous as public opinion, even from that newspaper readership which greatly increased his international fame. Newspapers'

¹⁶ Quoted in Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 83.

¹⁷ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 103.

¹⁸ Quoted in Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 127.

eventual enmity could be as damaging as newspapers' initial support had been advantageous, a truth upon which events would soon give Parnell ample time to meditate. Nor did such nationalist leaders owe their standing to being championed by individual press-barons, because individual press-barons as the world has known them since the 1890s – William Randolph Hearst, Joseph Pulitzer, Lord Northcliffe, Lord Rothermere, Lord Beaverbrook, Rupert Murdoch – did not yet exist.

Likewise irrelevant to these leaders was any vote-winning skill, since few European countries had widespread adult male suffrage before the twentieth century, while still fewer had widespread adult female suffrage before World War II (exceptions include Britain post-1918, and Germany between 1918 and 1933). Nationalist leaders could not rely on deriving power from adopting monarchism either. Divinity no longer hedged such nineteenth-century kings as Louis-Philippe in France, Otto in Greece, and Amadeo in Spain. They were enthroned *faute de mieux*, and were ultimately dethroned on equally weak pretexts, by politicians who acted not through love of monarchy but through dread of the alternatives.

A more promising source of authority than monarchism or the ballot-box, in the eyes of nineteenth-century nationalists, lay in a doctrinal claim to deep historical roots. Irish nationalism, so often tied in to revival of the Gaelic language, is among the most obvious examples of such a claim. (The alarm which Fenian activism inspired among Catholic hierarchs – because of its politically destabilising potential – ensured that for much of the nineteenth century, membership of a Fenian group constituted grounds for excommunication. Through similar fear of threats to the social order, and of being reduced to mere national-church vassalage, the Vatican in the 1830s championed Orthodox Russian rule over insurgent Catholic Poles.) But the claim to historical roots had, in the nineteenth century, almost universal relevance. It motivated great powers as well as small powers. It stimulated the extraordinary, if short-lived, cult of Frederick Barbarossa which Wilhelmine Germany exhibited (in such hypertrophic forms as the Barbarossa Monument at Kyffhäuser, Thuringia, unveiled in 1896). And it inspired the bitter aphorism widely attributed to H.H. 'Saki' Munro: 'The Balkans produce more

history than they can consume locally.’¹⁹ When a nation’s historical roots were bound up, or could plausibly be regarded as being bound up, with centuries of oppression by an empire, so much the better (Ireland under British rule, the Balkan states under Ottoman rule, Poland under Russian – as well as, sometimes, under Austrian and Prussian – rule). Here is Gellner on the topic of nationalists’ searches for pedigrees:

... nationalism sees and presents itself as the affirmation of each and every ‘nationality’; and these alleged entities are supposed just to be there, like Mount Everest, since long ago, antedating the age of nationalism.²⁰

Nonetheless it would be entirely wrong to argue that such historical awareness always took, during the nineteenth century, nakedly political forms. Sometimes it did, sometimes it did not. Instructive in this context is the early-nineteenth-century passion, almost everywhere in Europe, for Sir Walter Scott’s novels.

To a reader in the pre-unification Italian peninsula (Rossini and Donizetti famously used these novels as bases for several of their own operas), Scott’s tales of mediaeval life might have had a locally relevant political depth-charge. Perhaps the same applied to a Scottish reader of the novels. To an English reader of the novels, in clear contrast, it manifestly did not apply. For no foreign power was oppressing England; and yet Scott won at least as wide a public in England as he did anywhere else, wider, in fact, than he won among his fellow Scots. He won it without the slightest inclination on his part towards revolutionary fervour. In politics he remained an Anglophile Tory. But he had articulated cultural yearnings greater than himself. The appetite for the pre-modern history of specific foreign cultures, once Scott had done so much to arouse it, could only with difficulty be slaked. As will soon appear, this appetite eventually affected music: how it came to be written, how it achieved publication, and what audiences it found.

¹⁹ Actually Saki made his original aphorism much more specific: he put into his protagonist’s mouth the words ‘*The people of Crete* [emphasis added – RJS] unfortunately make more history than they can consume locally’ (‘The Jestings of Arlington Stringham’, from H.H. Munro, *The Chronicles of Clovis*, [London: John Lane, 1911], 86–92, at 91).

²⁰ Gellner, *Nations*, 48.

4.3 Nationalism and nineteenth-century music

It hardly needs stating how much Western classical music since 1800 has been inspired by – or at the very least is attuned to – self-consciously national, and sometimes self-consciously separatist, concerns.²¹ Not merely is it true that such music often evokes the spirit of place; it is also true that the spirit of place is often defined by the spirit of repudiating some other place, usually German.

Yet we do well to be surprised by how little general discussion of this phenomenon (as opposed to discussion of how individual composers exemplified the phenomenon) appeared in the musicological literature until the 1990s. There are several reasons for this. Ralph Locke has cited one of them: ‘Musicology has a longstanding formalist / structural / autonomist bias traceable back to [Eduard] Hanslick and other nineteenth-century idealists but particularly pervasive in the Cold War era of the 1950s-80s.’²² But on the issue of national particularism in music, this explanation (however accurate) will take us only so far. Pre-1990s musicology’s debt to Hanslickian autonomy has coexisted with abundant comments on the best-known musical manifestations of separatist sentiment.

In this respect, there can be no denying or avoiding the impact which Richard Taruskin’s writings – above all, his writings concerning Russian music – have had on musical historiography as a whole. Almost the whole of pre-Taruskin exegesis concerning music in Russia involved not only discussing nationalism, but also taking Russian nationalists at their own valuation. The almost routine scholarly habit of belittling Taneyev, Glazunov, even Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff (because of these men’s Westernising tendencies and the distance which they kept from more overt nationalists such as Glinka and the *Kuchka*) was hardly an expression of an autonomist impulse. Quite the contrary: such Russophile musicologists as M.D. Calvocoressi, Rosa Newmarch, Gerald Abraham, and Edward Garden had operated according to the automatic belief that explicitly exotic Russian music (exotic to Western European ears,

²¹ Naturally composers could avoid separatism by embracing unificationism. Verdi, who came to be regarded as the musical embodiment of Italy’s *Risorgimento*, is the supreme example of this allegiance.

²² Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 23.

that is) was almost the only legitimate form of Russian music; and that those Russian composers who did not purvey such explicit exoticism – or who at any rate usually showed a reluctance to purvey it – must be somehow second-rate. The *locus classicus* of such an outlook could well be the notorious article on Rachmaninoff in the 1954 *Grove*, which dismisses him as one who ‘represented his country only in the sense that accomplished but conventional composers like Glazunov or Arensky did ... The enormous popular success some few of Rachmaninoff’s works had in his lifetime is not likely to last’).²³

Allied to such an outlook, and frequently (though not always) exhibited by the same commentators, was a taste for what might be called musical Rousseauism, of whatever national origin. Anyone who operates from the premise that the most exotically un-Western Russian music was, and is, the best Russian music will probably be inclined to favour vernacularist music over non-vernacularist music in general, from whatever country. (‘Vernacularist’ is Taruskin’s own term, one that has the advantage of emotional neutrality, an advantage lacking in the words ‘nationalist’, ‘folkloric’ or ‘*völkisch*.’) A 2014 study of nineteenth-century Russian composition – which concentrates on opera but also deals with other genres – explores this whole issue.²⁴ Taruskin himself, discussing the most celebrated nineteenth-century composer from what we now call the Czech Republic, insisted that

Dvořák’s Bohemianisms were at once the vehicle of his international appeal and the eventual guarantee of his secondary status *vis-à-vis* natural-born universals like Brahms. Without the native costume, a ‘peripheral’ composer would never achieve even secondary canonical rank, but with it he could never achieve more.²⁵

²³ Rosa Newmarch, ‘Rakhmaninov, Sergei Vassilievich,’ in Eric Blom (ed.), *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th edition (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1954), Vol. 7, 27–29.

²⁴ Rutger Helmers, *Not Russian Enough?: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014). This volume pays due tribute to Taruskin, who ‘has relentlessly criticized the older Western approach to Russian music in his many publications on the subject since the 1980s’ (13).

²⁵ Richard Taruskin, ‘Nationalism: 11. Colonialist Nationalism,’ *Grove Music Online* (20 January 2001), <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.50846> (accessed 20 December 2019).

It should be emphasised here that Taruskin is not himself equating ‘universal’ music with Austro-German music. Far from it: he has made opposition to German musical scholarship a significant part of his life’s work. But the equation of musical universality with musical Teutonicism often enough took place in Dvořák’s own age. Celia Applegate has traced the history of this equation – while avoiding, to her credit, the coarse reductionism which the topic has inspired from other commentators – and in so doing, she has supplied a memorable horticultural image:

Unfortunately, the national problem in music, particularly as it does or does not apply to German music, is like pulling a weed only to find that its roots are intertwined with everything you wish to keep in your garden.²⁶

Not every historian of music has demonstrated Applegate’s willingness to go beyond ideological shibboleths. Too many have failed to acknowledge even that such a willingness might be desirable. Stanford’s own protégé Cecil Forsyth, writing in 1911, expressed the nationalist attitude in one of its more stylistically brutal English forms. Making no distinction between foreign composers and foreign performers, Forsyth delivered himself of the following complaint:

How long will it be before we realise the fact that where the foreign musician is, there is the enemy? ... He well knows that the surest way to make his position firm here is to denationalise our music.²⁷

Five years later Forsyth, in the *History of Music* on which he collaborated with Stanford, went further still:

It must be confessed that in almost every generation there are two classes of men working and talking in opposition to each other – the nationalists and the denationalists. And the artistic health and productivity of any community increases exactly with its proportion of nationalists. The denationalists almost invariably have rank, wealth, and fashion at their backs. Indeed, but for the fact that they are a race of artistic eunuchs, the other party would never make any headway. ...

²⁶ Celia Applegate, ‘How German is it?: nationalism and the idea of serious music in the early nineteenth century,’ *Nineteenth-Century Music* 21:3 (Spring 1998), 274-296, at 276.

²⁷ Cecil Forsyth, *Music and Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1911), 260.

[N]o lesson is more needed in England and America than the lesson of nationalism. Only by a fearless belief in itself can a people hope to possess an honourable music. And in this matter every single person who reads these lines is in some measure personally responsible.²⁸

(Forsyth, as if to underwrite Walt Whitman's proclamation 'You say I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself,' spent most of his last three decades being precisely the kind of foreign musician whom in 1911 he had condemned. He had his home in New York City, and died there in 1941, largely unnoticed but at least not accused of enemy trafficking: from which accusation, perhaps, his very obscurity protected him.)

Historians have made much of those directly political manifestations to which Forsyth-type attitudes can lend, and have lent, themselves: manifestations which in the twentieth century helped to precipitate mass murder in Nazi Germany, in the USSR, and in Communist China. These movements were but unusually destructive forms of dogmas that predated – that also, moreover, outlived – Hitler, Stalin, and Mao themselves. By now, the bibliography on how Nazism and Communism imposed their respective artistic Party Lines on musicians is vast. Far less has been written about the wider artistic significance of such Party Lines' basic nationalist assumptions. These assumptions have affected a good deal of musical historiography on topics that have nothing to do with twentieth-century totalitarian states. One of these topics is Stanford.

4.4 Stanford and vernacularism

No artist, least of all an artist of Stanford's quick-wittedness and fecund imagination, could have grown up in Ireland during the mid-nineteenth century and remained unaffected by that experience. Stanford's own early development, musical and otherwise, in Dublin has already been discussed. Still, another factor probably did even more than his upbringing to determine his subsequent outlook, and the role of the

²⁸ Charles Villiers Stanford and Cecil Forsyth, *A History of Music* (London: Macmillan, 1916), 305–306. Stanford wrote the book's chapters on the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century, Beethoven and his contemporaries, and 'The Post-Beethoven Period'; Forsyth wrote everything else, including the chapter 'Nationalism: Modern Schools' from which the above passage comes. Nothing in the Stanford chapters comes close to Forsyth's outspokenness.

Hibernian *genius loci* within that outlook: that is to say, the very fact of his leaving Ireland for good, while still in his twenties.

This choice of willing self-expatriation ensured that Ireland's claim upon Stanford's emotions kept, as it were, a chemical purity. It was a purity uncorrupted by any subsequent adult encounters, which, had he undertaken them, he would almost certainly have found to be ample sources of hideous disillusionment. Always the place of Stanford's birth preserved for him an Edenic allure. It became for him what A.E. Housman (speaking not of Ireland but of Shropshire) called 'the land of lost content.'

A time-lag of decades inevitably typified Stanford's view of Hibernian affairs. When in 1914 he spoke publicly on the subject, he had in mind the Ireland that he had known – and that he had, on balance, loved – in the 1860s. He could neither comprehend nor accept that during his absence, the Emerald Isle had (in a phrase which Yeats later used in his poem *Easter 1916*) 'changed, changed utterly.' Stanford's plight, which *mutatis mutandis* becomes the plight of almost any intelligent émigré, would eventually be encapsulated in the wistful title of a 1940 novel by America's Thomas Wolfe: *You Can't Go Home Again*. No more, it proved, could Stanford 'go home again.'

The panic which Stanford felt at the concept of travelling back to his birthplace, for however short a period, has been touched on in Chapter Two and will be discussed anew in Chapter Five. Admittedly, by the time Trinity College Dublin offered Stanford an honorary degree in 1921, the military struggle over Irish independence made it impolitic for him (as a Protestant who openly denounced Home Rule) to re-enter his homeland. But we can legitimately suspect that Stanford interpreted medical advice against the journey as a convenient excuse, rather than as a fundamental reason. It is hard to resist concluding that if Stanford had really wanted to visit Dublin for his award, he would have carried out the visit – warfare or no warfare – and would have defied his doctors' warnings. As a distinguished musician he would have faced far less risk of being caught in Anglo-Irish crossfire than an ordinary bystander on a Dublin street would have done. Sinn Fein's leaders, however unpitiful towards British troops, had a commendable reluctance to inflict 'collateral damage' on internationally

renowned civilian artists. The ultimate decision-maker regarding this cancelled trip by Stanford was, accordingly, Stanford.

An unavoidable parallel exists here between Stanford and his chief literary tormentor: George Bernard Shaw. Like Stanford, Shaw had spent his earliest and most impressionable years in Dublin. Like Stanford, Shaw resided thereafter mostly in England. Like Stanford, Shaw had his inherent combativeness whetted to a fine point by the exhilarating sensation of being Protestant-reared in a Catholic city. Like Stanford, Shaw held aloof from the Celtic revivalism of Yeats and of John Millington Synge.²⁹ With justice, the term 'Garrison' has been often used to describe the pre-1922 Dublin Protestant mindset.³⁰

But Stanford had been born, by Dublin criteria, to the purple; whereas Shaw had known from his earliest years the poisonous bite of consistent indigence, and worst of all (for a brilliant youngster in Queen Victoria's Britain) indigence of the shabby-genteel kind. Stanford had a rich lawyer for a father, who cherished him; Shaw had a feckless drunkard for a father, who barely tolerated him. Stanford benefited from undergraduate life at a great university; Shaw's parents could not possibly have afforded – and they never contemplated – higher education for their son, whose formal schooling had ended in his fifteenth year. The waters of the River Liffey itself were not deeper than the social gap between a rich nineteenth-century Dublin Protestant and a poor one. Stanford could, to a certain extent, ignore Shaw; but Shaw could not ignore Stanford. Hardly surprising, in view of this, that a strong element of personalised payback (quite apart from Shaw's aesthetic antipathy to Brahms and to Brahms's admirers such as Stanford) informed Shaw's hostility towards his compatriot.

For the most part this hostility emerged undisguised (Chapter Two has referred to it). Occasionally, and more instructively, it took the form of amateur psychoanalysis on

²⁹ Between Stanford and Yeats no love was lost. Both men had belonged to the Irish Literary Society; but when Yeats in 1900 denounced both Queen Victoria and the Boer War, Stanford furiously resigned his membership (Rodmell, *Stanford*, 390).

³⁰ G.K. Chesterton observed in his biography of Shaw: 'There is only one word for the minority in Ireland, and that is the word that public phraseology has found; I mean the word "Garrison." The Irish are essentially right when they talk as if all Protestant Unionists lived inside "The Castle." They have all the virtues and limitations of a literal garrison in a fort.' G.K. Chesterton, *George Bernard Shaw* (London: John Lane, 1909), 35.

Shaw's part. In 1893, Shaw reviewed Stanford's *Irish Symphony* with more enthusiasm than he expected to feel. When discussing the work, he posited a fundamental gulf – which no artifice could bridge more than temporarily – between Stanford the Celt and Stanford the Professor. Shaw considered the former persona laudable; he regarded the latter persona as insufferable. His findings must be quoted at something like their original length (the avoidance of italics throughout is Shaw's own):

The spectacle of a university professor 'going Fantee'³¹ is indecorous, though to me personally it is delightful. When Professor Stanford is genteel, cultured, classic, pious, and experimentally Mixolydian, he is dull beyond belief. His dullness is all the harder to bear because it is the restless, ingenious, trifling, flippant dullness of the Irishman, instead of the stupid, bovine, sleepable-through dullness of the Englishman, or even the aggressive, ambitious, sentimental dullness of the Scot. But Mr Villiers Stanford cannot be dismissed as merely the Irish variety of the professorial species.

... although in it [Stanford's *Eden*] you see the Irish professor trifling in a world of ideas, in marked contrast to the English professor conscientiously wrestling in a vacuum, yet over and above this national difference, which would assert itself equally in the case of any other Irishman, you find certain traces of a talent for composition, which is precisely what the ordinary professor, with all his grammatical and historical accomplishments, utterly lacks. But the conditions of making this talent serviceable are not supplied by Festival commissions. Far from being a respectable oratorio-manufacturing talent, it is, when it gets loose, eccentric, violent, romantic, patriotic, and held in check only by a mortal fear of being found deficient in what are called 'the manners and tone of good society.' This fear, too, is Irish: it is, possibly, the racial consciousness of having missed that four hundred years of Roman civilization which gave England a sort of university education when Ireland was in the hedge school. ...

The *Irish Symphony*, composed by an Irishman, is a record of fearful conflict between the aboriginal Celt and the Professor. The scherzo is not a scherzo at all, but a shindy, expending its force in riotous dancing. However hopelessly an English orchestra may fail to catch the wild nuances of the Irish fiddler, it cannot altogether drown the 'hurroosh'

³¹ In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary 'fantee' is defined as follows: '[chiefly British]: wild, unrestrained, or primitive – used chiefly as a predicate adjective and usually in the phrase *go fantee*.' The Fanti people (who speak a language likewise called Fanti) live in Ghana, which won independence from Britain in 1957 and became a presidential republic three years later, though as of 2021 it remains within the Commonwealth.

with which Stanford the Celt drags Stanford the Professor into the orgy. Again, in the slow movement the emotional development is such as would not be possible in an English or German symphony. At first it is slow, plaintive, passionately sad about nothing.

According to all classic precedent, it should end in hopeless gloom, in healing resignation, or in pathetic sentiment. What it does end in is blue murder, the Professor this time aiding and abetting the transition with all his contrapuntal might. In the last movement the rival Stanfords agree to a compromise which does not work. The essence of the sonata form is the development of themes; and even in a rondo a theme that will not develop will not fit the form. Now the greatest folk-songs are final developments themselves: they cannot be carried any further. You cannot develop God Save the Queen, though you may, like Beethoven, write some interesting but retrograde variations on it. Neither can you develop Let Erin remember. You might, of course, develop it inversely, debasing it touch by touch until you had the Marseillaise in all its vulgarity; and the doing of this might be instructive, though it would not be symphony writing. But no forward development is possible.

Yet in the last movement of the Irish Symphony, Stanford the Celt, wishing to rejoice in Molly Macalpine (Remember the glories) and The Red Fox (Let Erin remember), insisted that if Stanford the Professor wanted to develop themes, he should develop these two. The Professor succumbed to the shillelagh of his double, but, finding development impossible, got out of the difficulty by breaking Molly up into fragments, exhibiting these fantastically, and then putting them together again. This process is not in the least like the true sonata development. It would not work at all with The Red Fox, which comes in as a flagrant patch upon the rondo — for the perfect tune that is one moment a war song, and the next, without the alteration of a single note, the saddest of patriotic reveries ‘on Lough Neagh’s bank where the fisherman strays in the clear cold eve’s declining,’ flatly refuses to merge itself into any sonata movement, and loftily asserts itself in right of ancient descent as entitled to walk before any symphony that ever professor penned.³²

In view of the fact that Ireland’s hedge schools were run, clandestinely and illegally, by Catholics (amid the very harshest days of the Penal Laws), Shaw must have relished inserting that ‘hedge school’ reference as a means to taunt the upper-crust Anglican Stanford.³³ Yet the whole article, while designed specifically to mock Stanford’s

³² Crompton, *Reviews and Bombardments*, 341–344.

³³ When the persecution of Irish Catholics before Emancipation in 1829 took its most severe forms, hedge schools’ teachers (often themselves priests) sometimes held their classes quite literally next

academic approach, supplies an unwittingly revealing self-portrait of its author, who elsewhere revealed no taste for indigenous Hibernian music, and who feigned such a taste only when it had the potential for affronting the professoriate.

Stanford possessed none of Shaw's desire to distance himself from his geographical origins. Between 1902 and 1905 Stanford revised and released in three volumes a collection of Irish folksongs that the Dublin painter and archivist George Petrie had published in 1855.³⁴ (Already in 1877, another Dubliner – a certain F. Hoffmann – had published an anthology of extracts from the Petrie compendium.)³⁵ Unlike Vaughan Williams and Grainger in Britain, as well as Bartók and Kodály in eastern Europe, Stanford did not actually undertake field-work to hunt down demotic melodies. Instead, he relied on the material that Petrie (who, unlike Stanford, knew Gaelic) had already notated: a substantial corpus, amounting to no fewer than 1,582 tunes.³⁶ Not only did Stanford's six orchestral *Irish Rhapsodies* – the first of which dates from 1902, the last from 1922 – derive their motivic bases from such tunes, but so did several of his organ pieces.

The Irish melody *St Columba* (habitually sung by congregations to words beginning 'O breathe on me, o breath of God') forms the obvious basis for Stanford's Op. 101 No. 6; further details of this will be found in Chapter Five. Another Irish melody from Petrie, *Gartan*, is alluded to at least twice, once in Op. 105 No. 5 and again in Op. 182 No. 4. The 'Irish air' cited in the title to the fourth and last of Stanford's Op. 189 *Four Intermezzi* is none other than the melody which we know as *Danny Boy* (Stanford, like Grainger in his own arrangement of the melody, called it *Londonderry Air*). In 1908 Stanford maintained that when it came to British folksong traditions, 'the Irish, ... to my mind, speaking as impartially as an Irishman can, is the most remarkable literature of

to a hedge, so that Anglican landowners would not see them. More often, the classes – which included Latin and mathematics taught to a high level – took place in a barn or near a river. Tony Lyons, "'Inciting the lawless and profligate adventure": The hedge schools in Ireland,' *History Ireland* 24:6 (November-December 2016), 28–31, at 28.

³⁴ Charles Villiers Stanford (ed.), *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as Noted by G. Petrie*, 3 vols. (London: Boosey & Co., 1902–1905).

³⁵ F. Hoffmann, *Ancient Music of Ireland from the Petrie Collection, Arranged for the Pianoforte* (Dublin: Pigott & Co., 1877).

³⁶ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 391.

folk-music in the world – there is no emotion with which it does not deal successfully, and none has more power of pathos or of fire.’³⁷

But in terms of his aesthetic outlook, Stanford was Janus-faced. One face looked back at Ireland; the other face looked to Europe. So much for Stanford *vis-à-vis* musical vernacularism; now for a discussion of Stanford *vis-à-vis* musical internationalism.

4.5 Stanford and internationalism

Were a prize to be offered for the cliché which has been subjected to more persistent derision from recent musicological scholarship than any other, the winning entry might well be ‘Music is an international language.’ Even within Europe, this cliché retains ample power to provoke annoyance. We need solely recollect French audiences’ general lack of enthusiasm for Brahms, or German audiences’ general lack of enthusiasm for Fauré, in order to apprehend how difficult it is (the European Union’s sway notwithstanding) for much first-rate music to ‘travel’ to nearby nations.

Yet it was not always so; and pre-French-Revolution Europe furnishes lavish proofs of this fact. Bach, like almost any other composer living before 1789, would have found nonsensical any equation of musical greatness with national loyalty. He had not settled for second-class status – and what is more, nobody in his own time accused him of having settled for it – when he assiduously collected music by Italians (Palestrina, Frescobaldi, Vivaldi, Albinoni, Giovanni Legrenzi, Antonio Caldara) and by Frenchmen (Nicolas de Grigny, André Raison). Often enough Bach collected this music with a view to arranging it. Nor did Schütz incur any charges of second-class status when, a hundred years before Bach, he brought to Saxony’s musical life the *cori spezzati* techniques which he had mastered while in Venice. Similarly, no-one ever complained of Handel as somehow betraying his Germanic lineage when he associated with Corelli and the younger Scarlatti; when he wrote English-language oratorios for the London market; or when he wrote ‘French overtures’ according to Lully’s template. Most of Handel’s operas (*Acis and Galatea* and *Semele* being the exceptions) were in Italian, the standard operatic language throughout the eighteenth century. Composers who in many cases had never seen the Italian peninsula in their lives – who worked in Madrid,

³⁷ Stanford, *Studies and Memories*, 55.

in Lisbon, in Vienna, in Stuttgart, in St Petersburg – wrote their operas to Italian texts. Even for the commercially based operatic theatre of Hamburg, which Handel's own friend Reinhard Keiser had helped endow with a substantial tradition of German-language opera,³⁸ Handel adhered to Italian libretti.

Representative of Bach's and Handel's younger contemporaries was the attitude enunciated by Johann Joachim Quantz, writing in mid-eighteenth-century Prussia. Quantz lauded the advantages of a diverse musical idiom, as recommended by his Italian-trained, Saxony-based teacher Johann Georg Pisendel. The aesthetic of Pisendel (as Quantz himself recollected) 'took such deep root in me that I have since always preferred the mixed style to the national styles.'³⁹ In an analogous manner 150 years afterwards, when German theatres could guarantee performances of Stanford's operas and British theatres could not, Stanford accepted the local requirement for these operas' libretti to undergo German translation. From this circumstance, and from the foregoing chapters, it will already have become clear that Stanford cannot be slotted neatly into a triumphant vernacularist narrative. (Later it will become clear that he defies incorporation into a triumphant modernist narrative.) Where two or three such narratives are gathered together, there is Stanford in the midst of them, effortlessly problematising them.

It could be argued that the vernacularist-versus-internationalist antithesis is a false one. Still, if the antithesis truly is false, then it has taken a long time to die. And, as will emerge a few paragraphs hence, Stanford's hostile critics discernibly do not want it to die.

Stanford straddled both sides of the vernacularist-internationalist divide, as if such straddling was the most natural thing in the world. We have already seen how his English sympathies made him uncongenial to many Irish; how his Irish sympathies made him uncongenial to many English; and how his Teutonic sympathies made him uncongenial to many later Britons of more openly regional principles than his own.

³⁸ And even polyglot opera: Johann Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow*, which in its subject-matter anticipated Mussorgsky by a century and a half, had a libretto where some characters sang in German and some in Italian. None of Mattheson's Hamburg audiences thought this odd.

³⁹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. E.R. Reilly (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1966), xv.

What befell him was very much what befell other composers, trained in the nineteenth century, who were considered to have more than one geographical or racial allegiance. Much of the odium that Meyerbeer incurred from other composers (Wagner most famously, although Schumann and Mendelssohn also denounced him) derived not just from his Jewish ethnicity but from his combination of German childhood, Italian training, and long-term French abode.⁴⁰ Mahler complained that 'I am three times without a country: a Bohemian among Austrians, an Austrian among Germans, and a Jew among all the peoples of the world.'⁴¹ Anton Rubinstein, like Mahler of Jewish origin, uttered a somewhat similar lament: 'To the Jews I am a Christian. To the Christians – a Jew. For the classicists I am a musical innovator, and for the musical innovators I am an artistic reactionary and so on. The conclusion: I am neither fish nor fowl, in essence a pitiful creature!'.⁴²

The Gentile Liszt, in a similar fashion to Mahler and Rubinstein, wrestled with problems that appertained to both nation and creed. Late in life, Liszt bemoaned his artistic plight (the 'Sgambati' whom he mentions is the Italian pianist-composer Giovanni Sgambati, who had conducted the first Italian performance of Liszt's own *Dante Symphony*):

Everyone is against me. Catholics because they find my church music profane, Protestants because to them my music is Catholic, Freemasons because they think my music is too clerical; to conservatives I am a revolutionary, to the 'futurists' an old Jacobin. As for the Italians, in spite of Sgambati, if they support Garibaldi they detest me as a hypocrite, if they are on the side of the Vatican I am accused of bringing the Venusberg into the Church. To Bayreuth I am not a composer but a publicity agent. The Germans reject my music as French, the French as

⁴⁰ Dana Gooley, 'Meyerbeer, Eclecticism, and Operatic Cosmopolitanism,' *The Musical Quarterly* 99:2 (2016), 166–200, deals with this issue, and makes the point that both Weber and the young Wagner came closer to Meyerbeer's cosmopolitanism than we generally assume or that the mature Wagner wanted to admit: 'They took pride in the specifically German traits of opera, but balanced it with due recognition of French and Italian influences and strengths' (170). More recently Donizetti's extended dealings with the Austrian and French operatic markets have been discussed at length: Claudio Vellutini, 'Donizetti, Vienna, Cosmopolitanism,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 73:1 (2020), 1–52.

⁴¹ Stuart Feder, *Gustav Mahler: A Life in Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 23.

⁴² Quoted in James Loeffler, 'From biblical antiquarianism to revolutionary modernism: Jewish art music, 1850–1925,' in Joshua S. Walden (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 167–186, at 171.

German; to the Austrians I write Gypsy music, to the Hungarians foreign music. And the Jews loathe me, my music and myself, for no reason at all.⁴³

Yet Stanford, even as he straddled the divide, leaned towards internationalism. With his background he could hardly have done otherwise. So far as anyone knows, he never read a single line of James Joyce, who in any case was Stanford's junior by thirty years. Nevertheless, one passage in Joyce's early play *Exiles* (published 1918) has great relevance in comprehending Stanford. The passage in question is uttered by the character Robert Hand, who assures his friend Richard Rowan:

If Ireland is to become a new Ireland she must first become European. And that is what you are here for, Richard. Some day we shall have to choose between England and Europe.⁴⁴

Joyce's own career – with its record of protracted residences in Paris, Zürich, and the Austro-Italian border city of Trieste – shows vividly enough his commitment to Europe. (Even when Wehrmacht tanks barrelled through Paris, Joyce returned to Switzerland, not to Ireland, though in 1940 the latter country likewise remained neutral.) Stanford, unlike Joyce, never finally chose between being a good European and being a good citizen of the United Kingdom. A convincing argument can be made for the idea that the chronicle of Stanford's art is the chronicle of his geographical equivocality.

Nonetheless, it is strange how many historians have been reluctant to give Stanford recognition for making this equivocality work to his creative benefit. Bax's 1943 memoir *Farewell, My Youth* accused Stanford of being in thrall to Brahms and of deficient national pride:

Stanford was not Irish enough. An Irishman by birth, he belonged to that class abominated by Irish Ireland, the 'West Briton.' There are intimations in some of his work that he started not without a certain spark of authentic

⁴³ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years, 1861-1886* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 411.

⁴⁴ James Joyce, *Exiles* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 43.

musical imagination, but quite early he went a-whoring after foreign gods, and that original flicker was smothered in the outer darkness of Brahms.⁴⁵

Very few readers in 2021 will endorse Bax's view that Brahms's music inhabits 'outer darkness.' There is of course no gainsaying Stanford's admiration for Brahms's output, and the impact which that output periodically had on his own idiom. He would have regarded being compared with Brahms as, if anything, a compliment (although he showed no detectable interest in Brahms's Op. 122 collection of eleven chorale preludes for the organ, which had been released posthumously in 1902; perhaps these preludes' thickness of texture and passages of almost Tristanesque chromaticism deterred him). Stanford's memoir singled out for special commendation the diligence with which Sir George Grove and the conductor Sir August Manns 'made Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Wagner household words in musical circles'⁴⁶ by way of their concert series at the Crystal Palace, a series which began in 1855 and continued until Grove's death in 1900.

Joseph J. Ryan ultimately echoes Bax's view of Stanford – albeit in a far more civil fashion – when he bewails 'the all too evident influence of Brahms that permeates the *oeuvre* of a creative talent that could never quite break free from the constraints of academia.'⁴⁷ Observe how Ryan here makes against Stanford two different charges: first, reprimanding him for being too Brahmsian, and a moment later, upbraiding him for being too professorial. Fellow Dubliner Harry White, with less graciousness than Ryan, waspishly refers to 'exotic (and sometimes risible) appropriations of the native repertory which underlined the ethnic-colonial division of musical culture ever more emphatically. Stanford's "Irish" music is a case in point.'⁴⁸

These remarks of Ryan's and White's warrant notice not so much for what they include, as for what they omit. The noun 'academia' need not be automatically pejorative (even though the practice of censuring uninspired, or allegedly uninspired,

⁴⁵ Arnold Bax, *Farewell, My Youth* (London: Longmans, Green, 1943), 27–28.

⁴⁶ Stanford, *Pages*, 140.

⁴⁷ Joseph J. Ryan, 'The Tone of Defiance,' in Harry White and Michael Murphy (eds.), *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 197–211, at 205.

⁴⁸ Harry White, 'Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland,' in White and Murphy, 257–271, at 268.

compositions as 'academic' is well over a century old).⁴⁹ Stanford did not embrace the value system that prizes iconoclastic modernist originality over every other criterion. Likewise, phrases such as White's own 'ethnic colonial division' were to Stanford literally devoid of meaning.

Stanford's whole philosophy of artistic creation favoured inclusiveness rather than divisiveness. The very fact that he revered both Brahms's and Wagner's music, at a period when championing the one composer still often involved despising the other, is itself emblematic of his approach (although, admittedly, passions in the Brahmsians-versus-Wagnerians war had cooled somewhat since the pamphleteering heat of the 1860s). When he came to write *Pages from an Unwritten Diary*, he ruefully reflected on how odd his musical tolerance sometimes seemed to acquaintances:

I confess that I am a man of many likes, and I have often been told that my likes are somewhat incompatible with each other. A well-known lady musician sitting next me at the rehearsal of an early Richter concert at which Brahms' E minor Symphony and Wagner's 'Meistersinger' Overture were given, when I expressed my admiration for both, told me that it was impossible for me to like the one if I liked the other. My answer was that I was one degree happier than she was, for I liked one thing in the world more than she could.⁵⁰

As an artist, Stanford primarily thought, not in terms of 'either/or', but in terms of 'both/and.' This description also applies to Liszt, Mahler, and Rubinstein. The political philosopher Tony Judt well summed up, from his own experience as a London-born, Paris-educated, New-York-resident ex-kibbutznik, the requisite cast of mind:

⁴⁹ In 1901 the critic John F. Runciman railed at Stanford for academicism *per se*: 'The Academic cannot be joyous and natural for many minutes at a time: he must needs everlastingly be knitting his brows, folding his arms on his breast, and delivering rhetorical fustian – poverty-stricken imitations of the great master's great effects – in what he considers the grand manner.' (John F. Runciman, *Saturday Review* [London], 8 June 1901, 73–76; quoted in Dibble, *Stanford*, 333.) Well before Runciman's birth, Schumann in his *Davisbündlertänze* had explicitly aimed at routing his own epoch's philistines (as he himself called them). Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1867–1869) used the same word to denounce those who, in Arnold's view, most gravely threatened high culture: though Arnold aimed his denunciations less at conservative academics than at unreflective businessmen.

⁵⁰ Stanford, *Pages*, 136.

I suppose I should seek comfort in the familiar insult of 'rootless cosmopolitan.' But that seems to me too imprecise, too deliberately universal in its ambitions. Far from being rootless, I am all too well rooted in a variety of contrasting heritages.⁵¹

Amid this context, the rarity in pre-1800 music of any unmistakable national sentiment needs additional emphasis. To the (substantial) extent that pre-1800 music constituted a *lingua franca*, it made all except the most restricted nationalist differentiation in musical language largely unthinkable, even in territories peripheral to the European mainstream. The occasional indulgence in writing music with putatively Hungarian characteristics (cf. the famous *Rondo all'ongarese* from Haydn's G-major Piano Trio, XV:25 in the Hoboken catalogue) or, more often, with putatively Turkish characteristics found enthusiastic eighteenth-century audiences; but it did so exactly inasmuch as it remained, indeed, occasional.⁵² Bach's *English Suites* differ very little stylistically from his *French Suites*; none of these suites will seem to modern audiences especially redolent of either nation, and few if any of the works in which Bach incorporated the 'French overture' form in his music will impress listeners with their Gallic atmosphere. Among musicians of Bach's time, approval of geographical heterogeneity transcended issues of social rank. Carl Dahlhaus observed:

[U]ntil the late eighteenth century ... it was not national differences but regional and social differences that mattered in folk music, and this is how it would have seemed to the people who made the music as much as to external observers. National consciousness was an exception, even in politics; particular circumstances, such as the Hussite wars of the fifteenth century, might engender it; but otherwise it was a prerogative of the educated and was not found, in particular, among the classes where folk music had its roots. It never entered anyone's head to look upon national

⁵¹ Tony Judt, 'Edge People,' *New York Review of Books* (23 February 2010), 1–3. 'Rootless cosmopolitan' (sometimes rendered as 'rootless cosmopolite') was – as Judt well knew and as he expected his *NYRB* readers to know – a phrase prominent in Stalin's USSR for referring disparagingly to Jews as Jews, while avoiding the risks of more overt, Nazi-style insults.

⁵² There were, it need hardly be stressed, numerous pre-1800 allusions to 'Turkish' music (Rameau, both Haydn brothers, Mozart, and Beethoven all supplied examples). But these amounted more to splashes of alien colour than to any attempts at ethnography; and they were undertaken by European composers rather than by Turks themselves. In Austria above all, we should remember, janissary percussion's invocations had the effect of engendering a sharp existential *frisson*, because no eighteenth-century Viennese audience could forget how close the Turks had come to conquering the Habsburg empire as recently as 1683.

characteristics, in the idealized form of ‘the spirit of the people,’ as the source and substance of every ‘authentic’ intellectual and artistic activity.⁵³

Zelenka, at least as ethnically Czech as Dvořák or Smetana or Janáček, could not and did not exploit his Czechness as they could and did. Employed mostly in Dresden, he spoke the musical language of his early-eighteenth-century contemporaries, his glosses on this language being individual rather than national. Telemann, two years Zelenka’s junior, did allow himself the occasional allusion to Polish dance rhythms; but this was purely in the same spirit with which an author will often use dialect speech in a novel.

As with Zelenka, so with Buxtehude at an earlier date. Buxtehude no more exploited his own regional background (Danish in his case) than Zelenka did. The ‘father of Swedish music’, Johan Helmich Roman (1694–1758), wrote *sinfonias* that – as the late British critic Robert Layton commented –

hardly differed from Geminiani and Telemann in accent and manners. They would have remained just as different (or just as similar) had he lived in London or one of the small North German courts.⁵⁴

Roman, like Zelenka and Buxtehude, did not view any outside nation as an oppressor to be defied. No more (save, on occasion, during the Great War) did Stanford. Here, once again, is evidence that Stanford’s habits of thought inclined him in many respects more to the spirit of the eighteenth century, than to the spirit of his own age. St Paul, in a famous lament from his First Letter to the Corinthians, spoke of having been ‘born out of due time’;⁵⁵ Stanford could often have said the very same thing about himself. Comprehend this fact, and suddenly much which will otherwise seem alien (because anachronistic) in Stanford’s artistic character becomes intelligible. Couperin’s invocation of *les goûts réunis* – the subtitle of a 1714 chamber music volume in which he

⁵³ Carl Dahlhaus (trans. Mary Whittall), *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 94.

⁵⁴ Robert Layton, ‘Franz Berwald (1796–1868),’ in Robert Simpson (ed.) *The Symphony: Vol. 1, Haydn to Dvořák* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), 175–183, at 175.

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:8.

boasted of having united French and Italian musical styles – would have affronted a nineteenth-century nationalist. It is highly apposite to Stanford's own work.⁵⁶

At the same time, Sarah Collins and Dana Gooley have recently cautioned against bandying around the term 'cosmopolitanism' without taking thought. They expressed their warning thus:

Cosmopolitanism will only be an analytically useful concept if we can place the focus more squarely on the outlook and its relation to a musician's historical circumstances. Discerning the composer's or listener's ethical stance and sense of 'world-belonging' is unquestionably a murky task. ... Nevertheless, difficulty and ambiguity do not justify an absence of analysis, and it is only by investigating these kinds of outlooks and their implications that we can extend discussions of cosmopolitanism beyond the empirical, and reanimate the political and ethical impetus implicit in the concept.⁵⁷

Collins and Gooley make, in addition, the valid point that the international touring of Mendelssohn and Spohr (to name only two outstanding nineteenth-century German composers with consistently peripatetic careers) is very well documented, not least by the composers themselves. Such documentation can 'enable us to link their extensive travels with a sense of world-belonging and an account of their affinities with people from different cultural backgrounds.'⁵⁸ To speak of 'world-belonging' in connection with Stanford – or with Mendelssohn and Spohr – is arguably excessive, given that these men had no concern with Asia or Africa, and among them only Stanford showed interest in North America. But 'Europe-belonging' well fits all three.

Yet another recent musicological article deals with the cosmopolitan tendencies of two composers seldom discussed together: Grainger – whose youthful dealings with Stanford were discussed in Chapter Two – and the once internationally renowned

⁵⁶ Also redolent of the eighteenth century rather than of High Romanticism is the sheer swiftness (discussed on earlier pages) with which Stanford composed: so like Telemann and Handel, but so unlike, say, Mahler and Schoenberg. Dying as Stanford did in 1924, he remained unaware of Hindemith. This was perhaps fortunate, since he would have been appalled by Hindemith's profligate dissonances and contempt towards Wagner. Yet might not Stanford have eventually recognised, in Hindemith's sheer facility (he wrote his Op. 32 string quartet 'on the train') and his obeisance to eighteenth-century principles of demand-driven musical output, a kindred soul?

⁵⁷ Sarah Collins and Dana Gooley, 'Music and the New Cosmopolitanism: Problems and Possibilities', *The Musical Quarterly* 99:2 (Summer 2016), 139–165, at 143.

⁵⁸ Collins and Gooley, 'Cosmopolitanism,' 158.

American, Edward MacDowell. Grainger much admired MacDowell; and as the article's author Ryan Weber observes, the two men (while born almost a generation apart, MacDowell in 1860, Grainger in 1882) followed curiously similar career paths.

Each musician left his birthplace at an early age to receive formal education in Europe; each experienced the powerful waves of national romanticism in his youth; and each assimilated Nordic cultures as part of a broader transatlantic identity. ... [Grainger] developed a yearning for global cultures and folk music, which both he and MacDowell satiated through the study of Native American and African-American music.⁵⁹

But it would be pointless to press the Grainger-MacDowell comparison too far. The enthusiasm which Grainger evinced for 'primitive music' precisely on the grounds of such music being 'too complex for untrained modern ears'⁶⁰ represents the antithesis of MacDowell's creative approach, which bore the mark of his own Teutonic student days far more than Grainger's ever did. (MacDowell's oeuvre includes settings of German-language poems by Goethe, Heine, and Friedrich Klopstock.) Grainger – with his active promotion of African American performers – could never have said, as MacDowell did tetchily say, that 'Masquerading in the so-called nationalism of Negro clothes cut in bohemia will not help us.'⁶¹ In fact, MacDowell came aesthetically much closer to Stanford (whom the Ryan Weber article does not mention) than to Grainger. Weber's description of MacDowell as having achieved 'a composite style that could negotiate established relationships between the folk influences of the past, the chromatic language of the nineteenth century, and a burgeoning modernist style of the early twentieth century while preserving the complexities of "complex, different experiences" afforded by their interaction'⁶² applies to Stanford equally well.

Complicating Stanford's relations to other lands was his curious lack of interest (curious, that is, by the standards of his day) in the British Empire's wider reaches. Stanford did fit music to certain imperially-minded verses by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

⁵⁹ Ryan Weber, 'In search of hybridity: Grainger, MacDowell and their cosmopolitan imagination,' *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 16:1 (2019), 1–26, at 3–4.

⁶⁰ Malcolm Gillies and Bruce Clunies Ross (eds.), *Grainger on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 44; quoted in Weber, 'In search,' 15–16.

⁶¹ E. Douglas Bomberger, *MacDowell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 196; quoted in Weber, 18.

⁶² Weber, 'In search,' 24.

and by W.E. Henley of 'Invictus' fame.⁶³ But the *Songs of the Sea* and *Songs of the Fleet*, for all their patriotic confidence, exhibit a remarkably pre-imperial attitude. Although they invoke Sir Francis Drake and Lord Nelson, they avoid invoking such Victorian-Edwardian empire-builders as Cecil Rhodes, Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Kitchener, Admiral Fisher, Field-Marshal Roberts and Wolseley, or even General Gordon of Khartoum, whose gruesome fate long preoccupied Elgar.⁶⁴ Stanford's choral cantata *The Revenge*, to words by Tennyson, deals with the Elizabethan Sir Richard Grenville. It is notable that Stanford showed not the slightest desire to visit Australia, Canada, New Zealand, or any of the other imperial dominions. (By contrast, Sir Alexander Mackenzie toured the Canadian provinces before the Great War, and produced a *Canadian Rhapsody* for orchestra as well as four songs to Canadian texts.) In addition, Stanford never thought it worthwhile to travel to British-ruled India, or, if it comes to that, anywhere east of Suez. There exists no equivalent in Stanford's output to Elgar's consciously imperial *Caractacus*, *Crown of India*, *Empire March*, and *Fringes of the Fleet*.

4.6 Stanford and historicism

The nineteenth century (and especially the second half of the nineteenth century) was the first era in which large numbers of musicians developed a genuine historical consciousness concerning music from past ages: in particular concerning the sheer *pastness* of such music, the realisation that the past has its own fascination and is not merely the present's half-witted elder sibling. Not at all by coincidence, this was the very period when musicology, as a recognised scholastic discipline, arose. The starting date for this discipline is usually symbolically reckoned from 1884, in which year Guido Adler helped to found the scholarly journal *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft* (Musicology Quarterly); but the first volume in a comprehensive edition – also German

⁶³ Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 41.

⁶⁴ The non-Catholic Gordon possessed, annotated, and treasured a copy of Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* (Moore, 119–120); while Elgar's plans – eventually abandoned – to compose an explicitly programmatic 'Gordon Symphony' were well enough known to have inspired newspaper comment in 1899 (Moore, *Elgar*, 270).

– of Bach’s music had appeared as far back as 1851, while the equivalent volume in a similar edition of Handel’s music comes from 1858.⁶⁵

A historical consciousness tended to mark even the most self-assured, ebullient, and openly rebellious of nineteenth-century composers. Wagner, of all people, prepared as early as 1848 a performing edition (with profuse expression marks) of Palestrina’s *Stabat Mater*, this piece being at the time hardly known save among a handful of specialists.⁶⁶ Liszt shared in an intensified form Wagner’s admiration for Palestrina; and unlike Wagner, he allowed such admiration to determine much of his own creativity, his sacred oeuvre being large and varied.⁶⁷ Brahms not only served on the editorial boards for the Bach and Handel editions mentioned above, but also helped obtain (in defiance of the dominant nationalist proclivities) Teutonic publication for that most quintessentially Gallic of assortments, Couperin’s *Pièces de clavecin*.⁶⁸ The first modern printings of early Germanic compositions in substantial quantities – *Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst*, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern* – began late in Brahms’s lifetime and had his eager endorsement; these editions, the opposite of performer-friendly (with their eccentric clefs, their giant folio-sized pages, and their publishers’ reluctance to envisage any note-value shorter than a minim), presupposed quiet study rather than practical music-making.⁶⁹ Not for nothing does the very word *Denkmäler* mean ‘monuments.’ (A similar keep-off-the-grass connotation informed the

⁶⁵ Although the word ‘musicology’ was not at all in frequent use in English before 1909, it had (the *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals) first occurred at a remarkably early date. A letter to the editor from one J. Molineux in *The Musical World*’s September 1845 issue contains the sentence ‘Musicology has never sunk so low as it has from the pen of Mr Clare!’ The context makes it clear that Molineux is employing the term in a meaning perfectly compatible with its present one.

⁶⁶ Zsuzsanna Domokos, ‘Wagner’s Edition of Palestrina’s *Stabat Mater*,’ *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47:2 (June 2006), 221–232.

⁶⁷ Charles Willis White, *The Masses of Franz Liszt*, PhD diss., Bryn Mawr University, 1973. In an 1885 letter to biographer Lina Ramann, Liszt asserted that for modern editions of early music, ‘The best model of all is and will continue to be Wagner’s arrangement of Palestrina’s *Stabat Mater* ... this model arrangement’ (White, 59; italics in original).

⁶⁸ Elaine Kelly, ‘An unexpected champion of François Couperin: Johannes Brahms and the “Pièces de Clavecin,”’ *Music & Letters* 85:4 (November 2004), 576–601.

⁶⁹ Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), furnishes comprehensive information on the *Denkmäler* series, though as a result of Rehding’s revisionist zeal to throw out oceanic quantities of bathwater, one fears that several babies must fend for themselves. See in particular Rehding’s Chapter Five, ‘Collective Historia,’ which explains successive governments’ funding of these ‘national greatness projects’ (as we in the twenty-first century would call them) and how much Bismarckian *amour-propre* depended on such funding.

Latin title of Belgium's equivalent series, *Monumenta Musicae Belgicae*; the eventual Spanish counterpart bore the name *Monumentos de la Musica Española*.)

At the same period across the Rhine, Saint-Saëns oversaw editions of Rameau's harpsichord works, while Paul Dukas and Vincent d'Indy performed similar services for Rameau's stage works. The Schola Cantorum itself stood as a formidable monument to d'Indy's preoccupation with sixteenth-century church music, Palestrina above all.⁷⁰ Contemporaneously, Alexandre Guilmant – employed by the Schola in his last years – issued his valuable ten-volume collection *Archives des maîtres de l'orgue des XVIe, XVIIe, and XVIIIe siècles*, latterly with the aid of his protégé André Pirro. These Gallic publications catered to the requirements of non-specialist performers, in a way that the *Denkmäler* had never been designed to do. Meanwhile, Sir John Stainer in Britain laboured much to make widely available (and, like his French contemporaries, with a non-specialist market as well as connoisseurs in mind) such hitherto forgotten fifteenth-century music as Dufay's. Most dramatic of all, Sir George Grove organised and gave his name to the eponymous music dictionary, for which he made a point of hiring mostly British contributors, Parry among them. He meant the result to convince the world that if Teutons had ever held a monopoly on musicological expertise, they no longer did so. The dictionary 'could be observed from the outside, not least by the Austro-German axis, with admiration and respect.'⁷¹

True, there existed precedents for such research. Two Englishmen, Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins – the former an active professional musician, the latter in the strict sense an amateur – wrote histories of music in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.⁷² These histories tended to Panglossian assumptions that the authors lived in the best of all possible worlds; but they still served to make a great many hitherto

⁷⁰ These figures indicate d'Indy's evangelising, hyperactive enthusiasm on behalf of early music: 'During the first decade of the Schola [1896–1906] he gave about two hundred concerts in 130 French provincial cities and more than 150 in Paris, in which the music of Rameau, Bach, Gluck, Monteverdi, and Marc-Antoine Charpentier predominated.' Charles B. Paul, 'Rameau, d'Indy, and French nationalism,' *The Musical Quarterly* 58:1 (January 1972), 46–56, at 54.

⁷¹ Jeremy Dibble, 'Grove's Musical Dictionary: A National Monument,' in Harry White and Michael Murphy (eds.), *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 33–50, at 38.

⁷² Stanford pupil Edward J. Dent flatly stated in 1930: 'Historical research in England starts with Burney and Hawkins.' Edward J. Dent, 'The Scientific Study of Music in England,' *Mitteilungen der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft* 2:3 (July 1930), 83–92, at 90.

obscure ancient composers known, if only by name, to a large public. Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* first appeared in 1767. Johann Nikolaus Forkel's pioneering life of Bach, with its prophetic pan-German exhortations, dates from 1802. Twenty-seven years afterwards, Mendelssohn would revive the *St Matthew Passion* to astonished Berlin audiences. There is nevertheless a clear difference between these early and ad-hoc, if commendably diligent, individual enterprises on the one hand, and on the other hand the late-nineteenth-century metamorphosis of musicological learning into branches of heavy industry, almost like Krupp armaments plants.

Among certain composers who worked in the decades before 1900 (and who had witnessed the beginnings of modern copyright law, the Berne Convention having been signed in 1886), 'the anxiety of influence' threatened to become overwhelming. Brahms, for all his dogged determination, felt moments of being crushed by such anxiety. His much-quoted lament, seeking to defend his long-standing refusal to write symphonies – 'You don't know what it's like for the likes of us to hear that giant's [Beethoven's] footsteps'⁷³ – is instructive. (It would have been incomprehensible to earlier, less historically-minded, cultures: Beethoven, however deeply he admired – and at times sought to imitate – individual Haydn and Mozart works, never suffered debilitating awe at hearing these men's footsteps. Nor were Haydn and Mozart overwhelmed by hearing *their* predecessors' footsteps.) Busoni and Reger seemed forever to agonise over the heritage of Bach.⁷⁴ Neither man did so with the slightest levity, let alone with the ironising spirit which marked certain other compositional time-travellers of the same period. (Debussy mocked Czerny's piano exercises in his 'Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum' from *Children's Corner*; Strauss had his tongue at least halfway in his cheek when invoking the eighteenth century in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and elsewhere.)

Into all of this, where does Stanford fit? Certainly not with ironists like Debussy and Strauss. He had not been born into Victorian Britain for nothing; and when he

⁷³ Michael Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 91.

⁷⁴ Leon Botstein, 'History and Max Reger,' *The Musical Quarterly* 87:4 (Winter 2004), 617–627; Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Reger went so far as to tell one critic: 'Haven't you noticed yet how the chorale "Wenn ich einmal soll schieden" [from the *St Matthew Passion*] sounds through all my works?'. Frisch, 172.

deliberately alluded to, for example, Orlando Gibbons – as he did thrice in his Op. 105 *Short Preludes and Postludes* for the organ⁷⁵ – he did so in an earnest, yet tactful and assimilatory, style. Here we behold no Debussyan or Straussian (let alone Hindemithian or Stravinskian) emotional distance between the old and the new. Most listeners or score-readers would fail to discern in Op. 105 any Gibbons quotes whatever, had Stanford not made clear in his titles that those quotes were there to be detected. Similarly, when Stanford writes in homage to Bach and Buxtehude, as he several times does in his bigger and more improvisatory organ works (of which more in succeeding chapters), he manages this without any sign of pastiche, and without Brahms' trepidation towards precursors. Stanford always strikes a balance between the extremes of indebtedness and the extremes of novelty.

Career factors facilitated Stanford's achieving of just such a balance: first, his employment, for two decades, as organist; second, his employment, for more than four decades, as conductor. Many a pianist can earn a living (and could do so even in Stanford's day) by playing a very narrow repertoire indeed; Artur Schnabel and Rudolf Serkin, both of whom concentrated on the Viennese classics, are two celebrated twentieth-century instances. In the organ world, analogous executant concentration on a handful of personal favourites is next to impossible. No organists, except those who possess independent financial means, can afford to demonstrate such extreme choosiness. The very nature of ecclesiastical organists' jobs forces upon them an expertise in music from several different countries and epochs. If through no other incentive, they must usually acquire such an expertise in order to placate the clergy who pay organists' wages (and who would probably object to organ-loft liturgical contributions that were all-Bach, or all-Buxtehude, or all-Renaissance, or all-Romantic). The frequent requirement that organists improvise, especially to 'cover' each unexpected liturgical hiatus, is another factor which obliges them to grasp various kinds of musical idiom. An organ improvisation which is marked by Wagnerian chromaticism will, unless conceived with exceptional care, sound ludicrous in a liturgy dominated by, say, the music of Byrd.

⁷⁵ The three works in question are: Op. 105 No. 1, based on Gibbons' *Song 34*; No. 2, based on Gibbons' *Song 22*; and No. 4, based on Gibbons' *Song 24*.

So, too, with conducting, which in Stanford's case meant choral and operatic, more often than orchestral, conducting. The sheer amount of time that Stanford spent in charge of massed choristers (who evinced greatly differing aptitudes and educational backgrounds) meant that he could not confine himself to one specific type or period of choral writing, but instead, needed to be at least competent in several. As mentioned earlier, in one Bach Passion performance from 1894 he fell substantially below the directorial level which audiences had a right to expect from him. But an overcrowded timetable is a likelier explanation for such a disappointing outcome than any alleged lack of interpretative sympathy on his part for Bach's genius.

Moreover, Stanford's natural curiosity and gusto inclined him to substantial breadth of musical taste, and they would have done so even if his professional duties had not dictated it. He fully supported the efforts of Catholic convert Sir Richard Runciman Terry, who made the Latin musical legacy of Tudor England the foundation of choral repertoire at Westminster Cathedral. This repertoire also included Renaissance masters from the Continent: Palestrina, Victoria, Lassus, Willaert, Morales, Hassler, Felice Anerio, and Giovanni Croce. Furthermore, Stanford actively recommended that his Royal College of Music pupils avail themselves of, as he put it, 'Palestrina for tuppence': in other words, that they go and hear Terry conduct Renaissance music at the Cathedral, since they could travel thither from the RCM for the price of a twopenny bus ticket.⁷⁶ Terry returned the commendation by including now and then, in Westminster Cathedral's music lists, various Stanford works to Latin texts. As it happened, Terry had been during his Anglican days a student of Stanford's in Cambridge.

That said, to look in Stanford's output for any hint of Palestrinian influence – such as very clearly marks Vaughan Williams's Mass in G minor, which Terry commissioned – is to look largely in vain. Charles Wood, Stanford's erstwhile student (and eventual

⁷⁶ Hilda Andrews, *Westminster Retrospect: A Memoir of Sir Richard Terry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 113; T.E. Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England, 1791–1914: A Handmaid of the Liturgy?* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2013), 226.

successor in the Cambridge music professorship),⁷⁷ showed many more Renaissance traits in his own compositions, which inclined consistently towards a modal antiquarianism. The closest which Stanford comes to acknowledging the Renaissance could well be the densely imitative part-writing of *Beati quorum via*, the most celebrated among his Latin motets; and even that remains closer in style to Bruckner than to the sixteenth century. Stanford's 1918 *Magnificat* (written in the mistaken expectation that Parry would live long enough to hear it) does, it must be admitted, hark back somewhat to earlier idioms. But these are preponderantly those of Bach's motets, with periodic hints – in the antiphonal double-choir writing – of such Venetian masters as Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli.

Also noticeable enough in Stanford's output to be worth mentioning here is the use of chant: most marked in his 1879 *Jesu Dulcis Memoria* prelude (on which Chapter Five contains more information). In 1907 Stanford produced for choirs a *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* setting specifically confined to the second and third Gregorian modes. Earlier, a much better-known choral work of his, the *Service in B Flat*, had incorporated – as Stanford's *Musical Times* obituarist would emphasise – 'fragments of plain-chant.'⁷⁸ Even with these compositions, though, his approach to his source material is tactful and earnest, with no hint whatsoever of keeping an ironist's distance, and with very little hint of even that nostalgia for pre-Bachian harmonic syntax which plays a prominent role in Vaughan Williams' modal writing.

4.7 Conclusion

Stanford's output, and not least his organ output, can be summed up as displaying multiple influences without indicating any anxiety about those influences. A patriot rather than an exclusionary nationalist, and an authority figure who lived long enough to witness Jazz Age iconoclasm assail authority's very existence, he possessed enough self-assurance to avoid the fears which so often gripped Brahms: in particular, fears that

⁷⁷ As early as 1886 Stanford ensured that Wood, then aged twenty and at the RCM on a scholarship, had his piano concerto given at a college concert: 'Wood's technical ability and musicianship, coupled with his Irish origin, ensured a happy relationship with his teacher' (Dibble, *Stanford*, 175).

⁷⁸ Anon., 'Walter Parratt, February 10, 1841 – March 27, 1924, and Charles Villiers Stanford, September 30, 1852 – March 29, 1924,' *The Musical Times*, 65:975 (May 1924), 401-403, at 403.

Beethoven had exhausted the symphony and other musical genres. Stanford's treatment of folk melody displays a resourcefulness which entirely rebuts Constant Lambert's celebrated condemnation (echoing Shaw's) of such treatments:

To put it vulgarly, the whole trouble with a folk song is that once you have played it through there is nothing much you can do except play it over again and play it rather louder.⁷⁹

The same goes, furthermore, for Stanford's uses of pre-existing themes from art music. There, it is often the elaborate development which he imposes on such a theme that becomes the most conspicuous feature of his music: and not the theme itself, which (as with the aforementioned Orlando Gibbons tributes) he takes considerable trouble to disguise. Stanford's sheer industriousness – Chapter Two alluded to Thomas F. Dunhill's account of how his teacher laboured daily at the unglamorous tasks of creation and revision – left him with little enough time for aesthetic, let alone metaphysical, brooding. As critic Scott Goddard observed in 1946, Stanford 'was, in fact, singularly free from that self-questioning which lames a man's spirit and forms both the smallest and the greatest creative artists.'⁸⁰ Yet if on occasion Stanford as a creative artist might have benefited from being slightly less fluent, slightly more prone to self-distrust, his oeuvre in general (and his finest organ music in particular) should make us grateful for the emotional depths which he could often plumb, as well as for the superb technique which nowhere failed him.

⁷⁹ Constant Lambert, *Music Ho!: A Study of Music in Decline* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1948), 146. Shaw might have been a conscious influence on Lambert's sentiments here. According to a schoolfriend, by the age of fourteen Lambert 'was very familiar with all the works of Shaw.' Stephen Lloyd, *Constant Lambert: Beyond the Rio Grande* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 73.

⁸⁰ Scott Goddard, 'The Roots and the Soil: Nineteenth-Century Origins,' in Bacharach, A.L. (ed.), *British Music of Our Time* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1946), 11–30, at 19.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSES OF SELECTED STANFORD ORGAN WORKS: MUSIC MAINLY FOR CHURCH USE

5.1 Introduction

So little known is Stanford's music for the organ, on the whole, that one cannot assume even among organists any acquaintance with more than a tiny portion of it. Nonetheless it amounts to approximately one-fifth of Stanford's total output. Much of it, though by no means all of it, was published in the composer's lifetime. Moreover, the fact that Stanford stayed loyal to the organ after he had abandoned symphonic writing (and had much reduced his choral writing) would of itself suffice to reveal the affection that he retained for the instrument.

Admittedly, an economic factor operated too. After the Great War, publishers showed greater willingness to issue new music for solo organ – along with new chamber music and new solo piano music – than to issue music in the costlier, more expansive, more resource-heavy genres so prominent before 1914: oratorio and opera, above all. (Readers will recollect from Chapter Two that Stanford's 1922 attempts to interest publishers in material for organ *and orchestra* failed.) From the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, it seems unbelievable that compositions for the organ could actually – and routinely – become money-spinners; but such was the case during Stanford's lifetime.

In a thesis like this one, it is impossible to supply thorough coverage of every single Stanford organ piece. Consequently many commendable examples of Stanford's mastery in his organ writing have needed to be omitted, through no more legitimate motive than simple lack of space with which to describe them. (The present document's appendix entitled 'List of Stanford's organ works' provides the chronology and, where relevant, the opus numbers of every surviving piece that Stanford is known to have composed for the instrument.)

It has seemed advisable to group the compositions chosen for this chapter according principally to genre and purpose, and only secondarily according to

chronological criteria. This is because Stanford (with his organ music as well as with all his other music) underwent no obvious change in style with the passing of years, let alone the spectacular metamorphoses that Wagner and Stravinsky both exhibited between youth and old age. Stanford's idiom during his twenties remained similar to his idiom during his seventies, except for the occasional hint of French influence, and an increased penchant for chromatic progressions, near the end of his life. Therefore a better method for classifying Stanford's organ output than falling back on historiographical clichés about Early, Middle, and Late style is to group the selected pieces by their function: those which Stanford intended principally for the church; and, by contrast, those which he intended principally for the concert-hall.

This dichotomy has, it must be conceded, certain risks. With Stanford's organ oeuvre, the boundary between sacred usage and secular usage was not rock-solid. Sometimes it could be downright porous, as it could be with several of Stanford's contemporaries (British or otherwise) in the organ loft. Widor's organ symphonies – considered as wholes – are strictly for concert programs and would be liturgically untenable because of their sheer length; even so, a number of the symphonies' individual movements began life as improvised material with which Widor accompanied the Mass at Saint-Sulpice. There would be nothing wrong with a modern organist selecting individual Widor symphony movements for liturgical use today. (Many a modern organist does this very thing, quite apart from the seemingly incessant demand for the Widor Toccata at church weddings.)

Still, when one has made every possible allowance for such difficulties in classification, a clear difference in size and in idiom does exist between organ pieces that Stanford intended mainly for the church – ecclesiastical *Gebrauchsmusik*, if one wants to call them that – versus organ pieces that Stanford intended for recitals. To this end, it has appeared best to place each of the Stanford compositions discussed here into one of two categories. The compositions mainly for church use are dealt with in this chapter; those mainly for concert use are discussed in the following chapter.

ORGAN MUSIC MAINLY FOR CHURCH USE

- The *Prelude on 'Jesu dulcis memoriae'*, an early (1879) piece to which Stanford never assigned an opus number (and which had to wait till 1982 for publication);
- The *Prelude in the Form of a Chaconne*, Op. 88 No. 2;
- Examples from the Opp. 101 and 105 *Six Short Preludes and Postludes*;
- The *Six Occasional Preludes*, Op. 182;
- The *Fantasia upon the Tune 'Intercessor' by C.H.H. Parry*, Op. 187;
- The *Chorale Prelude* (again, no opus number) in memory of Parry, and based on Parry's song 'Why does azure deck the sky?';
- The *Three Preludes and Fugues*, Op, 193.

ORGAN MUSIC MAINLY FOR CONCERT USE

- The *Fantasia and Toccata*, Op. 57;
- *In Modo Dorico*, Op. 132 No. 1 (originally written for piano and subsequently reworked for the operatic stage);
- The five organ sonatas: No. 1, Op. 149; No. 2, *Eroica*, Op. 151; No. 3, *Britannica*, Op. 152; No. 4, *Celtica*, Op. 153; No. 5, *Quasi una fantasia*, Op. 159.

All these productions bespeak Stanford the mature artist, with his apprenticeship behind him. Even the 1879 Prelude could never be validly dismissed as juvenilia. Much of Stanford's idiom is already demonstrable in its pages. And this brings us to the first, important question: what are the chief characteristics of Stanford's idiom? In particular, how does it bring to mind, or differ from, Parry's idiom?

5.2 Stylistic considerations: Stanford versus Parry

Generalist historians have repeatedly tended to assess Stanford and Parry as if they were somehow the musical equivalent to conjoined twins: or, to quote Dibble, "Parry

‘n Stanford’’, the English Musical Renaissance’s answer to Marks and Spencer.’¹ (In January 1984 the BBC’s Radio Three devoted its ‘Composer of the Week’ programs to Parry and Stanford in tandem, thereby implying that neither figure justified such treatment in his own right.²) This pairing is rarely validated by the two men’s actual achievements. Least of all does it make sense in a consideration of either man’s organ music. What few points of resemblance occur between Stanford’s organ idiom and Parry’s are greatly outweighed by the marked and systematic differences. These differences are best conveyed in tabular form.

Table 1: Contrasts between Parry and Stanford in their writing for the organ

Parry	Stanford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Played the organ regularly in youth, seldom in later life • Predominantly homophonic organ writing, which often necessitates a 16’ manual stop (sounding an octave lower than played note) • Pedal parts seldom elaborate • Organ music mostly playable on two-manual instruments • Largely diatonic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Played the organ to virtuoso standard for decades • Frequent two-part counterpoint, duple-against-triple rhythms • Pedal parts continuously difficult, dominated by big leaps • Organ music repeatedly requires three-manual instruments • Often modal and surprisingly chromatic

The fundamental disparities between the two men’s organ works can in part be detected merely from their appearance on the printed page. At a first glance, Stanford’s organ works have a habit of looking uncluttered and simple. (Few would derive this impression from Parry’s habitually much denser textures.) Initially it is natural to assume of a Stanford piece that it can be easily sight-read. This assumption proves seldom, if ever, justified by events. Rather, Stanford seems to take an almost perverse delight in commencing a work with straightforward-seeming invention – the better to lull an unwary executant into hubris – only to place afterwards in the player’s path an

¹ Dibble, *Stanford*, vii.

² Stephen Banfield, ‘Renaissance Men,’ *The Listener*, 111 (12 January 1984), 32.

obstacle which intensive practising will alone remove. Sometimes this obstacle will be an unusually awkward hand-span. Elsewhere it will be a problematic change of manuals. Often it will be a bothersome cross-rhythm. More rarely it will be a startling key-change. The difficulties are heightened by the fact that Stanford favoured consistently lighter organ textures than Parry. Finger-slips and toe-slips that in Parry could well evade the notice of a performer's hearers, especially if such a performer can benefit from a generous cathedral echo, are apt to be painfully exposed in Stanford. Such textural clarity on Stanford's part is, as Gavin Brown (long-time organist of St Peter's Church in Brighton, East Sussex) put it with only slight overstatement, 'a feature which distinguishes his organ music from that of all his English contemporaries.'³

Regarding registration, neither Stanford nor Parry supplied anything like the detailed instructions that French composers for the organ have habitually done ever since the seventeenth century.⁴ Still, Parry showed consistently greater willingness than Stanford to specify stops, if only because (having largely abjured organ performance after his young adulthood) he depended on other organists championing his music. Those organists might well be too busy to devise their own registrations, and so Parry had every incentive for supplying such registrations himself.

To a much greater extent than Parry, Stanford appreciated how great are the divergences in stop-lists from organ to organ, not least two instruments coming from the same manufacturer and dating from the same period. Nor is it solely an issue of different stop-lists on which the organist must cogitate. Identical nomenclature can cover a multitude of timbres. Organ A might have an oboe stop which sounds mild, discreet, and readily compatible with other stops. On the other hand, Organ B's oboe stop might well sound so pungent and aggressive as to resemble a trumpet stop.

³ Gavin Brown, 'Re-valuations: (V) Charles Stanford,' *Quarterly Record of the Incorporated Association of Organists*, XLVII: 187 (1962), 67–68, at 68.

⁴ During the twentieth century such instructions would become extraordinarily elaborate, as revealed by the phrase-by-phrase commands in Messiaen's – and, earlier, Dupré's – scores. These commands imply at least one hyper-alert assistant (a *registrant*, to use the Gallic term) and, furthermore, also imply mechanisms like the 'General Cancel' piston, the latter being commonplace on French organs by Messiaen's time, but frequently unavailable on the instruments to which Englishmen of the Stanford-Parry generation were accustomed.

Clearly the musical outcomes for the former instrument and for the latter instrument will differ vastly; even so, the same stop name encompasses both.

All these verities Stanford appreciated from painstakingly gained experience. He showed a greater willingness than Parry to grant the performer the final say concerning registration. Where he did indicate possible stop choices himself, he did so with an atypical diffidence, seeking to give advice rather than to issue orders. In a prefatory note to Op. 57, he said:

The choice of stops is left to the player, and also the use of Couplers. Organs differ so largely from each other, that the player must be left to use his own discretion even in the alternation of manuals. The indications given on page two and subsequently must therefore be regarded merely in the light of suggestions.

Even the 'indications given on page two and subsequently' are vague, consisting as they do solely of directions like '8 ft only', 'add 16 ft', and 'Reeds.' Requests for 16-foot tone on the manuals – that is, for the use of manual stops which double a note at the lower octave – are much rarer in Stanford than in many other composers of his time (though 16-foot pedal, as opposed to manual, stops were already common in Bach's day). Most of Bach's organ works, for example, are singularly ill-served by 16-foot manual stops, which tend to blur the music's contrapuntal details. Not until the late nineteenth century did calls for 16-foot manual registrations become frequent among composers who sought a quasi-orchestral massiveness of sound.

Another clear difference between Stanford and Parry lies in the amount of time that each man devoted to organ composition. Parry's canonical organ works form only a small part of his worklist. Most of them can be fitted on one CD, whereas Stanford's organ corpus needs no fewer than five discs.⁵ Parry, in short, simply assigned less importance to the organ as a creative conduit than Stanford did.

In one aspect of organ composition, it should be acknowledged that Stanford and Parry were at one: namely, their indifference to fine liturgical points. The bulk of their

⁵ The 2000 *intégrale* of Parry's organ music (Priory PRCD682) justifies its two-disc status by including different versions of his *Fantasy and Fugue in G*, as well as making room for no fewer than twelve miniatures which are not by Parry at all: they were written after his death, to keep Parry's memory's green. Stanford's own contribution to this *Festschrift* is discussed later in the present chapter.

organ music is – to borrow a useful descriptor popularised by Oxford-based scholar-conductor Edward Higginbottom – ‘para-liturgical.’⁶ Though most of it was written for church rather than concert use, it has few linkages to specific Christian festivals. By contrast, Bach’s chorale-preludes abound in such linkages, as do the chorale-preludes of Bach’s Lutheran precursors, to say nothing of these precursors’ Catholic counterparts (Frescobaldi, for instance). Each of the forty-six miniatures in Bach’s *Orgelbüchlein*, save for the last six, treats a hymn that fits into one specific season of the Lutheran calendar (Advent, then Christmas, then the New Year, then Epiphany, then Lent [including Holy Week], then Eastertide, then Pentecost). In France, during the early twentieth century, Charles Tournemire – Stanford’s junior by eighteen years – went further still on a similar path, correlating the individual miniatures of his vast 1927–1932 cycle *L’Orgue Mystique* with whichever plainchants the pre-1969 Latin Catholic liturgy stipulated for the days in question. The miniatures that comprise *L’Orgue Mystique* would sound, if performed in a concert-hall environment, impossibly scrappy and inconclusive. They need to be heard as part of a sung Latin Mass (itself a decidedly rare phenomenon over the last half-century) before a listener can hope to grasp their running commentaries on the choir’s chants, with which they are designed to alternate.

It is quite otherwise in Stanford’s case. Even when Stanford called individual pieces ‘preludes’ or ‘postludes’, he never made clear which he meant to be which. Save for the very occasional Stanford postlude so festal and downright swashbuckling in spirit as to be usable only at the end of a service, clear lines of demarcation between the preludial and the postludial cannot be drawn. When Stanford quotes a hymn tune, the hymn thus cited is usually one that will serve on numerous days in the church calendar without seeming incongruous. Only with one collection, assembled late in Stanford’s life – namely, Op. 182, which did not see print until Stanford had been seven years dead – do we find organ pieces that contain overt, specific Christmastide and Eastertide thematic allusions, as well as a piece called ‘Requiem’ that cites the *Dies Irae*. With Parry, the situation is similar. While Parry wrote more than a dozen organ preludes on well-loved

⁶ Edward Higginbottom, ‘Organ music and the liturgy’, in Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 130–147, at 145.

Anglican hymns, these works would be valid for almost any Sunday or holy day of the year, apart from his treatment of *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, a meditation too unremittingly agonised to be appropriate anywhere very much except Passiontide itself. (This treatment employs, incidentally, a minor-key hymn tune which is altogether different from the major-key one that modern congregations associate with Charles Wesley's words.)

Through the all-purpose nature of his organ writing, as through much else, Stanford embodied the spirit of the age. The sheer centrality of the organ to the era's musical life helped inhibit – much to the pious Tournemire's exasperation – any great stress upon liturgical functionalism, such as Bach and his musical progenitors had consistently been forced to bear in mind. Higginbottom makes the point well in the following passage (though he ignores Stanford, and mentions no other British composer except Scotland's Kenneth Leighton, who died in 1988):

If Mendelssohn's organ sonatas, Franck's chorals and Widor's symphonies might be heard in church, it was not the liturgy which had inspired them, nor the liturgy which had a particular use for them. Rather it was the instrument that brought them to life, and a belief that the organ had its place in the musical world at large alongside the piano, the string quartet and the symphony orchestra. The organ itself found a place in secular institutions, in the large public halls of Europe, affirming that strictly musical purposes were being served in writing for it. This change of focus continues into and through the twentieth century in the works of Marcel Dupré and Paul Hindemith, Louis Vierne and Max Reger, Jehan Alain and Kenneth Leighton. Much of this music might have a place in church services of both the Catholic and the Protestant persuasion, but only as para-liturgical offerings, filling in gaps in the liturgy, or preceding and then concluding a service.⁷

5.3 *Prelude on 'Jesu Dulcis Memoriae'* (no opus number)

The year 1879 has a particular importance in Stanford's creative life, because it witnessed the appearance of his first widely and lastingly popular composition: his organ-accompanied *Service in B Flat*, Op. 10, which continues to be a mainstay of cathedral choirs. Composer and journalist Robert Hugill, writing in 2010, referred to

⁷ Higginbottom, 'Organ music,' 145.

Op. 10 as 'a major milestone in the development of Anglican church music, representing the harnessing of Brahmsian symphonic technique to the needs of the Anglican liturgy.'⁸ From the same year came Stanford's first opera, *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan* (though that work would not reach the stage till 1881). Also in 1879 there took place the première of Stanford's First Symphony, which he had finished scoring three years beforehand.

Before 1879 Stanford had composed extremely little for the organ. Only one of his pre-1879 pieces for the instrument has survived: a stern, unusually loquacious *Prelude and Fugue in E Minor* (1875?), which dutifully runs the gamut of contrapuntal techniques, and which seems very much like an attempt to imitate Bach (though printed by Novello in 1876, the work appears to have remained unheard till the twenty-first century). It might have been assumed that when writing for solo organ in 1879, Stanford would have wanted to tie in such production with his new Anglican service music. To a certain extent, he did. But the manner in which he did so was the reverse of predictable.

Readers and listeners could be pardoned for assuming that the theme on which he based the 1879 *Prelude* derived from Gregorian chant. Stanford insisted on calling the theme *Jesu dulcis memoriae [sic]*, though as a Latin scholar he would have known that the original phrase was *Jesu dulcis memoria*, this being the first line of a poem usually ascribed to St Bernard of Clairvaux. The poem in question is widely associated with a fairly renowned tune, included in the *Liber Usualis*, as a Vesper hymn to mark the Holy Name of Christ. This tune's Dorian melodic contour might well have made it attractive to Stanford.

⁸ Robert Hugill, '[CD Review],' *Music Web International*, 10 September 2010 (http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2010/Sept10/feast_cda67770.htm; accessed 28 October 2018).

Example 1: Plainchant *Jesu dulcis memoria*,
in (rhythmically approximate) modern notation

1. Je - su dul - cis me - mó - ri - a,
 2. Nil ea - ni - tur su - á - vi - us,
 3. Je - su, spes pæ - ni - tén - ti - bus,
 4. Nec lin - gua va - let dí - ce - re,
 5. Sis, Je - su, no - strum gáu - di - um,

1. Dans ve - ra cor - dis gau - di - a:
 2. Nil au - di - tur ju - cun - di - us,
 3. Quam pi - us es pe - tén - ti - bus!
 4. Nec lít - te - ra ex - prí - me - re:
 5. Qui es fú - tu - rus præ - mi - um:

1. Sed su - per mel et o - mni - a,
 2. Nil co - gi - ta - tur dul - ci - us,
 3. Quam bo - nus te que - rén - ti - bus!
 4. Ex - pér - tus po - test cré - de - re,
 5. Sit no - stra in te gló - ri - a,

1. E - jus dul - cis prae - sen - ti - a. *After last*
 2. Quam Je - sus De - i Fi - li - us. *verse*
 3. Sed quid in - ve - ni - én - ti - bus.
 4. Quid sit Je - sum dí - lí - ge - re.
 5. Per eun - cta sem - per sæ - cu - la. A - men.

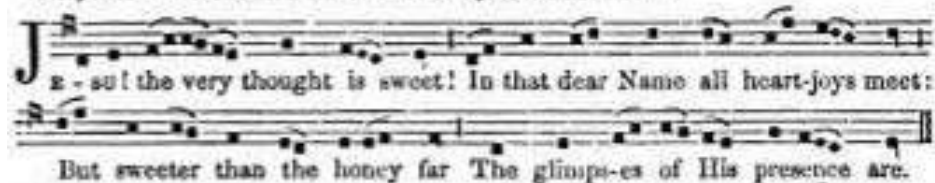
Yet while Stanford almost certainly knew of this chant, he did not actually employ it. The melody that he did employ inhabits the Ionian mode. Stanford could well have found the melody in an 1857 publication where it appeared: the *Salisbury Hymnal*, named after Salisbury's Anglican bishop at the time, William Kerr Hamilton. The *Salisbury Hymnal* linked the melody concerned not with Holy Name commemorations, as in the *Liber Usualis*, but with the Epiphany. (To this day, the melody's original composer remains unknown.) Under the alternative name *Christe redemptor omnium*, the melody became, in 1912, the basis for one of Parry's most sublime organ preludes. Anglican minister John Mason Neale was responsible for the hymn's syllable-by-

syllable – and decidedly florid – English translation. Note the 1857 edition’s use, in the following musical extract, of a plainchant-style four-line rather than a conventional five-line stave.

Example 2: *Jesu dulcis memoria* melody as given (a) in the *Salisbury Hymnal*, 1857; (b) in the *New English Hymnal* (with harmonisation), 1986

(a)

18¹ **Jesu! dulcis memoria.**
Morning Hymn for the EPIPHANY,
and following week, (also for August 7th.) From the SALISBURY HYMNAL
PHIL. II 5.—“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”



Je - su! the very thought is sweet! In that dear Name all heart-joys meet:
But sweeter than the honey far The glimpses of His presence are.

(b)



Unusually for Stanford, the *Prelude* – finished on ‘Nov. 19, [18]79’, according to a note under the original manuscript’s last bar – bears detailed instructions concerning registration. It is not clear whether these came from Stanford himself or from a subsequent Trinity College organist, Hubert Stanley Middleton, who presented the manuscript to the college library in 1956. Still, whatever the case, they appear in the 1982 printed version, along with dynamics which might have been Middleton’s

addenda, but which are retained 'as possibly incorporating Stanford's performance practice.'⁹ Here is the recommended registration (presupposing, as does most of Stanford's organ output, a three-manual instrument):

Swell – Open Diapason 8 ft., Stopped Diapason, Gamba and soft 4 ft.

Great – Salicional 8 ft. and Fulte [*sic*: presumably 'Flute'] 4 ft.

Choir – Clarinet

Pedals – Open 16 ft and 8 ft., Gt. coupled to Pedal.¹⁰

The chant theme is not sounded in a plain and unmistakable way until the ninth bar, when the pedals proclaim it as a slow-moving *cantus firmus*. Yet from the very start, the chant's ascending arpeggio-dominated motif is already dominating the music, in a speeded-up crotchet-quaver version of fugato character. This procedure can be recognised as wholly typical of Stanford, who – in his orchestral and choral works as well as his organ works – thought primarily in terms of brief motifs rather than (as Parry tended to do) in expansive melodic phrases. Likewise a frequent Stanford feature is the duple-against-triple pulse at bar 8, indicated with a box in the following example. (By what was presumably a coincidence, Parry – less given, overall, to rhythmic idiosyncrasies than Stanford – incorporated this same duple-against-triple device at crucial moments in his aforementioned chorale prelude, where the device acquires great expressive strength.)

⁹ Richard Barnes (ed.), *C. Villiers Stanford (1852-1924): Prelude for Organ on Jesu Dulcis Memoriae*. (Salisbury, Wiltshire: Royal School of Church Music, 1982), 9.

¹⁰ Barnes, *Prelude*, 3.

Example 3: Stanford, *Prelude on 'Jesu dulcis memoriae,'* bars 1–18

Prepare:
Swell - Open diapason 8 ft., St. dia., Canto and soft 4 ft.
Great - Salicional 8 ft. and Feltz 4 ft.
Choir - Clarinet
Pedals - Open 16 ft. and 8 ft., Cl. coupled to Pedal.

C.V. Stanford
edited by Richard Barnes

Andante tranquillo

Manual
(Swell)
pp

Pedal

3

6

9
(Melody)
Cl. to Ped. + 16'

12

15
Add Principal

Very little other English organ music of 1879 demonstrates anything comparable to Stanford's consistently imitative texture in this *Prelude*. Had Stanford written nothing else, he would still have earned respect for imparting to the genre of organ miniatures a cool, unobtrusive polyphony seldom to be found in the contributions made by William Thomas Best, Sir John Stainer, and Henry Smart (the last-named of whom died in the very year of the *Prelude's* composition). Not all the voice-leading is as expert as it would later become. In the example below, the consecutive fifths at bars 59 and 60 imply haste rather than deliberate flouting of contrapuntal rules. (One dreads to imagine how Stanford would have reacted to such fifths if a pupil's exercise had contained them.) The sustained tonic drone from bar 57 onwards echoes a trait often found in the perorations to Mendelssohn's organ pieces (most famously, perhaps, the *Allegretto* movement from the great German composer's Fourth Sonata, where the long-drawn-out tonic appears in the topmost line). Entirely un-Mendelssohnian, though, is Stanford's sudden flattening of the leading note at bars 72 and 73. That gesture, with its modal implications, would have startled hearers in 1879, though three decades later Vaughan Williams and Holst had made such manoeuvres common enough.

Example 4: Stanford, *Prelude on 'Jesu dulcis memoriae,'* bars 56–77

The image displays two systems of musical notation for organ, corresponding to bars 56 and 60. Each system consists of three staves: a treble clef staff, a bass clef staff, and a lower bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first system (bar 56) includes performance markings: 'Sw.' above the treble staff, 'Full Sw.' below the middle staff, and 'mp' below the bottom staff. The second system (bar 60) shows a continuation of the texture with similar markings. The notation features complex polyphonic textures with various articulations and dynamics.

5.4 *Prelude in the form of a chaconne, Op. 88 No. 2*

The spectre haunting Op. 88 No. 2 is unquestionably that of Brahms, whom Stanford had come to know personally during his German residence in the 1870s. Indeed, when Stanford's Fourth Symphony received its Berlin première in 1889, Brahms was in the audience. (It may legitimately be wondered what Brahms thought about the clear allusion, in that symphony's opening movement, to the first subject of Brahms's own Third.¹¹ This allusion we may suppose to have been deliberate, though neither composer ever said anything to confirm an act of conscious homage.)

That said, the nearest Brahmsian analogue to Op. 88 No. 2 – and this time we are talking of a generalised similarity to, instead of outright quoting from, Brahms – is not an organ composition at all. Instead, it is the passacaglia finale from Brahms's Fourth Symphony, which shares with Stanford's creation not just the use of an ostinato theme,

¹¹ A recent English commentator on Stanford writes: 'The principle [*sic*] subject of the first movement alludes unmistakably to the "Frei aber froh" arpeggio motive which had also begun Brahms's Third Symphony, while the second subject quotes from the first of Brahms's *Liebesliederwalzer* far too extensively to admit mere coincidence.' Christopher Howell, 'Stanford and Musical Quotation,' *Music Web International*, October 2003 (http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2003/Oct03/Stanford_Quotation.htm, accessed 12 November 2018). Elsewhere in the same article Howell goes so far as to insist that 'Stanford understood more than any composer except Charles Ives the value of musical quotation.'

but the key of E minor. Rheinberger, too, had produced in 1882 an E minor passacaglia of his own: the finale of his Eighth Organ Sonata, which preceded the Brahms symphony by three years.¹² Although this sonata was not among the Rheinberger organ works that appeared on Trinity College recital programs during Stanford's time there, Stanford's organist colleagues could well have brought the sonata to his attention by some other method.

However that might be, Op. 88 No. 2 certainly dates from 1903 and was released (like the other five preludes in the Op. 88 collection) by Breitkopf and Härtel two years later; Stainer & Bell waited until 1913 to issue it. Jeremy Dibble is less than enthusiastic about it, pointing out that it belongs with those other Stanford productions written to 'satisfy the demands of publishers rather than his artistic aspirations';¹³ but the implication that this genesis renders such productions automatically second-rate needs to be challenged. Such an implication involves imposing a Romanticist view of creative acts upon the relentlessly pragmatic Stanford, who after moving to England never enjoyed the luxury of inherited affluence, and who – in the best eighteenth-century rather than nineteenth-century manner – supplied some of his most inspired music on pretexts that he had not sought out himself. (Paul Rodmell's biography, like Dibble's, alludes to Op. 88 only in passing.) Without doubt Op. 88 No. 2, written for money, has much greater emotional depth than do several works written chiefly for Stanford's own contentment.

Melodically, though not harmonically, the chaconne's recurring motif is Phrygian, with its D natural rather than D sharp and, in particular, with its somewhat obsessive use of F natural rather than F sharp. The motif first appears in the treble, not – as with Rheinberger's Eighth Sonata – in the bass. Large leaps once more characterise the pedal line (few Stanford organ works lack those leaps) and specific registrations are once more kept imprecise.

¹² The similarities are probably inadvertent. Harvey Grace's 1925 Rheinberger monograph discusses the Eighth Organ Sonata at length and with great enthusiasm, but it makes no mention of the Rheinberger finale having influenced (or even been known to) Brahms. Nor do the Brahms studies by Richard Specht, Karl Geiringer, Bernard Jacobson, Jan Swafford, and Constantin Floros, though Specht's and Floros's books do fleetingly cite Rheinberger's name in other contexts.

¹³ Dibble, *Stanford*, 365.

Example 5: Op. 88 No. 2, bars 1–13

The image shows a musical score for Example 5: Op. 88 No. 2, bars 1–13. The score is in 3/4 time, marked 'Andante.' It features two systems. The first system shows the 'MANUAL.' part with a treble and bass staff, and the 'PEDAL.' part with a single bass staff. The second system starts at bar 8 and includes a registration change to 'II.' and a dynamic marking 'p'. The pedal part in the second system is mostly silent, with a few notes at the beginning.

By bar 25, Stanford has indulged his love of duple-against-triple rhythms, as illustrated in Example 6 (these rhythms are decidedly less conspicuous in Rheinberger's organ output, incidentally). Thereafter the figuration in the manuals becomes more and more intricate, giving the auditory illusion of a faster tempo even though Stanford requires no such increase. (He does indicate an increase in volume, requesting the addition of a 16-ft stop at bar 41, which also bears the marking '*più f.*') The climax comes at bar 99, the previous nine bars having been dominated by a reiterated pedal B flat. Such reiteration deliberately unsettles the listener's key-sense, since B flat is the most remote possible tonality from the prevailing E minor. Its tritonal relationship to E evokes the mediaeval idea of the tritone as 'the devil in music.'

Example 6: Op. 88 No. 2, bars 25–32

The image shows a musical score for Example 6: Op. 88 No. 2, bars 25–32. The score is in E major and consists of two systems. The first system (bars 25-28) features a treble clef with a first ending bracket over the first two measures, and a bass clef with a second ending bracket over the last two measures. The second system (bars 29-32) continues the melody in the treble and accompaniment in the bass. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

From bar 99 Stanford embarks on what is immediately recognisable as the last section, in a radiant E major. But the modal, rather than tonal, shape of the original ostinato cannot and does not survive the transition. Its D naturals become D sharps, its F naturals become F sharps; and as a result of the latter change, A sharp has the same somewhat disorienting tonal effect that its enharmonic equivalent B flat had in the immediately preceding material. With the tranquil close, the A sharp is resolved to a comparatively peaceful A natural (on which Stanford had placed great emphasis from the piece's opening phrases, both in the treble and in the pedal line). Nevertheless, such a resolution occurs only at the cost of more tonal equivocation, since Stanford refuses to settle on either a C natural or a C sharp for the concluding phrases. If he has achieved serenity in this conclusion, with its plagal cadence, it is a serenity that will not allow listeners to forget the preceding disquiet. Adding to the prevalent unease is Stanford's reversion to F natural in the pedal line at bar 119, as part of the pedal's 'walking bass' before E major is clearly stressed.

115

122

Org. Bibl.

5.5 Andante con moto, from *Six Short Preludes and Postludes*, Op. 101 No. 6; Allegro, from *Six Short Preludes and Postludes*, Op. 105 No. 6

Stanford's two collections of preludes and postludes date from 1907 and 1908 respectively. They differ from most of his other organ compositions in two respects: first, they have continued to be in print (New York's Kalmus firm reissued them shortly after they fell into the public domain); and second, they have never entirely forfeited the popularity that they once enjoyed among organists. As a result, they could be found – by no means always complete – on both LP and CD well before the advent of comprehensive Stanford recorded editions. Their brevity makes it tempting to underrate them, but it is a temptation that should be boldly resisted. In the very year of Op. 101's appearance, Ernest Walker maintained that 'Stanford displays his most distinguished manner when working on a small canvas.'¹⁴ Herbert Thompson, music critic at the *Yorkshire Post*, had observed in 1904 of Stanford: 'I cannot help thinking that he is at his very best in miniature work.'¹⁵ Arthur Benjamin insisted that 'only in small

¹⁴ Walker, *Music in England*, 302.

¹⁵ Quoted in Rodmell, *Stanford*, 245.

forms did he [Stanford] achieve sheer masterpieces.’¹⁶ Thomas F. Dunhill voiced a similar conclusion more charitably than Benjamin, and at greater length:

A man’s smaller works are not necessarily his least important. In Stanford’s case they have far excelled his chief efforts in popularity, and often seem to reflect his personality with greater clearness. Musicians differ in their estimate of the value of his more extended creations, but they all agree that in the art of fashioning small things with polished grace and exquisite delicacy of touch no other modern British composer can be compared with Stanford.¹⁷

‘Polished grace and exquisite delicacy of touch’ is an apt summary of both the works in this section, even if neither Dibble’s biography nor Rodmell’s biography has much to say about them (Rodmell makes one glancing reference to Op. 101). Porte is slightly dismissive and hardly very communicative, calling the Op. 101 miniatures ‘very convenient little organ pieces, being tuneful and free from dullness ... These [Op. 105] are a further convenient little set of short organ pieces.’¹⁸ This music consistently deserves better than such nebulously patronising verdicts.

Op. 101 No. 6, one of Stanford’s most immediately approachable inspirations, testifies to his passion for the folksong of his native land. The most academically notable product of this passion was his edition of the George Petrie collection discussed in the preceding chapter. One of the Petrie collection’s tunes was *St Columba*, which, ever since Stanford included it in his series, has become familiar to innumerable congregations both within and outside Britain. (It had already appeared in the Hoffmann survey, without thus attracting any special notice.) Usually the tune is sung to words from 1878, by Anglican clergyman Edwin Hatch, beginning ‘O breathe on me, o breath of God’ (sometimes it is sung to slightly earlier words by another Anglican clergyman, Henry W. Baker, beginning ‘The King of love my shepherd is’). *St Columba* duly becomes the basis for Op. 101 No. 6, one of two works in the set – No. 5 is the other – that bear the epigraph ‘Founded on an old Irish church melody.’ Generally, Stanford shows great subtlety in his treatments of others’ themes. Not in Op. 101 No. 6, where the theme is so

¹⁶ Benjamin, ‘A student in Kensington,’ 201.

¹⁷ Quoted in Plunket Greene, *Stanford*, 232.

¹⁸ Porte, *Stanford*, 82, 85.

openly stated that even the least attentive listener is bound to notice it, particularly when Stanford insists that it be played on a different manual from the surrounding passagework, each time it appears.

Example 8: *St Columba* (traditional Irish air)



Example 9: Op. 101 No. 6, bars 7–20



Notable and essentially Stanfordian are bar 19's rhythm – duple against triple, yet again – and the pedal part's repeated octave jumps. Equally characteristic are the punctilious phrase markings, so easy for the performer to ignore (since the music would remain perfectly playable without them), but so vital for ensuring adequate expressive content. The two-note sighing motif that Stanford prominently used in the similarly peaceful last bars of Op. 88 No. 2 recurs here, along with *St Columba's* concluding phrase in long-drawn-out note-values (dotted minims rather than the crotchets and quavers that prevailed earlier).

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Printed in England by Galliard Limited

St. & B. 180

April, 1907.

Op. 105 No. 6 is as robust as its equivalent in the Op. 101 set is plaintive. Harder to perform than the earlier work, much livelier in mood, and with a striking terpsichorean character, Op. 105 No. 6 was clearly intended as a flamboyant ending for particularly ornate liturgies. In its emphasis upon modal rather than tonal harmony (the main theme inhabits a modified Dorian mode), it looks back to Op. 88 No. 2. This time, on the other hand, the prevailing emotion is not nostalgia but fierceness, intensified by the composer's typically rapid harmonic rhythm.

So rapid a harmonic rhythm, in fact, that in practice *Allegretto* rather than *Allegro* would be a more suitable marking for most large venues. At the faster speed, the average cathedral or basilica – as opposed to Trinity College's comparatively intimate environs – will too often turn the composer's swift chord changes into a mere dissonant, clangorous smudge, especially if the player adheres to Stanford's *forte* and *fortissimo* commands while being insufficiently scrupulous about observing the implicit (never bluntly directed) staccato articulation. Organists, thanks to the extreme acoustic dryness which is apt to characterise their own consoles, quite often underestimate precisely how resonant ecclesiastical environments are for members of a congregation or of a recital audience. What to the organist will seem an eminently lucid, intelligible progression of

chords will very frequently strike a hearer, sitting back in the pews, as a bewildering harmonic muddle.¹⁹

Example 11: Op. 105 No. 6, bars 1–11

The image shows a musical score for Op. 105 No. 6, bars 1–11. The score is in 6/4 time, marked 'Allegro'. It features a piano accompaniment with a dactylic siciliana rhythm (dotted crotchet, quaver, crotchet) in the bass line. The upper staves contain complex harmonic textures. Dynamics include 'f' (forte) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). A section starting at bar 6 is marked with a '6' above the staff.

Nowhere in Op. 105 No. 6 does the luxuriant lyricism that dominated Op. 101 No. 6 manifest itself. Instead, Stanford nags at the dactylic siciliana rhythm (dotted crotchet, quaver, crotchet) that becomes unmistakable as early as the first bar, forming the basis for almost all the subsequent exegesis. This preoccupation with a single rhythmic figure suggests Schumann. It continues even after Stanford has switched to D major. The pedal line is suitably restless, vaulting up and down the bass stave until suddenly Stanford stills it with a long-held tonic. If the composition as a whole derived from an improvisation – as it might well have done – then this would explain the chromatic forays that never weaken the unyielding effect of the dactylic motif, though they do impart harmonic variety to the motif.

¹⁹ The *locus classicus* of an organist-composer overrating a swift harmonic rhythm's intelligibility to listeners comes, surely, with Jehan Alain's *Litanies* of 1937. Alain insisted on *Litanies* being performed 'at the performer's limit of speed and clarity' (Robert Lee Moore, *Litanies and Trois Danses for Organ by Jehan Alain* (MMus diss., Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, 1949: 6–7); but if it is thus played in a church acoustic, even the keenest-eared auditor will be hard pressed – especially without a score – to detect more than a generalised hubbub. With a slightly slower tempo, far more harmonic details are distinguishable, and the work's intended visceral excitement is if anything increased.

Example 12: Op. 105 No. 6, bars 29–44

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34

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Throughout, the music reveals a heroic and austere energy at the furthest possible remove from most earlier organ works by British composers. There is nothing like it in the predominantly mellow and occasionally saccharine organ writing of Stainer, for example. Nor has it much in common with Parry's more sombre, Teutonic, and pensive idiom. In its combination of buoyancy and solemnity, it comes closer to Widor's symphonies than to anything written in England; and the Widor connection would reappear in Stanford's output, after a fashion noted below. John Caldwell, whose 1999 *Oxford History of English Music* tends to dismiss Victorian-Edwardian organ writing ('The organ music of the period is ... of relatively small interest, except to enthusiasts')²⁰ and reprehends Stanford in general,²¹ nevertheless singles out Op. 105 No. 6 for special acclaim. With justice, Caldwell calls it 'a short freely composed piece of real

²⁰ John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music: Vol. 2, From c. 1715 to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 305.

²¹ 'Stanford's failure, in his later years, to develop beyond his inherited tradition was more a symptom of stagnation than of golden serenity': Caldwell, 301.

individuality.²² Small wonder that it has by now acquired a larger discography than any other work of Stanford's for the organ.

5.6 *Six Occasional Preludes, Op. 182*

'In my end is my beginning.' This sentence, familiar from Mary Queen of Scots and T.S. Eliot, can also be applied to Stanford after 1918. During his last creative years, he turned increasingly to the genres that had dominated his first creative years: songs, choral works, chamber works, piano solos, and – most applicable to the present dissertation's purpose – organ miniatures. He never recovered the taste for big symphonic composition that he had lost after 1912. Nor did he promote his other recent works with anything like the zeal that he would have exhibited when younger and in better health. His eighth (and last) string quartet dates from 1919; no performance of it before 1968 can be traced anywhere. As for his late Mass setting, *Via Victrix*, that needed to wait until 2018 before being given *in toto* (at Cardiff's Hoddinott Hall), though at least it saw print in vocal-score form during 1920, and though the Gloria from this setting did achieve performance (with organ rather than orchestra) at Cambridge in the same year, Stanford himself conducting it.²³

Instead, while Stanford continued to hope – vainly, it turned out – that he might witness in his old age a late theatrical triumph with *The Travelling Companion*, he concentrated upon small-scale creations. Among these were the half-dozen constituents of Op. 182, undated on the manuscript, although they are thought to date from 1921. Stanford wrote them in the desire for monetary reward, but none of them achieved publication in his lifetime. Stainer & Bell released them (in two volumes of three works each) during 1930.

By now, the fundamentally eighteenth-century, artisanal nature of Stanford's approach to his art will need no further emphasising.²⁴ Merely because Stanford produced a composition for economic motives, one should avoid assuming that the

²² Caldwell, 305-306.

²³ The vocal score appeared under the aegis of Boosey & Co., which would not become the more celebrated Boosey & Hawkes for another decade.

²⁴ Former Stanford pupil Edward J. Dent (Cambridge's music professor 1926–1941) correctly said of his teacher that 'despite his "Irish" enthusiasm he was far more a classic than a romanticist.' Edward J. Dent, 'Ralph Vaughan Williams,' *The Musical Times* 93 (1952), 443–444, at 443.

result is somehow inferior to what he wrote for pleasure. Thus with Op. 182. Not only are the prevailing levels of overall ingenuity as high in Op. 182 as they are in many of his more ambitious works, but on a few occasions, Stanford allowed himself experiments in tonality which he kept out of his bigger compositions. Measured according to the criteria of Scriabin (let alone Schoenberg) these are mild experiments, it is true; yet with Stanford, and more especially with his late output, listeners do well to expect the unexpected. During the composer's own lifetime (1922), critic Sydney Grew deferentially observed: 'Stanford has grown constantly as an artist, effecting some of his best work quite late in life, because from the beginning he was true to himself.'²⁵

The most striking trend detectable in parts of Op. 182 – and elsewhere in his post-1918 organ works, as will soon become evident – is an increasing sympathy for French-style harmonic progressions. It is a sympathy all the more remarkable in view of Stanford's prior impatience with the Gallic spirit as such. Arthur Benjamin reports that Stanford angrily dismissed Debussy and Ravel as purveyors of 'eunuch music.'²⁶ All the odder, then, that such 'eunuch music' should occasionally be echoed in Op. 182 itself: quite possibly as a result of new-found, Great-War-generated Francophilia allied with equally Great-War-generated Germanophobia.

Not in the first piece, however, which Stanford called 'At Christmastide' (or, to be more exact, 'At Christmas-tide'). There, Stanford reverts to the *cantus firmus* treatment that dominated the 1879 *Jesu dulcis memoriae* prelude. This time, unlike on the earlier occasion, he announces the *cantus firmus* itself without any preliminaries. The melody concerned turns out to be none other than *Adeste fideles*, alias 'O Come All Ye Faithful'. He begins his version of it with an upward leap of a fourth, rather than the reiterated tonic to which we are accustomed; and it will be noted also that in the pedal part of bars 6–7, he fills in the original tune's leap of a sixth between B flat and G.

²⁵ Sydney Grew, *Our Favourite Musicians: From Stanford to Holbrooke* (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis Ltd., 1922), 35.

²⁶ Benjamin, 'Student in Kensington,' 201.

Example 13: Op. 182 No. 1, bars 1–9

Particularly in view of the *Allegro* marking, the $12/8$ time-signature, and the seemingly incessant flow of quavers, Stanford might have had in mind the comparably animated first movement of a symphony from ten years earlier: Elgar's Second (which is in the same key, and which bears the representatively Elgarian tempo indication *Allegro vivace e nobilmente*). It is not certain whether Stanford attended any of that symphony's few early performances – in Elgar's lifetime the work met a very cool reception – but he could well have seen Elgar's score. There are obvious differences, it is true. For one thing, Op. 182 continues in the same festive vein until the finish, without the pessimism that dominates the Elgar movement's central section; and for another thing, Stanford forgoes the repeated dotted rhythms and syncopations to be found in the Elgar. The resemblances remain striking even so, and they might not be coincidental. What could be more Elgarian than the subsequent reliance on tonal sequences and, especially, the right hand's ascending motif in bar 21 (producing a major-ninth chord on a strong beat)?

Example 14: Op. 182 No. 1, bars 19–24

But Stanford avoids all danger of obscuring his own stylistic identity amid this tribute, if indeed tribute is what it was. As repeatedly before, so at the fortissimo climax to Op. 182, he allows himself copious pedal-board balletics.

Example 15: Op. 182 No. 1, bars 33–40

The analogy with Elgar's Second might be said to continue with Op. 182 No. 2, which Stanford unrevealingly titled 'Occasional.' His speed indication, *Andante*, likewise discloses little. (Neither in Op. 182 nor in most of his other organ works did he

supply metronome markings.) At first, we might almost be hearing not Elgar but a Bach three-part invention. Then, as early as the third bar, the scene is overcast by descending chromatic lines (left hand and pedal), with a first-inversion Neapolitan chord on the fifth beat. When the somewhat Bachian figuration recurs in bar 5, it cannot dispel the clouds.

Example 16: Op. 182 No. 2, bars 1–7

The musical score for Example 16 consists of three staves: Manual (Right Hand), Manual (Left Hand), and Pedal. The tempo is marked 'Andante' and the dynamics are 'p'. The time signature is 6/8. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains bars 1-3, and the second system contains bars 4-7. The Manual (Right Hand) part features a descending chromatic line in the left hand and a first-inversion Neapolitan chord on the fifth beat. The Pedal part features a descending chromatic line. The score is marked with a '4' at the beginning of the second system.

To intensify the atmosphere of what might be called vaguely menacing whimsy – an atmosphere that echoes the Elgar Second’s darker passages, though it lacks the passion found in the symphony – Stanford unexpectedly resorts to hemiolas at bar 11, writing the entire bar in $\frac{3}{4}$ metre rather than the $\frac{6}{8}$ metre which he uses almost everywhere else. If one examined merely the right-hand and left-hand parts of the passage in D flat major which begins at bar 15, one would be tempted to assume that the mood was one of untroubled relaxation, in accordance with bar 13’s *diminuendo-piano* command. This assumption Stanford invalidates by underpinning the manuals’ lines with possibly the most strenuous pedal passage in his whole oeuvre. Listeners in the pews might well fail to discern how demanding this passage is, but no players will be left in any doubt.

Example 17: Op. 182 No. 2, bars 15–22

15

19

Subsequently, at bar 28, occurs an example of a device that can be found elsewhere in Stanford's organ writing: a pseudo-crescendo, or perhaps (to adapt a term found in discussions of the visual arts) a *trompe-l'oreille*. The '*cresc.*' indication in that bar cannot mean a literal insistence on the organist gradually opening the swell-box, because at this point, opening the swell-box will be physically impossible: both the organist's feet will be engaged in rendering the octave-dominated pedal motif. A registrant, admittedly, might be able to add stops by hand; but often – as the ever-practical Stanford needed no reminding – registrants are simply not available when organists crave their services. Instead, and in a registrant's absence, the hearer must be made to *feel* that a rise in volume and tension is happening, through the ascending chromatic figure in the left hand, against the sustained A flat in the right hand. If the player were to modify the tempo as well for those bars, then the feeling of emergent tension would be strengthened (whether the player decided on a *stringendo* or, to the contrary, on a *ritenuto*).

Example 18: Op. 182 No. 2, bars 27–29

Following a brief reversion to the previously mentioned hemiola rhythms, and a rather forlorn, sequence-dominated flute-stop solo (a rare instance of Stanford specifying a particular registration), the prelude quietly ends. In the circumstances, the final bar's *tierce de Picardie* sounds more cryptic than comforting.

Few if any such ambiguities characterise No. 3, where the mood is for the most part straightforward, jubilant, and – one could be forgiven for thinking – characteristically Stanfordian. Like No. 1 (but unlike No. 2), No. 3 uses an existing tune, initially in the pedals. Again, the tune is one that every Protestant churchgoer in Stanford's Britain would have recognised: a 1708 theme which, around six decades after its first appearance, acquired its seemingly permanent association with Charles Wesley's Easter Sunday verse 'Jesus Christ Is Risen Today.' This theme came from a collection (the contents of which have been otherwise forgotten except by specialists) published in London and called *Lyra Davidica*.²⁷ It is a shame that no-one knows who wrote the virile, striding melody, with its upward major-seventh leap between the eighth and ninth bars, a leap which for more than three centuries has daunted all but the most self-assured congregational songsters.

²⁷ The collection's full name is *Lyra Davidica, or, A Collection of Divine Songs and Hymns, Partly New Compos'd, partly Translated from the High-German, and Latin Hymns: And set to easy and pleasant Tunes, for more General Use; The Musick Engrav'd on Copper plates*. 'J. Walsh, J. Hare, and P. Randal' are identified as the editors; the first-named was that John Walsh whose son and namesake would go on to release much of Handel's music. Richard L. Hardie, '*Curiously Fitted and Contriv'd*': Production Strategies Employed by John Walsh, from 1695 to 1712, with a Descriptive Catalogue of his Instrumental Publications (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, London [Canada], 2000), 45–46. Few Catholics ever heard the tune before the upsurge of Catholic vernacular hymn-singing after Vatican II.

Example 19: Anonymous melody from *Lyra Davidica*, 1708



Once more, the prelude begins *in medias res* with a pedal statement of the theme. Or, rather, part of that theme: to be precise, the melody's ninth bar, which – with its ascending scale followed by a descending fifth – is almost immediately taken up by the manuals. Players should not be tempted to disregard the slightly paradoxical tempo indication. Clearly, Stanford wanted the piece (for all its dignity) to keep moving, a desire made the more conspicuous by the cut-common time-signature.

Example 20: Op. 182 No. 3, bars 1–6



Chromaticism in bars 5 and 6 will become increasingly relevant to what follows. We may legitimately wonder if Stanford had been listening to, or studying sheet music by, Franck (whose organ output his RCM colleague Sir Walter Parratt had begun to perform). Indisputably, the combination of steady march-like rhythm – note the unrelenting crotchet pace – with sequential and modulatory yearning is Franckian in spirit.

Example 21: Op. 182 No. 3, bars 13–25

13

19

mf

f sempre

cresc.

più f

Franckian, too, is the manner in which Stanford develops the four-note motif explicitly propounded by the pedals in bars 17–18. The motif derives from the original tune's third and fourth bars. Where Stanford writes '*cresc.*', it would be entirely legitimate to supplement the increase in dynamic (all the pedal part's semibreves can be sounded by the player's left foot, while the right foot gradually opens the swell-box) with an increase in speed. In all candour, most organists would find it difficult to avoid doing so.

Example 22: Op. 182 No. 3, bars 33–45

33

40

p (Full Sw.)

cresc.

After the pedals restate the original theme's third and fourth bars, in rhythmic augmentation (Stanford goes to the trouble of marking this restatement '*ff* with Reeds'), the work ends with the same bars, again in rhythmic augmentation. This time, however, they are in the topmost line of the manuals; and in case hearers should fail to realise that the conclusion is approaching, Stanford writes *Più lento*. Meanwhile, the four-note crotchet motif reappears in the left hand, similarly stretched out to minims and semibreves. Since No. 3 has a character incomparably more postludial than preludial, one can only assume that Op. 182's general title uses the noun 'preludes' in the same generalised fashion that Chopin and Debussy had used it for their piano works: to denote any miniatures, however free they are of prefatory implications. No. 3 can be readily envisaged as concluding music for an Easter Sunday service where the worshippers have just finished singing the hymn itself.

Example 23: Op. 182 No. 3, bars 71–80

71

Più lento

Full

The third instance in Op. 182 of a pre-existing melody comes with No. 4, 'Requiem', where – appropriately enough – Stanford draws on the *Dies Irae*. By contrast to most composers who have employed this theme (Berlioz in the *Fantastique*, Liszt in *Totentanz*, Rachmaninoff *passim*), Stanford gives it a triple-time accentuation. In this, admittedly, he had been preceded by Saint-Saëns, who likewise deployed a triple-time *Dies Irae* in his *Danse Macabre*. With Stanford, nevertheless, the mood is wholly different from *Danse Macabre*'s: not at all grotesque, not at all redolent of 'things that go bump in the night,' but rather, as solemn as the *Andante maestoso* command implies.

Example 24: Op. 182 No. 4, bars 1–12

No sooner has the composer reached his seventh bar than he modulates in a manner which, once more, suggests Franck in its use of the same sighing phrase repeated sequentially. This modulation continues until near the end of the first section. Thereafter, Stanford prefers to emphasise the Aeolian mode (he makes here considerable use of the note B-flat, though the piece's initial stave is almost entirely in the Dorian mode instead).

After the first section finishes with a variant of bars 1 and 2 (the pedals sound a chromatically inflected version of those bars), the music moves to the tonic major. Here the listener is fooled into thinking that an increase in speed has taken place – because of all the semiquavers which now dominate, instead of the crotchets and dotted minims which prevailed before – but in fact Stanford has specifically ruled out such a

quickening of tempo. He has done this by his unambiguous ‘crotchet equals crotchet’ signal, as well as his *Molto tranquillo* indication.

Example 25: Op. 182 No. 4, bars 55–60

Jeremy Dibble has posited²⁸ a link between this D major passagework – with its suggestion of heavenly harps – and Stanford’s own *Stabat Mater*, finished in 1906 and ‘a mighty popular success’ at its first performance the following year. (The words ‘a mighty popular success’ are those of Parry, who was in the audience.)²⁹ There can be no doubt that the ‘Paradisi gloria’ alto solo, in the *Stabat Mater*’s final minutes, has a similar texture.

Yet that solo is not the only antecedent to Op. 182 No. 4’s middle section. Again, Franck might well come to mind: to be specific, the Franck who, during his D minor Symphony’s last movement, used a harp soloistically for the first time in the piece (bars 354 *et seq.*; in the middle movement the harp does little more than reinforce pizzicato strings, and in the first movement it does nothing). Another cross-Channel pre-echo of

²⁸ [T]he doleful Latin plainchant hymn *Dies Irae* in D minor is juxtaposed with a more celestial idea in D major (more akin to the heavenly music in the conclusion to Stanford’s *Stabat Mater*).’ Jeremy Dibble, booklet note to Priory PRCD1175.

²⁹ Dibble, *Stanford*, 377.

Op. 182 No. 4 comes near the end of an opera still thoroughly familiar to all British music-lovers in the 1920s: Gounod's *Faust*.

Stanford seems never to have conducted *Faust*, either at the RCM or anywhere else – he preferred to concentrate on conducting works that were not already repertoire staples in Victorian and Edwardian England – and Gounod inspired little enthusiasm in him, to judge from the paucity of his published references to the Frenchman's music. Yet Gounod, when depicting Marguerite's ecstatic Act V vision (the words of which begin '*Anges purs, anges radieux*'), resorted to celestial harp arpeggios greatly resembling Stanford's organ filigree. (Another earlier example of such writing, one known to Stanford, is the final section of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*.)³⁰ To provide a robust contrast with these beatific invocations, Stanford briefly but firmly re-introduces the *Dies Irae* motif, this time marked *forte*, before the arpeggios return. And while it would be wrong – here or elsewhere – to overstate the Gounod likeness, bars 67–70 do have a precedent in *Faust*'s Act V: Méphistophélès's final threat '*Jugée!*' versus the angelic chorus's arpeggio-accompanied reassurance '*Sauvée!*'.

Example 26: Op. 182 No. 4, bars 67–70

67

Henceforth the *Dies Irae* dominates. For the third and final section of the prelude, Stanford returns to the original tempo and the original D minor key. This time he allows himself a fortissimo climax on a protracted subdominant (with, as on several occasions before in Op. 182, first-inversion Neapolitan chords noticeable). When this

³⁰ Stanford referred to Berlioz's epic when rebuking the Leeds Philharmonic choristers for their rejection of *Gerontius* in 1902: 'A work which is the first English composition to be given at a Lower Rhine Festival (in consequence of which Sheffield upsets its programme to include it) is not a work to be simply dismissed because A or B don't care for it ... Look at Berlioz! Fancy a Philharmonic Committee in the '60s [1860s] voting a performance of [*La Damnation de*] *Faust!* I can hear the easy way in which it would have been ruled out of court.' Plunket Greene, *Stanford*, 156–157.

has died down, he softly reverts to D major and echoes the melody first heard at bar 58; but he does not do the latter until he has made an unmistakable allusion to Irish folksong.

At bar 114 – quite out of the blue, since nothing in the previous thematic material has suggested it – Stanford quotes the pentatonic Hibernian melody *Gartan*. He had employed *Gartan* on at least two occasions beforehand in his organ oeuvre. His Op. 105 No. 5 had been based on it; and (as will be clear from subsequent pages of this thesis) he had alluded to *Gartan* again in his Fourth Organ Sonata. Here Stanford's use of the melody is altogether different from what it was in either of those compositions. There he employed it with great drama, forthrightness, and verve. In Op. 182 No. 4, by total contrast, he cites it gently and wistfully, as if – amid advancing age and physical decline – he craved one last calming reminder of his birthplace. Moreover, scarcely has he cited it in Op. 182 No. 4 than he breaks it off. Had his Irish memories grown simply too painful for him by this time to let him quote *Gartan* in full, as he had confidently done when younger? Maybe so, given that Op. 182 was contemporaneous with, first, Irishmen fighting against Englishmen, and then Irishmen fighting against other Irishmen. Neither conflict could furnish the slightest happiness to anyone as loyal to English rule *and* to his Dublin origins as Stanford always was.³¹ Only in bar 118, once *Gartan* has been aborted, does Stanford permit himself to recapitulate the middle section's principal thematic strain for the last time.

³¹ Writing in 1917 to his friend and compatriot Sir John P. Mahaffy, classical scholar and musician, Stanford made clear his profoundly mixed feelings about a visit – then in prospect – to the city of his birth. He both longed and dreaded going back, however briefly, to Dublin. Poignantly he told Mahaffy: 'I shall see ghosts, all day and every day' (Dibble, *Stanford*, 330). In the event, the homecoming did not take place, and he never saw Ireland again.

Example 27: (a) original *Gartan* melody; (b) Op. 182 No. 4, bars 114–123 (with box indicating *Gartan*'s initial phrase)

(a)

GARTAN 88 88

From the Petrie Collection of Irish Music
edited by C. V. Stanford 1852–1924.
Melody attributed to J. Mease of Fresford, Donegal

Flowing

(b)

114

With No. 5 in the set, named 'Epithalamium', Stanford returns player and audience to the high spirits of No. 1: the same E-flat major key being used, the same quaver movement dominating. This time no pre-existing tune undergirds the structure. Instead, Stanford makes abundant use of the very first bar's slightly Bachian quaver motif, with its repeated tendency to fall back upon its lowest note. Once again, it will be observed, the pedal line takes as active a thematic role as the manuals do.

Example 28: Op. 182 No. 5, bars 1–9

Allegro con brio

MANUAL

PEDAL

4

7

That recognisably Stanfordian device from earlier organ compositions, the climactic Neapolitan chord, recurs in No. 5 (bars 38–39). What no-one could have predicted is the conclusion, where Stanford, having led his hearers to expect a majestically echoing *ff* dénouement, abruptly decelerates. (Presumably he did not intend the '*dim.*' in bar 44 to be taken literally, unless a registrant was on hand to cancel stops one by one; for both the player's feet will be too busy negotiating those quavers to close the swell-box.) The piece's title indicates that Stanford envisaged No. 5 for use at weddings, although few other composers' works written with such hymeneal intent end pianissimo.

Example 29: Op. 182 No. 5, bars 38–53

38

42

46

50

More harmonically daring than No. 5 (or than most of Stanford's earlier works, for whatever medium) is No. 6, 'At Even-Tide.' Beethoven's much-quoted description of his Sixth Symphony is relevant here: 'more an expression of feeling than painting.' By this point, Stanford had become increasingly averse to program music of Strauss' rumbustiously pictorial sort (the bleating sheep in *Don Quixote*, the ablutions allegedly portrayed in the *Sinfonia Domestica*, and so forth). Such pictorialism he regarded as a betrayal of Brahmsian discipline. He cannot, therefore, have meant No. 6's title to convey for the work's hearers any but vague connotations of twilight quietude. The

chorale-like writing is at first straightforwardly diatonic, though from bar 5 the suspensions hint that it will not always remain thus.

Example 30: Op. 182 No. 6, bars 1–7

(One harmonic oddity might be unintended. Did Stanford consciously perpetrate the consecutive fifths between the left-hand and pedal parts in bars 3 and 4? They do not give the impression of having been written for deliberate effect. Could they derive – as the consecutives in the *Jesu dulcis memoriae* Prelude, already mentioned, probably derive – from absent-mindedness? He would never have tolerated such absent-mindedness from any of his students.)

However peaceful the ambiance, Stanford is not about to let his public forget his contrapuntal interests. The four-note idea (F-E-A-D) heard first in the left hand, then in the right hand, and eventually in the pedals facilitates – in this last iteration – an unexpected move to E flat major (bar 21), thence two bars later to C minor, with suspensions abundant. Further employment of canon, the entries occurring only half a bar apart, is followed by a strange chord sequence which momentarily (bars 27–28) hints at – improbably – the Wagner of *Tristan*. It is just possible that the E natural minim sounded on the first beat of bar 28 is a misprint for E flat. (Sharp eyes will detect a misprint of another kind in bar 27: the E natural there should presumably be either a dotted minim, or an undotted minim followed by a crotchet rest.) But assuming that Stanford did actually mean the note in bar 28 to be E natural, then the fleeting cross-relation between that note on the one hand, and on the other hand the E flat in the pedals upon the last beat of the previous bar, gives a harmonic frisson of a sort rarely if

ever found elsewhere in the composer, though if it occurred in a piece by some post-Wagnerian Frenchman it would surprise nobody.³²

Example 31: Op. 182 No. 6, bars 15–28

15

22

A subsequent yearning D flat major passage recalls Franck in its liberal use of sequences. Then the initial theme returns, now with a more elaborate pedal part. Now with, also, yet another sudden cross-relation: the F sharp (left hand) versus F natural (right hand) at bar 47. The remainder of No. 6 displays no such harmonic unconventionality, and Franck is echoed once more in the wistful three-note figure which the left hand plays in the two final phrases before the plagal cadence at the very end. Still, the work's moments of atypical harmonic voluptuousness show that Stanford even in his last years was by no means content to repeat himself.

³² Two days before the present thesis was due to be submitted, I succeeded in obtaining a copy of *A Stanford Organ Album*, released in 2021 by Oxford University Press, which includes this work. The editor of *A Stanford Organ Album*, John Scott Whiteley, has interpreted the third beat of the lower right-hand line in bar 27 as warranting an A flat (below middle C) crotchet, while retaining for the fourth beat the G crotchet a major seventh higher. Whiteley has also construed bar 28's E flat as a F. As he points out, this is a case where Stanford's own manuscript has vanished: though, as will emerge from the subsequent discussion of Stanford's *In Modo Dorico*, even surviving manuscripts do not remove all uncertainties regarding notes.

Example 32: Op. 182 No. 6, bars 42–57

42

50

5.7 *Fantasia upon the tune 'Intercessor' by C.H.H. Parry, Op. 187*

A month before the Great War ended, Parry died. Stanford's distress at the passing of his old friend was both intensified and complicated by their bitter quarrel (mentioned in Chapter Two) over Stanford's pedagogic dishonesty. His short – approximately ten-minute – unaccompanied *Magnificat*, Op. 164, one of his most impressive choral achievements, pays homage to the deceased. It bears the inscription (originally in Latin): 'This work, which death prevented me from giving Charles Hubert Hastings Parry in life, I dedicate to his name in grief. C.V.S.' Nor was Op. 164 Stanford's sole act of funerary reverence.

Sir Herbert Brewer, who had been Gloucester Cathedral's chief organist since 1895, continued to play an indispensable part in the administration of the Three Choirs Festival (which included the cathedrals of Gloucester itself, Hereford, and Worcester). In this capacity – as well as through the fact of Brewer having been a Royal College of

Music student – Brewer and Stanford already knew each other. From Stanford, Brewer commissioned an organ work, hoping that it would be ready for the 1922 Three Choirs Festival, which would be Gloucester-based. Since plans for the festival included the unveiling of a memorial tablet to Parry in the cathedral’s west end, Brewer clearly wanted Stanford to furnish something Parry-related. Stanford obliged with Op. 187, based on Parry’s hymn tune *Intercessor*. It is not clear who, at the unveiling ceremony on 5 September, actually performed the fantasia. Probably Brewer did, though it is possible that Stanford played the piece himself. (This cathedral origin for Op. 187 explains its inclusion here as one of Stanford’s church-based compositions, though the virtuosic flourishes near the end might be thought to bring it closer in spirit to the recital program.)

Whoever gave Op. 187’s première, there can be no denying that Stanford made an inspired choice of basic material. *Intercessor*, dating from 1904, ranks among the very best things Parry ever wrote. With its perfect balance of phrase-lengths and, above all, its rugged modal harmonies, it evokes the Elizabethan-Jacobean golden age of English music. Somehow it is as if Parry himself had channelled the spirit of Orlando Gibbons.

Example 33: Parry, *Intercessor*



Stanford’s approach to his source consisted of treating it not as a theme on which Stanford would impose variations, but as – so to speak – variations which would coalesce into a theme. The process involved has been neatly dubbed ‘teleological

genesis' by Yale musicologist James Hepokoski, who cites the finale of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony as a prime instance of it.³³ Only near the end of that finale does the brasses' mighty hammer-swinging theme emerge; the theme would have been incomparably less effective if it had been enunciated at the start.³⁴ (Other occurrences of teleological genesis in late-Romantic repertoire are Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung* and d'Indy's once-popular *Istar*, the latter tone-poem's climactic horn ostinato being a curious anticipation of the Sibelius example.) Likewise, not until the end of Op. 187 does Stanford allow his audience to hear Parry's tune and harmonies in unambiguous, vehement form. It cannot have taken long for Stanford to realise, amid the creative process, that the opening downward tetrachord of the tune offered much potential to sustain a musical discourse. So from the start he concentrates upon that tetrachord, and also upon the inverted version of it (E-F-G-A), which begins the hymn's last phrase. The *Andante solenne* indication warns the performer against adopting too lethargic a speed.

Example 34: Op. 187, bars 1–11

³³ James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 26-27.

³⁴ The original metaphor comes from Tovey: 'The [finale's] bustling introduction provides a rushing wind, through which Thor can enjoy swinging his hammer' (Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Vol. 2 [London: Oxford University Press, 1935], 128.

Some would even say that Stanford overworks the four-note theme, which is seldom allowed to fade from the listener's consciousness. (This prompts the conjecture that Op. 187 started life as an improvisation; any organist with reasonable gifts at extempore playing soon appreciates the usefulness of a readily identifiable melodic tag for generating harmonic and counter-melodic ideas.) With other music Stanford usually displays great tact in sensing how much a motif can be employed before it tries the listener's patience, but here such tact is in short supply. While Kevin O'Connell's waspish complaint is grossly unfair when applied to Stanford's output as a whole – 'In Stanford's music,' O'Connell insisted, 'technique too often functions as the most boring distance between two points'³⁵ – it has a certain justification apropos Op. 187's more arid stretches. The two tetrachords manifest themselves again and again with, at first, no rhythmic variety:

Example 35: Op. 187, bars 57–66

57

61

Better reflecting Stanford's habitual ingenuity is the central fugato section, where the time-signature changes to $\frac{6}{8}$ but where the tactus is unchanged. (Or is it? It would indeed be unchanged if Stanford had indicated that in the new section a *dotted* crotchet would equal the previous section's minim; but for whatever reason – a typesetter's

³⁵ O'Connell, 42.

error? a mistake in Stanford's original manuscript? – the published score gives a crotchet without a dot.)

Example 36: Op. 187, bars 116–123

No dynamic indications are supplied for this section apart from the pedals' *forte*, but *crescendo poco a poco* is unquestionably implied, both by the brisk harmonic rhythm and then – in Mendelssohnian style – by a tonic pedal-point held for five bars, during the fifth bar of which the manuals sound a Picardy third. Then Stanford announces (*Lento maestoso*) the original Parry theme on the Great Manual, complete with its original chords, yet periodically interrupted by the Swell manual's cadenza-like embellishments of Stanford's own devising (and presumably meant to go at a faster pace than the theme itself).

159

Lento maestoso.

163

Alas, the inadvertent effect of quoting Parry's original in its complete form is to emphasise the comparative unmemorability that characterises Stanford's earlier handiwork. True, Stanford probably could never write bad music. But he could write dull music; and rather too much of Op. 187 suggests mere note-spinning. He would achieve far happier results in a subsequent, and more concise, *éloge* to Parry.

5.8 Chorale Prelude on 'Why Does Azure Deck the Sky?' (no opus number)

In 1924, the Chappell publishing house issued a collaborative enterprise, *A Little Organ Book in Memory of Sir Hubert Parry*, wherein a dozen British composers contributed memorial miniatures to honour their colleague (as well as including an organ piece of Parry's own, one which had hitherto lain in manuscript). Among these composers were Alan Gray (Stanford's successor at Trinity College, and in 1878 organist at Stanford's

wedding); Harold Darke (organist for five decades at St Michael's Church, Cornhill, London); the Australian-born George Thalben-Ball (an erstwhile Stanford student who served for fifty-nine years as organist at London's Temple Church);³⁶ and Stanford himself, who did not live to see the collection's appearance in print, although Dibble ascribes Stanford's own contribution to 'c. 1920.'³⁷

A Little Organ Book represented a musical genre substantially more common – and of greater antiquity – on the Continent, particularly in France, than in the United Kingdom: that is to say, the *tombeau*, which paid homage to a recently deceased musical master. In many cases, though certainly not all cases, the *tombeau* would conspicuously quote the master's own music. Early *tombeaux*, dating from the seventeenth century, tended to be lute or harpsichord pieces; fashioners of such *tombeaux* included lutenists Denis Gaultier and Jacques Gallot, and keyboard players Johann Jakob Froberger and Louis Couperin (François's uncle). The tradition of *tombeau*-writing continued in France well after 1900. It inspired Ravel – trying desperately to make sense of the Great War's carnage, which he saw at first hand as an army truck-driver – to produce one of his supreme masterpieces: *Le Tombeau de [François] Couperin*. A quarter-century afterwards, during a still worse conflagration, Marcel Dupré lauded the founder of France's organ school, Jehan Titelouze (1562?–1633), in a sixteen-movement organ suite which Dupré appropriately called *Le Tombeau de Titelouze* (1942). Manuel de Falla's solitary work for solo guitar bears the bilingual name *Homenaje pour Le Tombeau de Debussy*.

This funerary tradition was always much weaker in British composition than in French, although hints of it appear in the musical memorials that Purcell's early demise in 1695 prompted from other Englishmen, among whom John Blow stood out as a notable composer in his own right. Stanford could well have encountered Ravel's *tombeau* (at least in Ravel's own orchestral version, played several times in London from 1920 onward); and with his appearance in *A Little Organ Book*, he made one more late gesture in the direction of European music-making.

³⁶ In 1997, millions heard Thalben-Ball's *Elegy in B Flat* during the televised coverage of Princess Diana's funeral.

³⁷ Dibble, *Stanford*, 480.

Seldom can so subtle a miniature – it takes up only two pages – have been based on so prosaic a theme. ‘Why Does Azure Deck the Sky?’ is a song that Parry produced when a mere seventeen years old. It uses words by Stanford’s compatriot Thomas Moore, but has none of the profundity apparent in Parry’s mature writing. At first Stanford cites it in a suitably plain, unadorned G major. Within six bars, though, he has nudged it into a very different emotional realm from Parry’s almost commonplace idea. From F major he slides (after a very brief G major homecoming) to B flat major, then to A flat major, as becomes obvious from Example 38.

Example 38: *Chorale Prelude*, bars 1–11

The musical score for Example 38, 'Chorale Prelude', bars 1–11, is presented in three systems. The first system shows bars 1–4, the second system shows bars 5–8, and the third system shows bars 9–11. The score is for organ, with a 'MANUAL' part (treble and bass clefs) and a 'PEDAL' part (bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Andante.' and the dynamic is 'p'. The key signature is G major. The score features a four-note motif in the manual part, which is then echoed in the pedal part. The piece begins in G major, moves to F major, then to B flat major, and finally to A flat major.

Stanford teases out the implications of Parry’s scalic four-note motif, treating it canonically, distributing references to it among pedals and manuals alike, and showing a tonal vagueness that calls to mind (again) Franck. Nothing could be more Franckian, in its harmonically luscious gloom, than Stanford’s use (especially in bars 14–16) of the same bleak, aching four-note figure in two different tonal contexts within the same bar. There are even hints in this same passage of Franck’s most chromatically-inclined pupil, Louis Vierne, whose organ writing Stanford probably never heard.

Example 39: *Chorale Prelude*, bars 12–16

Equally Franckian in spirit and in technique is a later section, which uses the same echo device, this time in both the pedals and the right hand. This section can be found in bars 25–27.

Example 40: *Chorale Prelude*, bars 23–27

It was as if the loss of Parry (once the immediate pain of the bereavement had passed) released something inside Stanford, something which permitted him a modulatory freedom that he had earlier tended to avoid. The outcome, for all its quiet dignity, possesses rare ardour. Most organists would probably find the work too short – and too reticent – for inclusion as part of a recital program; but as a meditative offertory or communion accompaniment in a church service, it would be utterly appropriate. A 1965 description of Saint-Saëns's late chamber music suits Stanford's *Chorale Prelude* equally well:

One is hardly prepared to meet with passages ... which are written with more feeling than practically anything else in the rest of his work. The characteristic lucidity and smoothness are there, of course, but so too is a deeper, intimate emotion that he had rarely allowed to intrude upon his music before.³⁸

³⁸ Harding, *Saint-Saëns*, 223.

5.9 *Three Preludes and Fugues, Op. 193*

Published by Novello in 1923, the triptych that makes up Op. 193 was among the last things that Stanford composed; his only subsequent opus number belongs to his final organ work, *Three Idylls*. In Op. 193 we have yet another instance of Stanfordian *Gebrauchsmusik* for the organ, written in the hope of deriving quick income for the composer—each prelude and fugue could be used as a succinct recessional for liturgies—and no less artistically valid for that.

Early in 1921, according to Plunket Greene, Stanford had suffered ‘the first breakdown (from which he never recovered).’³⁹ Whether the breakdown was principally somatic, or whether it chiefly manifested itself in the anxiety disorder which (as noted in Chapter Two) required Stanford to consume *sal volatile* before conducting, Plunket Greene does not explain; but the former is more probable. Arthur Benjamin—returning, in the summer of 1921, to London from a visit to his native Australia—concluded, when he called upon Stanford, that cerebrovascular damage had already afflicted his old teacher:

It looked as though he had had a stroke, and his speech was thick. He was touchingly pleased to see me, and thanked me for coming until I was embarrassed. With tears filling his eyes he said: ‘All my lovely pupils—mad! They’ve all gone mad! Vaughan Williams, Holst, Howells, Bliss—all mad!’ Then, looking very fixedly at me: ‘Don’t *you* go mad, me bhoy!’⁴⁰

One will nevertheless find no indications in Op. 193 that brain injury had impaired the septuagenarian’s compositional talents. The entire set shows that while physical illness by now plagued Stanford, his creative mind remained as active and confident as ever.

Op. 193 No. 1 shares a tonic key with two masterpieces that Stanford cherished and conducted: the *Meistersinger* overture and the *Falstaff* finale. Its opening atmosphere of diatonic geniality hints at both these operatic examples. As so often in Stanford’s output, the rhythmic and melodic figures which will mark the entire prelude are

³⁹ Plunket Greene, ‘Stanford as I knew him,’ 82.

⁴⁰ Benjamin, ‘Student in Kensington,’ 207. The earlier allegation by Benjamin that Stanford’s Op. 177 was ‘his last piece’ (207) is obviously incorrect.

detectable clearly from the start. Moreover, in a fashion increasingly noticeable with his organ music, the writing soon displays quasi-Franckian modulatory freedom. The exasperatedly affectionate tribute which critic Stanley Webb paid, more than half a century later, to his friend Herbert Howells – ‘he can stuff enough accidentals into the innocent key of C major to daunt the most confident sight reader’⁴¹ – applies also to Stanford here.

Example 41: Op. 193 No. 1 (Prelude), bars 1–14

The musical score for Example 41, Op. 193 No. 1 (Prelude), bars 1–14, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1-4) is labeled 'MANUAL' and 'PEDAL'. The tempo is 'Moderato e maestoso'. The key signature is C major. The score begins with a forte (f) dynamic in the manual part and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic in the pedal part. The second system (bars 5-8) shows a crescendo (cresc.) marking in the manual part, followed by a fortissimo (ff) dynamic and a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The third system (bars 9-14) continues with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, arpeggios, and accidentals.

On this occasion the sight-reader’s sufferings are brief, because the entire prelude takes no more than two minutes or so in performance. Those two minutes, nevertheless, encompass modulations to B flat minor and B major within the space of a few bars. When the opening C major material returns, its initial exuberance has been tamed. It

⁴¹ ‘S.W.’ [Stanley Webb], [Record Review], *Gramophone* 54:644 (January 1977), 1161.

reappears softly, and comes to hint at a Berlioz trait in the prominence which Stanford gives to the flattened added-sixth (A flat in a C major context).⁴²

Example 42: Op. 193 No. 1 (Prelude), bars 35–56

By comparison, the fugue is considerably more severe in style, as its bluff main subject promises. Everything that might be thought of as factitious charm has been purged from the musical argument (which eventually includes inversion,

⁴² 'The addiction to the minor or flattened sixth [is] that note beloved of the Romantics but so peculiarly personal to Berlioz as to be a sort of trademark or fingerprint ... It is present in one of the last pieces he composed, the distant chorus in *Beatrice and Benedick*, and in his earliest surviving manuscripts, his accompaniments to popular romances and his own hesitant attempts at songwriting.' David Cairns, *Berlioz: The Making of an Artist 1803–1832* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 43–44.

augmentation, and diminution); the result is dogged enough to suggest the North German baroque, as well as Rheinberger.

Example 43: Op. 193 No. 1 (Fugue), bars 1–15

FUGUE
Allegro moderato
MANUAL *mf (61)* (R.H.)
PEDAL

7

11

mf

To excited young British musicians in 1923, gorging themselves on Stravinsky's acerbic neoclassicism, Milhaud's polytonal insouciance, Satie's aphoristic quirkiness, and Bartók's fierce peasant rhythms, such fugal writing as Stanford's – with its steady tactus – must have seemed bland almost to the point of perversity. It soon proves to be nothing of the sort. Bach excepted, no North German baroque organist-composer would have countenanced the harmonic sideslips which ensue from bar 26; and the sudden lightening of the counterpoint to two parts from bar 30 is typical of Stanford's late music, where his long-standing distaste for textural density (a distaste often to be found in fugal episodes by others, notably Beethoven) becomes ever more marked.

Example 44: Op. 193 No. 1 (Fugue), bars 26–33

The musical score shows two systems of music. The first system, starting at bar 26, features a complex texture with multiple voices. The second system, starting at bar 31, shows a change in texture with some notes marked as 'Ch.' (chords) and 'L.H.' (left hand) or 'R.H.' (right hand). Dynamics include piano (p) and sforzando (sf) markings.

The fugue's conclusion is ambiguous in terms of the dynamics which Stanford had in mind. A pedal-point on the dominant note (G) underpins the stretto which starts at bar 58. Soon the composer demands a crescendo, and then (bar 64) a fortissimo, the better to emphasise the inversions and augmentations that Stanford continues devising. At the end he includes a still longer pedal-point, this time on the tonic for nine bars. Since the fortissimo is cut back to a mere mezzo-forte at bar 72, a decrescendo in the last bars to reinforce the '*rit.*' would make perfect musical and emotional sense (although Stanford nowhere specifically asks for such a quietening-down). It would impart an agreeable element of surprise to listeners anticipating, after the stretto, a conventional *plein jeu* peroration. Daniel Cook, on his Salisbury Cathedral CD account of the fugue,⁴³ makes precisely such a decrescendo to captivating effect; and the lowering of the overall register in the music's concluding bars further vindicates a lowering of volume.

⁴³ Priory PRCD1146.

Example 45: Op. 193 No. 1 (Fugue), bars 67–80

67

74

mf

rit.

Novello & Company, Ltd. Engravers & Printers 15008

The most obvious difference between Op. 193 No. 1 and Op. 193 No. 2 is the increased level of virtuosity which the latter demands of the organist. Its mood is consistently more sombre and apprehensive, as would be expected from its choice of key, C minor. Not only did Mozart use the same key to convey tragic gravitas in his K.491 piano concerto; not only did Beethoven cast his *Pathétique* Sonata and Fifth Symphony in the same key for the same reason; but Mendelssohn used the key for two of his most frequently played organ works. These works were the Second Sonata (though this sonata's two final movements mostly inhabit C major), and the first of his Op. 37 preludes and fugues. Parts of Stanford's own Fifth Organ Sonata are echoed in the desolate mood and quaver figuration with which No. 2's Prelude begins. The request for a 16-foot stop at the fourth bar – and for the textural thickening which the stop's added lower octave ensures – is decidedly rare in Stanford. So is the implied switching-over of hands with the changes of manual.

Example 46: Op. 193 No. 2 (Prelude), bars 1–7

The musical score for Example 46: Op. 193 No. 2 (Prelude), bars 1–7, is presented in three systems. The first system consists of three staves. The top staff is in Treble clef, the middle in Bass clef, and the bottom in a lower Bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). Performance instructions include '(Gt.)', 'staccato', and '(Sw. with 16 ft.)'. The second system also consists of three staves, with a '5' marking above the first staff. The third system continues the three-staff format. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Whereas Mendelssohn's Op. 37 Prelude modulates to closely related tonalities when it modulates at all, Stanford manoeuvres chromatically without a qualm. He employs a device often to be found in the organ music of Guilmant (though also noticeable in compositions by Mozart) as a means to convey unease: the diminished octave, generating a passing semitonal clash, as on the third beat of bar 13, indicated by the box in the following excerpt.

Example 47: Op. 193 No. 2 (Prelude), bars 12–19

12

16

(Gt.)
staccato

(Sw.)

Near the end of the Prelude – which, like the equivalent place in No. 1, is notable for its concision – the dotted-crotchet-dominated idea heard at the beginning grows more prominent, and the quaver figuration less so, though it is still present until the concluding six bars. These bars are somewhat hymn-like in character, with block chords that eventually die away to a pianissimo.

At the bottom of the opening page for the Fugue in No. 2, there can be found a footnote from the composer: ‘The registering is left to the taste of the player and the suitability of the instrument.’ No such latitude characterises Stanford’s tempo marking, a fairly specific *Molto Allegro, alla Toccata*. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that Mendelssohn’s C minor Fugue from Op. 37 was a conscious model here. Though the Mendelssohn is meant to go at a notably slower speed (and loses at least half its dramatic thrust when organists rush through it, as all too often they do), both pieces are in compound time and are distinguished by iambic rhythms in their respective opening subjects.

Example 48: (a) Mendelssohn, Op. 37 No. 1 (Fugue), bars 1–10;
 (b) Stanford, Op. 193 No. 2 (Fugue), bars 1–11

(a)

6

(b)

A penchant for alternations – once again, familiar from Franck – between phrases in the tonic major and phrases in the tonic minor re-occurs in this fugue’s development. Stanford loses no opportunity to test the independence of the performer’s hands, or that of the performer’s feet relative to the hands, especially in the matter of articulation. Slurred quavers in the right hand sound against staccato quavers in the left, and slurred quavers in the left hand against staccato quavers in the pedals. The leaping octave at the

start of the main subject grows more and more conspicuous, eventually dominating both the right-hand line and the pedal line at (as well as after) the fortissimo climax.

Example 49: Op. 193 No. 2 (Fugue), bars 81–91

81

86

sempre staccato

mf

With a plagal cadence – as if to remind us of the intended ecclesiastical environment, amid all the virtuoso panache on display heretofore – Stanford brings the Fugue to an end. Any player who can do justice to the technical requirements of the Fugue and its companion Prelude will be rewarded with some of Stanford’s most bracing music.

Stanford saves his most surprising musical ideas in Op. 193 for its last constituent. Not so much in the Prelude, which, for all its modulatory restlessness and enharmonic ambiguity, can be recognised as the work of the same man who wrote the Preludes for Nos. 1 and 2. A hymn-like texture dominates from the opening bars, and there is a hint of Elgar in the yearning sequences.

Example 50: Op. 193 No. 3 (Prelude), bars 1–7

Lento e solenne
f
(Gt., Sw. coupled)

f

The right-hand motif in bar 1 assumes greater and greater significance in the subsequent development. So do the dramatic pauses, which hark back to an especially conspicuous trait in Bruckner's symphonic style. Near the end, Stanford includes one of his favoured Neapolitan triads, while the pedal part itself provides a chromatic gloss.

Example 51: Op. 193 No. 3 (Prelude), bars 33–39

33

f

Nothing in the Prelude will prepare either listener or player for the knotty laboriousness of the Fugue, which is like nothing else in Stanford's writing for the instrument, and which in fact has few counterparts in any other British organ music of the age. For sheer intractability, the initial subject of this *Fuga Cromatica* justifies comparison with Bach's *Wedge Fugue* and with Liszt's *B-A-C-H Fugue*.

Example 52: Op. 193 No. 3 (Fugue), bars 1–7

FUGA CROMATICA
Allegro moderato

(GL) *mf*

8

5

mf

8

Even Stanford, formidable contrapuntist though he was, feels the need (from bar 18) to thin out the polyphony with semiquaver arpeggios. But there is no sense of him having taken a soft option, because soon the semiquaver arpeggios become an integral part of the fugal texture. The tonality grows less and less definite; some passages could be credited to Reger without any but the most expert hearers suspecting a misattribution.

Example 53: Op. 193 No. 3 (Fugue), bars 28–30

The musical score for Example 53, Op. 193 No. 3 (Fugue), bars 28–30, is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom staff is also in bass clef but contains only rests, with a '5' written below it. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is highly polyphonic, with multiple voices moving in parallel motion and complex rhythmic patterns. The treble staff features a prominent melodic line with many accidentals, while the bass staff provides a dense harmonic accompaniment. The overall texture is intricate and characteristic of a fugue.

While a comparatively conservative use of dominant pedal-points marks the Fugue's climax, even at this climax Stanford often shies away from B minor as much as he can. If it were not for the rather dull perfect cadence tacked on at the very end – almost suggesting that the composer had grown weary of the piece before he finished it, or perhaps felt obliged to lapse into concluding conventionalism – this Fugue would be one of Stanford's most consistently inspired and original utterances.

The next chapter of the present thesis will deal with Stanford's organ music intended primarily for the concert hall. In some respects, his concert-hall organ works are recognisably by the same hand as the para-liturgical organ works. In other respects, they differ markedly: how markedly, the following chapter will show.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSES OF SELECTED STANFORD ORGAN WORKS: MUSIC MAINLY FOR CONCERT USE

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with a selection of Stanford organ works that, by their nature and their size, are more attuned to the church than to the concert hall. This chapter, in contrast, deals with those among Stanford's organ works that were conceived primarily as concert pieces. When all the above-cited historiographical risks of making a hard-and-fast distinction between the sacred and the secular have been acknowledged, the fact remains: the works discussed in this chapter are not obviously suited to liturgical environments. This is particularly evident with the five organ sonatas, the sheer length of which will of itself preclude frequent ecclesiastical hearings.

6.2 *Fantasia and Toccata, Op. 57*

First published in 1902 though finished eight years earlier (a second 'revised edition' appeared in 1917),¹ Op. 57 is unique among Stanford's bigger organ works in that it has never totally dropped out from concert programs. While it could not possibly be called famous, it still tended to be heard now and again when almost everything else that Stanford wrote for the instrument rested under layers of dust in libraries. It bears a dedication to Sir Walter Parratt – Stanford's habit of dedicating organ compositions to

¹ The precise nature of the revisions is unclear. Comparison of the 1894 manuscript (NUL MS17, Robinson Library, Newcastle University) with the 1917 edition – which bears the words 'Copyright (revised edition) U.S.A. 1917' – gives no indication that Stanford changed any notes. There are a few discrepancies between the two sources in terms of phrasing and articulation, and they occur in the *Toccata's* pedal part. (In the manuscript's bar 149 a phrase ending falls on the second note; the printed version of the same bar has the phrase ending falling on the first note instead. The manuscript includes a staccato mark on bar 153's last pedal note, and one on bar 158's first pedal note; these are both missing from the printed version.) But these inconsistencies are at least as likely to derive from slight carelessness on the typesetter's part, as from anything else. One very plausible conjecture is that the announcement of a 'revised edition' for the U.S.A. appeared purely in order to secure the American copyright for the piece. This would have been useful, since after August 1914 Stanford received not a farthing in royalties from the German editions of his earlier works.

fellow organists would stay with him throughout his life – and comes from not long after Stanford had ceased the bulk of his Cambridge duties as recitalist.

Perhaps in view of this chronological proximity to the composer's regular performing appearances, Op. 57 adopts an extroverted and decidedly populist approach. (It was heard at the 2013 obsequies for Baroness Thatcher in 2013, though its spectacular unsuitability for any funeral inspires the hypothesis that its inclusion might have been intended as an organist's sly jibe at the former Prime Minister's expense.)² The result indicates a man who has diligently examined Bach; the fact that it shares a key with Bach's most celebrated organ utterance, the *Toccatà and Fugue in D Minor* (BWV565), cannot be accidental.³ It nevertheless avoids anything that smacks of pastiche or pedantry. The very opening is bound to attract an audience's attention, with its rhetorical pauses, such as can often be found in Bach's and Buxtehude's organ fantasies. Brilliant too are the hectic semiquaver flourishes that suggest improvisation, and the fast pedal manoeuvres (both features would recur in Stanford's Op. 103 *Fantasia and Fugue*, also in D minor, from 1907).

² 'Margaret Thatcher: the funeral Order of Service,' *The Telegraph*, 14 April 2013 (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/margaret-thatcher/9992142/Margaret-Thatcher-the-funeral-Order-of-Service.html>; accessed 23 October 2018).

³ On the still unanswered question of whether Bach did in fact write BWV565, whether for the organ or for any other instrument, see Friedrich Blume, 'J.S. Bach's Youth,' *The Musical Quarterly* LIV:1 (January 1968), 1–30, and Peter Williams, 'BWV565: a toccata in D minor for organ by J.S. Bach?,' *Early Music* 9:3 (July 1981), 330–337. Dibble, incidentally, invokes not BWV565 but BWV542 – *Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor* – as the work on which Stanford 'clearly modelled' Op. 57: Dibble, *Stanford*, 260.

Example 54: Op. 57, *Fantasia*, bars 1–12

Following this occurs a gentler, and slightly slower, section in the lilting $\frac{6}{8}$ rhythm that Stanford would frequently use again later in his career. (He could well have had in mind Mendelssohn, who employed it repeatedly in his organ works, notably in the Op. 37 No. 2 Prelude in G, and in the Sixth Sonata.) When the opening motif recurs, it becomes intertwined with the $\frac{6}{8}$ material, the latter enlivened by typically demanding pedal figuration, with leaps of a tenth. The music's overall tendency is to make calmer and calmer the ideas generated by the opening, until finally they are heard in a relaxed D major (marked *Tempo primo, più tranquillo*), with the pauses now soothing instead of rhetorical, and with the final murmuring chords conveying the impression of repose.

Such quiet is soon banished by the vigorous *Toccata* itself, so elaborate in its disjunct pedal writing that it could only have been produced by someone who took conscious pride in exhibiting athletic footwork at the organ console. Precedents exist for such sustained display in the pedal lines of Bach, Buxtehude, and Georg Böhm; but nothing like it can be discerned in Parry, in Mendelssohn or in Franck (the 'Final' from Franck's

Six Pieces aside), and very little even in the more deliberately virtuosic Widor approximates to it.⁴

Example 55: Op. 57, *Toccata*, bars 1–11

Allegro. (♩ = 80.)

Altogether this is an exceptionally polyphonic toccata, far more so than almost any contemporaneous French organ work bearing that name. Nowhere strictly fugal, it manages to convey (through the interplay of manuals and pedals) the effect of a fugue, an effect made all the stronger by repeated changes of manuals to give further internal contrast. Large leaps dominate the pedal writing, with the result that when a pedal phrase moves stepwise instead (bars 131 to 134) the emotional tension is raised. Only on the last two pages does the speed let up: near the end of the penultimate page Stanford inserts a *Più lento e maestoso* passage (bars 170 to 177) immediately before increasing the toccata's main tempo from the initial 80 crotchets to 100 crotchets (*Allegro assai*); at bar 195, he writes *Maestoso*; and from 205 to the end occurs a chorale-like chord sequence over which he inserts an *allargando*. This sequence conveys such grandeur that the very

⁴ A possible exception among Parry's organ works is his *Chorale Fantasia on 'O God Our Help'* (1915), where the last page does contain a remarkably dramatic pedals-only outburst. But this is altogether the most Stanford-like thing that Parry wrote for the organ (with a good many duple-versus-triple cross-rhythms not very often found elsewhere in Parry) and the implied obeisance to Stanford's idiom is therefore unsurprising, if atypical.

last D-major triad cannot disperse the minor-key-dominated drama conspicuous in the foregoing musical content.

6.3 *In Modo Dorico*, Op. 132 No. 1

Within Stanford's output as a whole, strikingly little cross-fertilisation exists. Mahler deliberately sought to weaken – if not indeed to obliterate – dividing-lines between the symphony and the song-cycle (freely quoting his own *Songs from a Wayfarer* when he came to write his First Symphony). Strauss deliberately referred to the 'transfiguration' theme of *Tod und Verklärung* in his *Four Last Songs* (and elsewhere). Among younger composers, Hindemith recast great chunks of his opera *Mathis der Maler* as a symphony (which went on to attain vastly greater commercial success than the original opera ever won). But normally Stanford, by contrast with these three men, preferred to keep genres separate.

One exception to this general statement occurs with Op. 132 No. 1.⁵ This actually began life as a piano work, the first of *Six Characteristic Pieces* which Stanford produced for that instrument in 1912. He dedicated all six to one of the age's most revered pianists, whom he knew through London social life: the Poland-born, Liszt-trained Moriz Rosenthal (1862–1946). At no stage did Rosenthal play these works; nor did he show any greater interest in Stanford's Second Piano Concerto, similarly written with Rosenthal in mind.⁶ Stanford's idiom might have had insufficient pianistic bravura about it for Rosenthal to have been interested in performing it. Insufficient bravura in Berlioz's viola-writing had notoriously sufficed to smother Paganini's initial enthusiasm for *Harold in Italy*.

⁵ Other exceptions can be found. Stanford later arranged for piano, as gifts to his pianist friend Harold Samuel, the second and third organ fugues from Op. 193. Then there is Stanford's *Installation March* (Op. 108), so called because it was composed – as the published score puts it – 'for the installation of Lord Rayleigh as Chancellor of Cambridge University.' The ceremony took place in 1908, not, as Porte would have us believe, in 1892 (Porte, *Stanford*, 85–86). Originally Stanford intended the march for military band, the detailed arranging having been carried out by Michael Retford (one of the Novello imprint's house arrangers) on the basis of Stanford's handwritten short score. Later in the same year Stanford reworked the march as an organ solo, marked by uncharacteristically detailed indications of which organ stops the player should use. Lord Rayleigh had won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1904; and his brother-in-law was none other than Arthur Balfour, during whose Prime Ministry Stanford obtained his knighthood.

⁶ Mark Mitchell and Allan Evans, *Moriz Rosenthal in Words and Music: A Legacy of the Nineteenth Century* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 135.

Clearly Stanford found it difficult – as well he might have done – to get Op. 132 No. 1’s poignant, sombre opening theme out of his system. It is not clear precisely when he arranged *In Modo Dorico* for organ, but it was probably after the Great War. Nor was this his sole use of the motif, which would recur in orchestral guise as a prelude to *The Travelling Companion*, indeed as the most prominent thematic material of the opera as a whole.

Example 56: Op. 132 No. 1, bars 1–15

Adagio molto e solenne.

MANUAL *mp* Gt.

PEDAL.

4 (Ch.) (Sw)

7 *mf*

10 (Gt. coup. to Sw) *cresc. poco a poco*

13

Already at bar 10 the composer's repeated use of bass minims indicates how much better suited the music's idiom is to the organ – with its easy sustaining powers – than it is to the piano, where notes begin to die away as soon as they are struck. Though a quiet central passage after the first fortissimo takes the music to a serene C major, this resting-place turns out to be brief. Soon, the ominous three-note march-like rhythm first heard at bar 9 comes to dominate the pedal writing, and a protracted crescendo (shades of Titurel's cortège in *Parsifal*'s Act III?) proclaims the imminence of the climax.

Example 57: Op. 132 No. 1, bars 28–36

28 (Ob. off)
p
mf Gt.

31
cresc.

34
f
cresc.

Between bar 37 and bar 39, and again at bar 41, the composer's fondness for *trompe-l'oreille* dynamic changes manifests itself afresh. Stanford repeatedly piles one triadic note on top of the last to create a sense of growing excitement, while both of the player's feet thunder out an octave-dominated ostinato and are thus once more (despite the *cresc. sempre* command) too busy to ensure a conventional crescendo by pressing the swell-box lever.

Example 58: Op. 132 No. 1, bars 37–39

Most listeners, by this point, would probably assume that the climax itself will be based on the powerful triadic chords somehow being combined with the march rhythm, as per bars 34 and 35. Yet Stanford's dramatic sense ensures one of the most unpredictable coups that he ever carried out. The result is to debar the entire composition from the church-service use to which (we could be forgiven for thinking) it would be otherwise suitable. Only the most latitudinarian clergy would be inclined to tolerate in a liturgical environment the concluding section's pyrotechnical virtuosic demisemiquavers. Following these demisemiquavers, the last two chords of the three-note march rhythm's final iteration exhibit another dramatic stroke: a major *ninth* in the left hand – with a full-organ fortissimo at that, although only a demisemiquaver long – as well as the expected straightforward tonic-major triad which comes immediately afterwards. It is strange to think of Stanford, with his conventional pedagogic aversion to consecutive fifths,⁷ allowing himself this ninth. But there it is in the score; and while

⁷ Not that this aversion operated in every circumstance. In a 1911 primer, Stanford commented: 'A composer who has full knowledge of his technique, and can play about with a canon or fugue, has got to a point where he can utilise his knowledge to make experiments. A man who knows he is writing consecutive fifths can write them if he is convinced of their appropriateness, and can

one cannot rule out altogether the possibility that it derived from no reason more exalted than a printer's mistake, it makes for an undeniably effective stroke in performance. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato*. The following example gives both the Stainer & Bell published version and an extract from the (atypically dishevelled) manuscript version.

Example 59: (a) Op. 132 No. 1, bars 40–45 in the Stainer & Bell published version; (b) bars 44–45 in the manuscript version (NUL MS58, Robinson Library, Newcastle University)

(a)

(b)

convince the hearer of their beauty, without being pulled up by the old formula of infringement of rule.' Charles Villiers Stanford, *Musical Composition: A Short Treatise for Students* (London: Macmillan, 1911), 3.

6.4 The five organ sonatas, Opp. 149, 151, 152, 153, 159

No one knows precisely why Stanford, having confined most of his organ writing to smallish works before the Great War (the comparatively expansive Op. 57 being the exception), should suddenly after 1916 have produced five organ sonatas, the last four of which take more than a quarter of an hour each to play.⁸ As none of the five is readily amenable to church use, Stanford must have had the recital hall in mind for all of them; but neither in his time nor in any subsequent era have recitalists shown much interest in them.

Conjectural explanations offer themselves for why Stanford wrote them. Rodmell suggests that the composer's dealings with Sir Walter Parratt at Windsor (at whose home he often stayed, Windsor being safer than London from the threat of air-raids) might have 'spurred a renewed interest in writing for the instrument.'⁹ The challenge of a new genre – furthermore, a genre that Parry never undertook – could well have appealed to Stanford. By 1916 he had come to feel that he had exhausted the possibilities of symphonic production (his Seventh Symphony dates from 1912).

Quite possibly Stanford wished to make a more conspicuous contribution to war work than he had previously done. The eventual arrangement for full orchestra of one sonata – in a fashion to be discussed a few pages hence – bespeaks a conscious courting of public patriotism. Parry, it is worth emphasising, had unforgettably adorned the Allied cause with his composition of *Jerusalem* (originally called, after its opening words, *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time*) during 1916. There was, besides, a chance that the sonatas might earn for Stanford the composer a following as great as Widor's organ symphonies had already attained. Given Stanford's chronic money troubles, which – as Chapter Two stated – the great wartime reduction of RCM student numbers had worsened, he would have been superhuman had he not wanted to profit from his sonatas in an economic sense.

⁸ 'Stanford never spoke of the motivation for composing them [the sonatas]': Geoffrey McConnell, *Stanford's Preoccupation with the Organ Sonata, 1917–1918* (MA diss., University of Ulster [Belfast], 2002), 15.

⁹ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 313.

Nor can the historian rule out a simple disposition on Stanford's part to distract himself from the tension and powerlessness of civilian existence during the war. Embarking on a truly major compositional project, when after three years the hostilities showed no sign of ceasing, could have been a kind of therapy for him. Both his children had crossed the Channel to serve in the war effort, Guy in the army, Geraldine as a Red Cross nurse. As Gerald Norris rightly observed:

It is perhaps difficult for many of us, so far removed from those terrible events, to comprehend how deeply the onset of the First World War shocked and stunned men and women of Stanford's generation. For him, in particular, with his acute sensitivity and oneness with Europe, the unfolding of the conflict occasioned the most appalling anguish. This distress was soon magnified when Guy was ordered to the front and Geraldine went to France as a nurse. He clung pathetically, for some time, to the belief that hostilities were almost at an end ...¹⁰

The threat of aerial aggression particularly upset Stanford. (By some kindly intervention of providence, he did not live to see the incomparably more severe damage which Hitler's Luftwaffe inflicted on London and Londoners a generation afterwards.) Conductor and former Stanford pupil Leslie Heward bluntly said of his old teacher: 'The war was a great trial to him, as, like most super-sensitive people, he was physically a coward.'¹¹

A further contributing factor could well have been the new respectability that had attached itself to organ epics over the preceding three decades. Elgar's 1895 Organ Sonata¹² swiftly became a repertoire staple in Britain, in a way that no other large-scale creation for the instrument since Mendelssohn's profoundly influential six sonatas had managed to be. Stanford, who continued admiring Elgar's music even as he winced under the impact of Elgar's often public invective against him, indubitably knew of the Elgar sonata.

¹⁰ Norris, *Stanford*, 561.

¹¹ Walford Davies *et al.*, 'Charles Villiers Stanford, by some of his pupils,' *Music & Letters* 5:3 (July 1924), 193–207, at 203.

¹² The frequent description of this work as Elgar's 'First Organ Sonata' is misleading, because Elgar's so-called Second Organ Sonata is in fact nothing more than a 1933 transcription – by the composer's friend Ivor Atkins – of the *Severn Suite* that Elgar had furnished three years earlier for brass band.

Elgar's creation had forerunners among English-born musicians, a fact not widely realised until 2017, when Florida State University professor Iain Quinn traced the creative genealogy thereof.¹³ In 1858, two of Victorian England's most prominent organists, William Spark and the aforementioned William Thomas Best, had composed one organ sonata each. Quinn calls Spark's sonata 'a substantial addition to the repertoire.'¹⁴ Sir Frederick Arthur Gore Ouseley, who combined the roles of academic and Anglican clergyman (he served as Oxford's professor of music from 1855 to his death in 1889), wrote two organ sonatas: the first in 1877, the second – which bears a dedication to Sir Walter Parratt – in 1883.¹⁵ Five British musicians much younger than Best, Spark, and Ouseley (all of these five, moreover, having been born within a decade of Stanford himself) contributed estimable organ sonatas during Victoria's and Edward VII's reigns: Alan Gray, cited above in connection with the Parry *tombeau*; Hugh Blair, Worcester Cathedral organist and one of Elgar's few close friends; Basil Harwood, who, like Stanford, had undergone training in Leipzig; Walter Battison Haynes, similarly a Leipzig alumnus; and John E. West, long-time Royal College of Organists president.

While Quinn has discussed most of these productions, two other composers should be cited here. One is Sir Percy Buck (1871–1947), eventual professor of music at the University of London, who produced three organ sonatas before World War I. (Buck's hymn tune *Gonfalon Royal* continues to be sung on occasion.) The other, still less remembered than Buck, belonged to the preceding generation: Charles John Grey (1849–1923), from Diss in Norfolk. Around the turn of the century, Grey wrote at least two organ sonatas (no exact dates are given on the scores): one in A major, and one in G minor. The A major composition has little to distinguish it from many solid, fairly forgettable organ works produced by other English musicians during the same period; but the G major leaves a much stronger impression, through its curious mixture of jaunty panache with succulent Franckian modulations. Possibly Grey had heard some

¹³ Iain Quinn, *The Genesis and Development of an English Organ Sonata* (Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁴ Quinn, *Genesis*, 29–30.

¹⁵ Iain Quinn, 'The two organ sonatas of Frederick Arthur Gore Ouseley,' *The Organ* 394 (Autumn 2020), 44–49.

of Parratt's Franck performances. He can have had few other opportunities at the time of hearing or seeing Franck's organ output.

Against the foregoing surmises must be set the hard fact that when these composers' sonatas appeared, they usually attracted only limited attention even among organists. Elsewhere, most of them were ignored, apart from the very occasional brief review in the specialist literature; and they never began to compete in popularity with Elgar's instance. (Occasionally the more enterprising players in British cathedrals would revive Basil Harwood's First Sonata, from 1890, still being called as late as 1949 'the finest organ sonata written by an Englishman';¹⁶ yet even they almost never bothered with Harwood's Second Sonata, from 1912.) How many – if any – of such sonatas Stanford had examined himself, before he embarked on his own sonatas, remains uncertain. He would, it is safe to say, have seen announcements of these works in publishers' advertisements when they were initially released; but he never spoke of them in his public utterances, or in the small amount of his private correspondence which survives.

Continental models were at least as readily accessible to Stanford as British ones. As early as 1857 Julius Reubke (formerly a pupil of Liszt) produced the half-hour long *Sonata on the Ninety-Fourth Psalm*, which is cast in one continuous movement, and which owes a good deal to Liszt's own style of organ fantasy. The Dresden-based Gustav Merkel left behind him nine organ sonatas, and was a familiar name to English audiences during Stanford's younger days, as the foregoing discussion of Trinity College's recital programs has indicated. (Merkel's fellow Germans considered him important enough to deserve a biography in 1886, only a year after his death).¹⁷ Franz Lachner, the friend of Schubert, composed in his old age three organ sonatas, all published in 1877. Rheinberger's twenty organ sonatas have already been alluded to, and were – as Quinn notes – 'well received in England.'¹⁸ Guilmant produced eight

¹⁶ Lancelot G. Bark, 'Basil Harwood, 1859–1949,' *The Musical Times* 90: 1275 (May 1949), 165–166, at 165; Bark makes it clear that he is quoting an earlier critic, who remains unidentified.

¹⁷ Paul Janssen, *Gustav Merkel: Ein Bild seines Lebens und Wirkens*. Leipzig: Rieter-Biedermann, 1886.

¹⁸ Quinn, *Genesis*, 98. But W.T. Best had no time for them, or for Parratt's admiration of them. He complained in 1892 that 'The works of Mr Parratt's favourite composers – Herren Merkel and Rheinberger – though in undeniable organ form, are apt to pall upon cultivated ears. Their

organ sonatas; Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, Guilmant's Belgian teacher, supplied three sonatas of his own for the instrument. Parratt referred deferentially to the organ compositions of Merkel, Rheinberger and Guilmant (as well as those of Stanford, Best, and Saint-Saëns) in an 1892 lecture.¹⁹ Besides, by 1917 all of Widor's organ symphonies had been made known in Britain. Stanford, as we shall see, actually dedicated one of his own organ sonatas – the second, *Sonata Eroica* – to Widor.

The very name 'symphony' (as Widor well knew when he adopted it) proclaimed, to a still greater extent than the name 'sonata', a quality of gravitas: of Austro-German, Beethovenian gravitas at that. In particular, it proclaimed a desire to take systematic advantage – as most organ sonatas by Englishmen nowhere did – of the quasi-orchestral resources that the organ's timbres had acquired, thanks largely to Cavallé-Coll's achievements, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. It is relevant that when Guilmant rearranged the first and last of his organ sonatas as concertante works, he insisted on calling them, not concertos (which in practice is what they became), but *symphonies pour orgue et orchestre*. Edwin H. Lemare's own two symphonies for solo organ did adopt a quasi-orchestral idiom, and they owed a substantial stylistic debt to Widor's achievements. Maybe they owed too much, since neither Lemare himself nor any other executant could win for them any wide acceptance. Or maybe the organ-music-loving public so completely associated the phrase 'organ symphony' with Gallic examples (quite apart from Widor, Vierne produced six such symphonies) that it refused to credit any non-Frenchman with skill in the medium. Whatever the reason – and despite Lemare's best efforts – British composers' enthusiasm for releasing multi-movement organ works, and for calling them sonatas, did not extend to comparable enthusiasm for employing the 'organ symphony' label.

numerous "sonatas" in particular, bear a strong family likeness, the chief themes being encumbered with a wearisome technical development, too often proclaiming the manufactured article rather than the presence of the creative impulse, while the enormous length of many of the movements effectually prevents a frequent performance.' Quoted in Dibble, 'Romanticism,' at 271.

¹⁹ Donald Francis Tovey and Geoffrey Parratt, *Walter Parratt, Master of the Music*. London: Oxford University Press, 1941, 180.

6.4.1 Sonata No. 1 in F, Op. 149

Op. 149 – finished in May 1917 and published later in the year by Augener – bears the dedication ‘To my old friend Alan Gray.’ (A reciprocal gesture, since Gray had dedicated his own first organ sonata ‘To Professor C.V. Stanford.’) Like three out of its four successors, it contains three movements. Unlike the Second, Third, and Fourth Sonatas, it has nothing remotely resembling a program, let alone a specific narrative; unlike the Fifth Sonata, it does not draw on other material in Stanford’s output. Geoffrey McConnell avers that Stanford’s piece could have been intended to console the bereaved Gray, who had lost both of his two sons on the Western Front (‘Stanford,’ according to McConnell, ‘would not have needed to be explicit about his reasons for the dedication on the score’).²⁰ Yet the predominant urbanity – at times bordering on outright happiness – of the sonata itself suffices to render doubtful such an elegiac interpretation. Had Stanford genuinely wanted to memorialise Gray’s sons, the chances are that he would have written much more consciously and unequivocally mournful music.

In any event, most of the sonata’s first movement, marked *Allegro (molto moderato)*, derives ultimately from the initial bars’ crotchet-and-dotted-crotchet motif. A certain Elgarian atmosphere prevails, what with the abundant sequential repetitions, the dramatic dotted-crotchet-quaver leaps of a sixth, and the tendency to alternate between major and minor triads. One can imagine such a bold, striding preamble being equipped with that most Elgarian of Italian adverbs, *nobilmente*.

²⁰ McConnell, *Stanford’s Preoccupation*, 16.

Example 60: Op. 149 (first movement), bars 1–20

Allegro (molto moderato)

MANUAL

Gr. *f*

PEDAL

7

Cple. Gr. and Sw.

14

pppp

Reeds

Already the original motif, notwithstanding its block harmony, has demonstrated contrapuntal implications. Those implications Stanford emphasises in the movement's middle section, which inhabits the tonic minor, and which is dominated by fluttering semiquaver passagework on the Swell manual, against the simple descending scale which constitutes the second subject.

Example 61: Op. 149 (first movement), bars 42–47

42 Sw.
mf
(uncouple Gt. and Sw.)
Sw. to Ped.

45 Ch.

Only with a switch to C major does the semiquaver figuration decrease in prominence. The second subject grows more noticeable, is sometimes given in retrograde (or retrograde-inverted) form, and continues to be significant after the movement's opening motif has returned in the new key. A long C pedal-note announces a gradual modulation – marked by, again, copious semiquavers – towards F minor's relative major, A flat. Cunningly, though, Stanford avoids a straightforward root-position A flat triad, preferring a six-four harmonic episode of the type in which (however much he would have hated to admit the fact) Strauss specialised. After a tiny recitative in the treble register, finishing on an E flat, the A flat major second movement – *Tempo di Minuetto* [sic] (*Allegretto*) – begins. (The recitative's inconclusiveness makes clear that Stanford envisaged an *attacca*, even if, presumably through accident, this command has been omitted.)

Whereas the first movement had a mainly animated character, the second movement is as graceful and elegant as its tempo indication implies. Canadian organist Stephanie Burgoyne cautiously calls it 'perhaps one of Stanford's most light-hearted

movements for organ.²¹ (Somewhat unfairly, Philadelphia organist Harry Wilkinson described it – in 1957 – as ‘rather trite.’)²² It conveys the sense that Stanford has consciously wished to echo eighteenth-century manners, albeit with the resources of nineteenth-century chord progressions. No eighteenth-century composer would have countenanced the opening bar’s chromaticism. But again, Stanford’s chief Germanic *bête noire* comes to mind, because with this movement we could easily be in the Meissen-china-figurine world inhabited by Strauss’s *Bourgeois Gentlehomme*.

Example 62: Op. 149 (second movement), bars 1–12

Tempo di Menuetto (Allegretto)

Just as the opening movement was dominated by its initial phrase, so the second movement is dominated by *its* initial phrase. As Burgoyne points out: ‘the main theme is never far away. The development section uses many different modifications such as inversion, imitation and modulation.’²³ Even when the preliminary quavers become triplets, they hark back to the opening; and every so often Stanford refers to the opening movement’s second subject, either in something like its original guise, or in an inverted

²¹ Stephanie Burgoyne, ‘The Five Organ Sonatas of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924),’ *The Diapason* (August 2016), 20–23, at 21.

²² Harry Wilkinson, *The Vocal and Instrumental Technique of Charles Villiers Stanford* (PhD diss., Eastman School of Music, Rochester [NY], 1957), Vol. 1, 145.

²³ Burgoyne, ‘Five Organ Sonatas,’ 21.

guise. After such elaboration, it almost comes as a shock when the composer finishes the movement with a restful, straightforward perfect cadence.

The First Sonata's finale has a fugue as its *raison d'être*. Burgoyne correctly cites Rheinberger's penchant for fugues in the concluding movements of his own organ sonatas;²⁴ but the introductory matter of Stanford's finale is substantially more complex and discursive than what Rheinberger usually allowed himself. After the manner of Beethoven with the *Choral Symphony's* finale, Stanford echoes in his own piece's finale the earlier movements. Lest anyone should have forgotten the first movement's exordium, Stanford quotes it and marks it *come prima*, this time dovetailing within it the semiquavers associated with the second subject.

Example 63: Op. 149 (third movement), bars 1–8

The musical score for Example 63, Op. 149 (third movement), bars 1–8, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the tempo marking "Allegro maestoso (Come prima)". The piano part features a guitar (Gt.) accompaniment with a forte (f) dynamic and a swell (Sw.) marking. The score includes a five-measure rest in the piano part at the beginning of bar 5. The second system continues the piano part with a guitar (Gt.) accompaniment. The third system shows the continuation of the piano part with a guitar (Gt.) accompaniment. The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 3/4 time signature.

Following several more allusions to the first movement's themes, Stanford concludes the section with an imperfect cadence, before beginning the four-voice fugue. He bases the fugue on a decidedly Bachian subject, where the first three notes clearly reaffirm the sonata's opening material.

²⁴ Burgoyne, 'Five Organ Sonatas,' 20.

Example 64: Op. 149 (third movement), bars 33–38

The resultant counterpoint, for all its intricacy, introduces very little new matter. Mostly Stanford remains content with developing the first movement's chief ideas in unexpected ways. A dramatic stretto initiated by the pedals in C major leads to the climax, after which the composer reverts to block harmony and deliberately alludes to the sonata's opening bars. With a chromatic pedal line marching upwards, and above this line a repeated figure in the right hand that echoes the fugue's first three notes, Stanford briefly sideslips to A flat major before bringing the whole work to a celebratory close.

Example 65: Op. 149 (third movement), bars 102–116

102

109

(Reeds)

Full

The sustained neglect by most organists of so attractive and approachable a composition as Op. 149 is very unfortunate, as is Rodmell's dismissal of the sonata (he says that 'it is a functional piece but lacks a sense of purpose').²⁵ Shorter than any of its four companions, it makes an excellent gateway to Stanford's biggest creations for the instrument.

6.4.2 Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 151, 'Eroica'

Consistently meritorious though Op. 149 is, it becomes evident from the very first phrases of Op. 151 (dated August 1917 and published by Stainer & Bell rather than Augener) that here Stanford has struck a deeper emotional note than he ever sounded in the earlier work. This is the sonata which he dedicated to Widor 'and the great country to which he belongs.' Op. 149 had given listeners so few hints of wider European conflict that it could just as well have been composed wholly in peacetime. Not so with Op. 151, where the Great War is omnipresent. Stanford calls the first

²⁵ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 315.

movement 'Rheims'; the second movement, while it has no title, possesses the distinct character of a lament; and the finale bears the name 'Verdun.'

While the city of Rheims was, historically, associated with French kings' coronations, Stanford in 1917 had in mind a much more recent event than any monarchical enthronement: namely, the German army's shelling of the city's cathedral, which became a gift to Allied propagandists, along with the army's destruction of Louvain's university library at the same period. Such wanton disregard for other nations' priceless cultural treasures confirmed the Allied belief – a belief which, as we have seen, Stanford fully shared – that the German war machine entailed an innate barbarism. As if to proclaim from the start the indestructibility of the wider European-Carolingian spirit, Stanford based his first movement upon the Eastertide carol *O filii et filiae* (often performed in Anglophone lands to words beginning 'O sons and daughters, let us sing'). That this carol had a French origin added to its appropriateness in Stanford's eyes. A Franciscan monk based in Paris, Jean Tisserand, wrote the tune during the fifteenth century. While the tune's opening bars' rhythm varies from edition to edition, its fundamental sequence of pitches remains the same.

Example 66: (a) *O filii et filiae*; (b) Op. 151 (first movement), bars 1–6

(a)

(b)

It should, at this point, be noted that several French organist-composers had already used the carol's melody in their own work. The seventh volume in a ten-volume series called *Archives des Maîtres de l'Orgue*, edited by Guilmant and his colleague André Pirro, had appeared in 1906; this volume contains an *offertoire* by the early-eighteenth-century Parisian organist Jean-François Dandrieu, based on the *O Filii* melody. Not only that, but Guilmant had himself written an *offertoire* which likewise wove variations upon the tune. (Both the 1906 collection and Guilmant's own piece could have come Stanford's way, though it cannot be proven that they did.)

Stanford's opening movement proves to be largely monothematic, in a way that his writing seldom is on other occasions. Any monothematic movement carries within it the danger that it will strike the listener as drearily repetitive; and this danger Stanford did not always circumvent, as the above comments on Op. 187 will have indicated. But here Stanford evades the peril by two methods: first, the sheer complexity of the *O filii et filiae* theme itself; and second, clear changes in tempo as well as key. Scarcely has Stanford modulated to the distant tonality of G flat major (bars 92–98) than he leaves that tonality and moves to E flat minor. He has marked the next section *Più mosso*, and in this section he confirms that he has by no means exhausted the developmental possibilities of the original carol's intervals and rhythmic patterns. The prevailing mood is defiant, with a Beethovenian tenacity of purpose.

Example 67: Op. 151 (first movement), bars 104–119

104 *Più mosso*

110 *cresc.*

116 *ff* *rall - - - at -*

A softer section, to be taken at the speed of the opening bars, is dominated by semiquaver commentary in the manuals above chromatic scales in the pedals. At one point (bar 190), Stanford, eager to accentuate the dramatic potential of his writing, employs the extremely rare Italian term *tranquillandosi*: ‘becoming quiet’. (Elsewhere, for similar dramatic reasons, he is more specific in his instructions concerning organ stops than is his wont. As well as specifying particular manuals throughout, he often calls for ‘Solo Reed’ or ‘Reed off,’ while also including more specific indications such as ‘Ch[oir manual]. 8’4’2’.)

The whole passage prepares the way for a G major climax, which is characterised by the use of preceding material in a manner that suggests conventional sonata-form. For example, when the *Più mosso* statement re-emerges, it does so in G minor. After a

self-consciously theatrical diminished-seventh chord, arpeggiated so as to banish the most obvious hints of cliché, Stanford ends the movement in a happy G major: or, to be more exact, a G major with Mixolydian inflection. The pedal line is conspicuously virtuosic.

Example 68: Op. 151 (first movement), bars 229–237

Once more Stanford supplies a Mendelssohnian pedal-point on the tonic note, in order to herald the final cadence. There could hardly be a greater contrast between the proud *fortissimo* of this ending, and the start of the succeeding movement.

This movement bears the indication *Adagio molto. Tempo di Marcia Solenne*, followed by that rare thing in Stanford's organ oeuvre (which the finale also has): a metronome marking. Almost certainly, with this marking, a printer's mistake has been committed. The published score says that the central movement should be taken at sixty-three *quavers* to the minute, which might well make it insufferably slow on the organ.²⁶ It is

²⁶ But not, curiously, in Stanford's *orchestral* version of the music, recorded for the first time in August 2019 by Hyperion (CDA68283). There, the performers (Howard Shelley conducting the Ulster Orchestra, Belfast) do come very close to the organ original's printed metronome marking; and the music does not sound impossibly cumbersome. The orchestral version's manuscript, unlike the manuscript of the organ version, bears – in the composer's own handwriting – the indication '*Tempo di Marcia (Andante mesto)*.'

likelier that Stanford actually wanted a speed of sixty-three *crotchets* to the minute, since this tempo – as any organist will testify who has essayed both tempi – has the merit of making the music into something recognisable as a four-beats-to-the-bar funeral march, whereas at the lethargic printed tempo, any suggestion of forward movement vanishes.

Making an apt choice of speed especially important here is the sheer loveliness of the music itself, which shows its creator at the height of his powers. Could Stanford, in this movement, have been deliberately alluding to (or at least vaguely remembering) Elgar's 'Nimrod', albeit turned from triple into quadruple time? Perhaps. His choice of the same key as 'Nimrod' inhabits – E flat major – is certainly suggestive; and so is the almost constant ambulatory bass, an Elgar trait.

Still, we need to remember (although innumerable recent radio and television transmissions of British royal and military funerals have made the remembrance difficult for us) that the automatic association of 'Nimrod' with exclusively threnodic contexts is a modern one. It tends to be forgotten that when Elgar wrote the *Enigma Variations* in 1898–1899, August Jaeger – the dedicatee of 'Nimrod'²⁷ – remained very much alive. On Elgar's own account, 'Nimrod' developed not from desire to mourn the loss of any particular friend, but from conversations which Elgar had had with Jaeger about slow movements in Beethoven, more especially the slow movement in the *Pathétique* Sonata. Furthermore, the innate stylistic differences between Stanford and Elgar must be acknowledged. Stanford's muse is predominantly more reticent than Elgar's, with less propensity for roiling emotion. It can very seldom be said of Stanford's output, as Elgar memorably said of his own, that 'if you cut that it would bleed.'²⁸ Whatever Elgarian connection might or might not exist with this *Adagio molto*, the melancholy grandeur of Stanford's inspiration is undeniable. It attains such dignified eloquence that the direction *con molto espressione* appears almost redundant.

²⁷ Elgar, with his lifelong love of puzzles and ciphers, expected his audiences to realise that 'Nimrod' refers to nothing more mysterious than Jaeger's surname, which is the Teutonic equivalent of 'Hunter.'

²⁸ Moore, *Elgar*, 225.

Example 69: Op. 151 (second movement), bars 1–10

Here is no existential anguish, as so often typifies Mahler's march movements, but a meditation that for all its beauty (a beauty intensified by the right hand's opening syncopations) is stoic in spirit. The sequential repetitions at bars 17 and 18 are consolatory rather than harrowing.

Suddenly Stanford doubles the pace – his exact phrase is *Doppio movimento* – and bases the new section upon the dotted-quaver-semiquaver rhythmic figure that had played a significant part in the first section. Improbably, he moves to G flat major, still with the same rhythmic figure dominating, and then to a more predictable C minor. By this time the original atmosphere of sad dignity has given way to something much more vigorous and ardent, as if Stanford would rather summon the living than mourn the dead.²⁹ The harmonic rhythm is characteristically swift, the melodic sequences are frequent, and the hints of Elgar are conspicuous. Once more Stanford emphasises most beats with a bass note, in true Elgar fashion, though at bars 45 and 46 the composer most obviously evoked is not so much Elgar as (yet again) Franck. The emotional and

²⁹ The phraseology is Schiller's, from his 'Song of the Bells': 'I summon the living, I mourn the dead' (in Schiller's original Latin, *Vivos voco, mortuos plango*). France's Jean Jaurès invoked Schiller's words in a much-publicised anti-war speech that he gave to a conference of his fellow socialists at Basel during 1912, two years before his opposition to European war led to his murder in a Paris café.

political implications, in a Great War context, of Franck's Belgian birth hardly need underlining.

Example 70: Op. 151 (second movement), bars 38–46

A few bars later (once the music has quietened down) comes a right-hand passage which, based as it is on an arpeggiated C major triad, suggests – of all things – a bugle call. Possibly Stanford intended here to prepare the listener for his lavish use, in the finale, of the *Marseillaise*. Such cross-referencing would occur with subsequent Stanford sonatas.

Example 71: Op. 151 (second movement), bars 47–58

Following this, the movement's opening material is repeated at the original tempo and in the original E flat major, though with richer textures and with a running pedal-board commentary in semiquavers. As before, the music sidesteps briefly to G flat major; but this time the allusion to the *Marseillaise* is explicit. Specifically, the right hand's topmost notes at bars 85–87 form the same melodic progression which, in the original, is set to the words 'Marchons, marchons! Qu'un sang impur'.

Example 72: Op. 151 (second movement), bars 80–90

The musical score for Example 72, Op. 151 (second movement), bars 80–90, is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 80 to 82. It features a piano accompaniment with a running semiquaver pedal in the bass. The right hand has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes at bar 85. The score includes dynamic markings like *pp* and performance instructions such as 'Soft Ch. Reed.', 'without Reeds.', 'Sw.', and 'rall'. Bar numbers 80, 82, 85, and 87 are indicated.

Shortly after finishing the sonata as a whole, Stanford devised orchestral arrangements of this movement and the finale, though not of the first movement. With the orchestral version, both movements – instead of the finale alone, as in the organ score – are called 'Verdun.' Sir Landon Ronald, the principal at London's Guildhall School of Music, conducted the orchestral version's first (and, it seems, only) concert performance. This event occurred in January 1918 at the Royal Albert Hall.³⁰ Stanford's decision to bestow on the relevant movements the sumptuous, multi-coloured garments

³⁰ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 315. The organ score's title page contains the words 'The MARCH and FINALE are also arranged for Full Orchestra. Score and parts can be had from the Publishers.'

of post-Wagnerian instrumentation ensured that the music would reach – at least temporarily – a bigger public than the ranks of organ-recital devotees could provide.

That said, nowhere does the organ original resemble a mere sketch for symphonic treatment. The flamboyant semiquavers from the third bar, very obviously conceived with a keyboard instrument in mind, put paid to any such notions. (Indeed, the orchestral version differs much more markedly from the organ original than does the orchestral version of the *Adagio molto*.) Already Stanford emphasises the interval of a rising fourth which makes the *Marseillaise*'s opening so distinctive. Hence his decision to base the semiquaver passage upon iterations of G-A-D and, afterwards, E-F sharp-B (rather than deploying a straightforward G major triad or E minor triad in arpeggiated form). Hence, also, the rising fourth so noticeable in the pedal line at bar 6, and repeatedly echoed later in the movement.

Example 73: Op. 151 (third movement), bars 1–12

Allegro moderato. (♩ = circa 116)

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1-4) begins with a piano introduction marked 'Allegro moderato. (♩ = circa 116)'. It features a guitar (Gt.) and a full swell (Full Sw.) effect. The second system (bars 5-8) shows a semiquaver passage in the right hand and a rising fourth in the left hand. The third system (bars 9-12) continues the semiquaver passage and rising fourth motif.

Yet however many references Stanford makes to the French national anthem, he never allows it to become wearisome. It has been mentioned on an earlier page how in a later work, Op. 187 from 1922, he ran the risk of trying listeners' patience by letting himself perpetrate excessive reprises of Parry's *Intercessor* tune. Here he shows much greater artistic judiciousness. Rarely does he make the *Marseillaise* citations as obvious as, for example, Tchaikovsky did in the trumpet part at the climax to his *1812 Overture*. Instead, Stanford takes a bar here, a bar there, from his source and deploys that as the main subject for his argument, before doing the same with another *Marseillaise* motif. Again, the parallel with Strauss warrants acknowledging. Strauss described his latter-day structural methods to his librettist Stefan Zweig:

I can't get beyond short themes. But what I can do is to utilise such a theme, paraphrase it and extract everything that is in it, and I don't think there's anybody today who can match me at that.³¹

Op. 151's finale shows that Stanford, if he did not quite equal Strauss in sheer developmental resourcefulness, had come close. At times, he plays off different *Marseillaise* ideas against one another, as with the right hand's allusion to '*Contre nous de la tyrannie*,' which is followed straight away by the pedal proclamation – with an extra reed stop, at that – quoting '*Aux armes, citoyens!*' A certain piquancy attaches to Stanford the Tory monarchist basing the movement upon a republican national anthem with words unique in this genre for sheer bloodthirstiness.

³¹ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (Sydney: Cassell & Company, 1944), 249.

Example 74: Op. 151 (third movement), bars 35–40

35

Gt. Reeds off.

38

Gt. Sw.

with Reed. Reed off.

This is exultant music, which (especially in its orchestral dress) must have profoundly stirred its initial British hearers. Neither they nor Stanford knew the cost in human lives which the offensives and counter-offensives of Verdun had actually inflicted between February and December 1916. By the time that France's Second Army had battered, bludgeoned and bombardiered its way to a victory of sorts – parts of the battlefield had changed hands no fewer than sixteen times in the preceding ten months – the French death toll had reached 143,000, while the German death toll had reached 163,000. Of this extermination the British public, lulled by official censorship, suspected little or nothing. Likewise concealed from the British public was the scale of the ensuing French mutinies, which erupted only after more than a million French soldiers had perished since 1915. Knowing what we now know about these factors, we might well find it hard to enter into the spirit of bellicose triumphalism which actuated Stanford in 1917, with a fervour guaranteed by his civilian status. Possibly, nonetheless, the sheer distance in time which separates us from the European mayhem of over a century ago can lend to our view, if not enchantment, at any rate a certain detachment. It is not as if our own age has lacked civilians cheering on various purported military 'cakewalks.' And even the radical historicists among us can be forgiven for finding ourselves caught

up in the sheer excitement of Op. 151's closing bars, where Stanford slows the tempo (note the *Più lento* indication at bar 190) and for the first time allows the *Marseillaise* itself to ring forth unchallenged.

Example 75: Op. 151 (third movement), bars 187–198

The image shows a musical score for Example 75, Op. 151 (third movement), bars 187–198. The score is in G major and 2/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment and a solo reed part. The tempo is marked 'Più lento.' and 'rall.'. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'Full Gt.' and 'Full Gt. opied to Sw. closed.'.

6.4.3 Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 152, 'Britannica'³²

In the First Sonata, Stanford ignored the Great War. In the Second Sonata, he celebrated the Allied war effort unequivocally. In the Third Sonata (dating from November 1917 and published the following year by Stainer & Bell), he celebrated it more obliquely. The title is of self-evidently patriotic import; and by November 1917, British patriotism needed all the outside reinforcement that it could obtain.

Since July, the Battle of Passchendaele – also known as the Third Battle of Ypres – had been grinding on with no apparent result except death tolls that, even if we accept the *lowest* estimates proffered by historians, amounted to at least 200,000 on each side. In Russia, Alexander Kerensky's provisional and increasingly notional government, having taken the bitterly disputed decision to remain faithful to Russia's allies, collapsed ignominiously on 6–7 November when defied by militant Bolshevism. Few British observers, however knowledgeable, recognised the full import and peril of this collapse. A more immediate cause for British fear came with Italy's calamitous defeat

³² The front page of this sonata's original edition misidentifies the work as Op. 151! Inept typographers, like the poor, will always be with us.

(19 November) at the Battle of Caporetto, by the newly resurgent Central Powers. Not only did 10,000 Italian troops lose their lives, but more than a quarter of a million other Italian troops abjectly surrendered rather than endure the punitive discipline of their commander-in-chief Luigi Cadorna.

Ten days after the Italian army's wreckage, a letter from Lord Lansdowne, the former British Foreign Secretary, appeared in *The Daily Telegraph's* pages. The Tory peer predicted that the prolongation of war 'will spell ruin for the civilised world.' (His laments for European civilisation as a whole echoed, almost certainly by accident, the encyclical *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum* which Pope Benedict XV had issued in November 1915.) The public outrage caused by this letter, even though Lord Lansdowne had abjured pacifism in the document and had reaffirmed his desire for an Allied victory, sufficed to indicate how different a country Britain had become in the space of three and a half years.³³

Yet perhaps a still more striking instance of how completely the old Europe had vanished – and an instance with more direct relevance to Stanford's aims – took place much earlier in the year than the Lansdowne Letter. On 17 July, jingoistic pressure moved King George V to renounce his dynastic name (which was Wettin, although the dynasty was more often known as the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha) and to adopt the impeccably English-sounding cognomen Windsor instead.³⁴

King George had so much Teutonic blood coursing through his veins, thanks to both sides of his family tree, that in 1917 – and in particular after the Romanovs'

³³ Cf. Aldous Huxley's acidulous 1946 comments, in a new edition of *Brave New World*: 'For the last thirty years there have been no conservatives; there have been only nationalistic radicals of the right and nationalistic radicals of the left. The last conservative statesman was the fifth Marquess of Lansdowne; and when he wrote a letter to the *Times*, suggesting that the First World War should be concluded with a compromise, as most of the wars of the eighteenth century had been, the editor of that once conservative journal refused to print it. The nationalistic radicals had their way, with the consequences that we all know – Bolshevism, Fascism, inflation, depression, Hitler, the Second World War, the ruin of Europe and all but universal famine.'

³⁴ Mark Pearsall, 'Wettin to Windsor: changing the royal name,' The National Archives, 17 July 2017 (<https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/wettin-windsor-changing-royal-name/>, accessed 26 May 2019), which also reveals that the suggestion 'Windsor' came from the King's private secretary Arthur John Bigge, Baron Stamfordham. The change occurred to the unconcealed disgust of a Bavarian nobleman, Count Albrecht von Montgelas, who earned himself a certain immortality through his complaint that 'the true royal tradition died on that day in 1917 when, for a mere war, King George V changed his name.' Kenneth Rose, *King George V* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), 175.

downfall – he understandably dreaded the consequences of holding out against nationalistic sentiment. By nature, and by conviction, he inclined towards lenity as far as the Germans were concerned. His biographer tells us:

[The King] objected to proposals that the Kaiser and his family should be deprived of their honorary commands of British regiments; that their Garter banners should be removed from St George's Chapel, Windsor; that they and all other enemies should be stripped of their honorary appointments to British orders of chivalry. For him, those pre-war exchanges of uniforms and ribands were part of history and should be left undisturbed.³⁵

Against the cautious, internationally minded monarch, there was ranged the full force of newspaper proprietors' chauvinist pressure, to say nothing of pressure on the domestic front. His adored mother, the Danish-born and Teutonophobic dowager Queen Alexandra, objected particularly to the banners remaining on display, and told him: 'It is but right and proper for you to have down those hateful German banners in our sacred Church.'³⁶ Unenthusiastically, the King ordered the 'hateful German banners' removed, fearing that if they had been left in their places, 'the people would have stormed the Chapel.'³⁷ (One historian, writing in 1952, called the King's actions 'an unworthy concession to popular hysteria,'³⁸ though an understandable concession, in view of the contempt with which Lloyd George greeted a summons to the kingly presence: 'I wonder,' the Prime Minister sneered to his secretary, 'what my little German friend has got to say to me.'³⁹)

At least calling the Royal Family 'Windsor' served as a British signal to the Central Powers that 'our Germans are better than your Germans.' (General Eisenhower benefited from a similar impulse in the next war; his family name had originally been Eisenhauer.) The monarchy's patriotic change of nomenclature reinforced, moreover, the King's riposte to H.G. Wells, who had bewailed in public Britain's 'alien and

³⁵ Rose, *George V*, 173.

³⁶ Rose, *George V*, 173.

³⁷ Rose, *George V*, 173.

³⁸ Charles Petrie, *Monarchy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Andrew Dakers Ltd., 1952), 97.

³⁹ Rose, *George V*, 175.

uninspiring' court. 'I may be uninspiring,' George V answered, 'but I'll be damned if I'm an alien.'⁴⁰

Not for nothing does the third, and last, movement of Stanford's Op. 152 take as its unequivocal thematic basis the hymn-tune titled *Hanover* (composed by William Croft in 1708, a year when Hanover's Electress Sophia was the nearest Protestant heir to the British throne).⁴¹ In Op. 152's opening movement, Stanford used a different hymn-tune: *St Mary*. This came from the earliest psalter ever to be published in the Welsh language: *Llyfr y Psalmiau*, issued in 1621 by Edmund Prys (1542?–1623), Anglican Archdeacon of Merioneth (or to give the Welsh form, *Meirionnydd*). Though Prys – whose surname is sometimes given as Price or Prees – certainly wrote the words, it is not clear whether he also composed this particular melody, a strong and attractive one. (Pioneering London bookseller and typographer John Playford became the first person to make the melody known outside Wales, when he included it in his 1677 publication *The Whole Book of Psalmes [sic]*.) *St Mary*, like rather a lot of hymn-tunes which fit Common Metre – in other words, which fit a stanza that alternates between eight-syllable and six-syllable lines – has suffered, at least outside Wales, from its failure to become popularly bound to any specific set of English-language words. Sometimes hymnals fasten it to a text that begins 'Adore and tremble, for our God'; sometimes to a text that begins 'O Lord, turn not Thy face from me'; and sometimes to a text (by eighteenth-century Baptist minister John Needham) that begins with the impressively intimidating lines 'Why are not sinners, Lord, consumed / By Thy avenging rod?'. The text goes on:

Long didst Thou bear a guilty world
With rapine filled, and blood;
Thy patience wished to have restrained
The wide destroying flood.

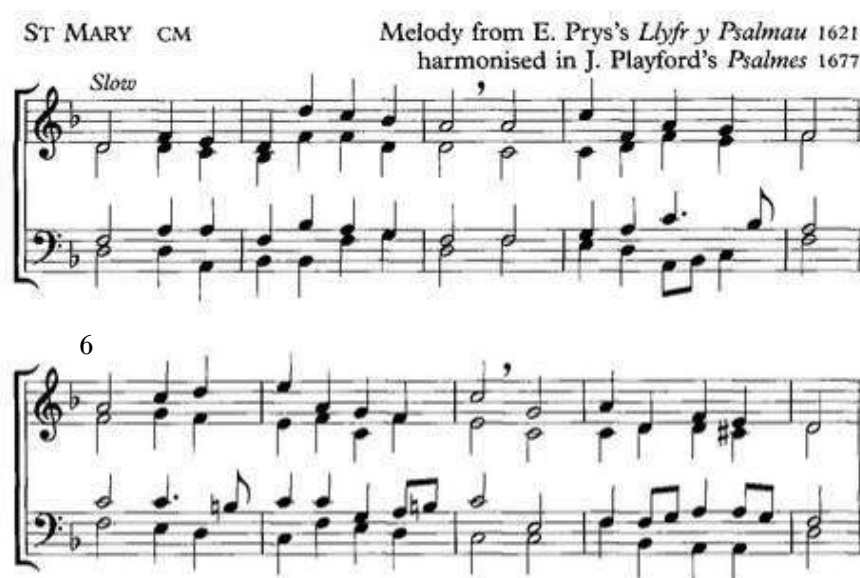
⁴⁰ Rose, *George V*, 175.

⁴¹ The Electress predeceased Queen Anne by two months, and on Anne's death in August 1714, the Electress's son George attained the British crown. In 1701 (during the reign of Anne's brother-in-law William III, whom she loathed), the Act of Settlement had excluded from the succession the person who, but for his Catholicism, would have been nearest in line: James II's son and namesake. Anne toyed with the idea of officially making the younger James her heir; but chronic vacillation, Machiavellian advisers, and the cumulative impact of seventeen pregnancies – none of her children survived her – robbed her of the will to do so.

Could even Sodom the impure
 Have named ten righteous men,
 Thy flaming sword, in sulphur dipped,
 Would have been sheathed again.

But the other texts, in their less dramatic fashion, are likewise petitionary.⁴² The modal tune seems to require contrite tones of literary voice. So does the tune's innate cragginess, which is evident through its upward-leaping octave near the start, as well as through its exposed downward-leaping fifth in the seventh bar.

Example 76: Hymn tune *St Mary*



Could Stanford have chosen a Welsh tune (and selected his sonata's title) through a deliberate desire to proclaim that the struggle against Wilhelm II was no merely English cause, but a Celtic cause also? In the absence of any remarks by Stanford himself on the topic, this interpretation must remain hypothetical. Still, it meets the known facts, and

⁴² Burgoyne declares that 'it is hard to imagine any other text fitting the music except that of [sic] which was composed by Cardinal John Henry Newman, the first verse of this Hymn beginning with the Creedal statement "Firmly I believe and truly, God is Three and God is One" (Burgoyne, 'Five Organ Sonatas,' 23). She supplies no evidence for this assertion, which, besides, is simply untrue. That hymn's stanzaic pattern does, admittedly, start with an eight-syllable line (the third line also has eight syllables), but its second and fourth lines are of seven syllables each. Newman's eight-syllable lines are trochaic; to accord with *St Mary*, they would need to be iambic. Besides, in 1917 churchgoers in Britain already associated Newman's verses (as, more than a hundred years later, they still associate them) with a tune by his co-religionist Elgar: namely, *Drake's Broughton*.

in particular it accords with the general lack of English enthusiasm for *St Mary*, Playford's and Needham's efforts notwithstanding. Subsequent pages will show how Stanford would openly refer to his Celtic heritage in his Fourth Sonata.

Besides, to the Stanford of late 1917, and to everyone else in the United Kingdom at the same date, Wales loomed large because of another reason altogether unrelated to church music. For in December 1916 'the Welsh Wizard,' Lloyd George, had driven Herbert Henry Asquith from the Prime Ministry. Lloyd George went on to prosecute the war effort with an unsparing ardour far beyond anything that the gentlemanly, irresolute, and increasingly alcoholic classicist Asquith (still mourning the death of his son Raymond on the Western Front) could manage. Events would prove that Lloyd George's determination to thwart Irish independence matched Stanford's own; and if the Tory Stanford had hopes of greater preferment at Lloyd George's hands than he had ever obtained from earlier Liberal leaders, he was hardly alone in that. Two Tory politicians identified with Ulster Protestantism, Andrew Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson, had been indispensable in backing 'the Welsh Wizard' and in forcing Asquith from power.

Whether or not Stanford had these concerns in the forefront of his thinking, the energy of his sonata's opening movement is unmistakable. The key of D minor – or, sometimes, D-Dorian, as with *In Modo Dorico* – moved Stanford (as it had moved the Mozart of *Don Giovanni's* overture, the Beethoven of the *Choral Symphony*, and the Mendelssohn of *Elijah's* opening) to a decided toughness and strenuousness. From the very start of Op. 152, the music is dominated by the original hymn's octave leap, and by no-nonsense clashing seconds (sometimes major, sometimes minor), so that the listener's attention is at once captured and held. Stanford's *con fuoco* marking – frequently to be found in his orchestral and chamber works⁴³ but otherwise absent from his organ works – indicates the composer's desire that the music should sound as virtuosic as possible, especially in the quaver flourishes which are meant to suggest improvisation. The pauses in bars 6, 9 and 15 add to the improvisatory atmosphere, and

⁴³ It occurs in the third movement of the Second Symphony; the finale of the Third Symphony; the Fourth *Irish Rhapsody*; *Down Among The Dead Men*, a set of piano-with-orchestra variations; the finale of the First Piano Trio; and the finale of the Seventh String Quartet.

they echo the dramatic pauses which can so often be found in organ fantasias of the Bach-Buxtehude type. Similarly dramatic is the way in which Stanford, at bar 10, cuts across the harmonic implications of the previous bar's leading-note-based diminished seventh (which leads hearers to expect a move back to D minor) and, instead, reiterates the opening theme a semitone lower. This gambit has the effect of temporarily but markedly disorienting the music's tonal sense.

Example 77: Op. 152 (first movement), bars 1–15

Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco.

MANUAL.

PEDAL.

7

10

St Mary's intervals proceed to dominate the movement, as the writing becomes ever more agitated, with the original leaping-octave figure returning in shorter note values than before, and this time *fortissimo* (from bar 32 ff). Stanford seems on the verge of modulating to E flat major, only to thwart this expectation with an abrupt halt. After this halt (from bar 43), we are taken to a suddenly peaceful F major, and the metre changes from compound time to simple time. The F major passage – based, in its first notes, on the second line of the hymn-tune – does not last long, though, since within eight bars it has given way to G minor.

Example 78: Op. 152 (first movement), bars 43–51

43

p Sw.

Ch.

p

48

soft Reed.

Still the music echoes fragments – frequently combined with one another – of the original tune. Again, it conjures up the extempore spirit. The accompanimental quavers (in the pedal part as well as on the manuals) denote this spirit; and so, rather more strikingly, does the outburst of semiquavers after the movement's initial figure is once more recalled.

Example 79: Op. 152 (first movement), bars 77–84

77

Animato

81

Thereafter Stanford alternates between $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{12}{8}$, introducing little new material, but rather, thoroughly exploring the implications of the existing material. Near the end of the movement, the F major motif returns, this time in a serene D major; yet this serenity does not have, as one might have expected, the final word. Instead, the movement's last bars – grim and dramatic – are mainly in the original D minor, with a suitably ecclesiastical final phrase based on *St Mary's* ending, although a Picardy third dominates the very end.

Example 80: Op. 152 (first movement), bars 192–205

192

Full Sw. (open)

Solo Reed

Solo.

Sw.

Gl.

196

201

Affixed to the second movement (*Larghetto*) is the title *Benedictus*; but contrary to what one might infer from this title, Stanford seems not to have been thinking of any identifiable plainchant, as opposed to a more general invocation of beatific calm. Examining the various *Benedictus* settings that are included in the *Liber Usualis* – which was accorded its first modern edition in 1896 – reveals no phrase corresponding to any theme in this movement.⁴⁴ The composer's use of a repeated minor third at the start is at

⁴⁴ On this point I am indebted to Mr Hugh Henry for his expertise concerning plainchant in general, and the *Liber Usualis* in particular.

least as likely to refer to the fourth-last and third-last bars of the previous movement, as it is to any chant. On the other hand, the five-note quaver figure of which this Larghetto makes plentiful use does call to mind a Stainer composition: that is to say, the opening *Andante* from *Six Pieces for the Organ*, the earlier of two books which Stainer published under that name (this first book appeared in 1897). The boxes indicate where the overlap is.

Example 81: (a) Sir John Stainer, *Andante*, bars 1–11; (b) Stanford, Op. 152 (second movement), bars 1–8

(a)

Andante (♩ = 88)

Sw. *p*

Soft 16' coupled to Sw.

6

Gl.

Gl. to Ped

(b)

Larghetto.

Sw. Soft Reed.

MANUAL.

p

Ch.

PEDAL.

p

5

Ch.

rall.

Sw.

a tempo

Whether Stanford meant, by having used this five-note figure, to make a deliberate allusion to Stainer – let alone to pay a conscious tribute to the older man – is uncertain. He owed Stainer (who had died in 1901) a debt in career terms, since in 1800 Stainer had commissioned from him one of his earliest liturgical works, the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in A*, Op. 12. The publishing firm Stainer & Bell, which issued so much of Stanford's output in all forms, had been founded by Sir John himself. What is more, Stainer's *Six Pieces* attained considerable popularity among organists in the decades following 1897. Stanford is not actually known to have possessed a copy of the *Six Pieces*, and his own dealings with Stainer had been polite rather than warm. (He explicitly, and reasonably, rated Stainer's creative gifts below Parry's.)⁴⁵ Still, the melodic parallel, if inadvertent, is striking enough to justify mention here.

The tranquillity of the opening gives way at bar 36 to a more intense *Più mosso* section. This section – thanks to its use of aspirational sequences – shares something of the Elgarian character that marked the previous sonata's slow movement. In the pedals, there might also be a conscious hint of Mendelssohn, since probably the most distinctive single part of Mendelssohn's often-played Sixth Organ Sonata is the variation (in the first movement) dominated by the pedal part's staccato quavers.

⁴⁵ When Ouseley died in 1889, Stanford wanted to see the Oxford music professorship go, not to Stainer, but to Parry. To Tennyson's friend Francis Turner Palgrave (best known for his anthology of English verse), Stanford explained: 'I cannot resist writing you a line, as I see you are one of the board of Arts at Oxford, asking you in the name of all that is right and proper in music to forward Hubert Parry's interests (for the sake of Oxford) in the matter of the Professorship of Music. I know he will do nothing himself because of his loyalty to his old friendship for Stainer: and I also have the very highest regard for Stainer: but all the same the world 50 years hence won't understand Stainer having been made Professor, when Parry was there to be made it. Anymore than they would understand if Beethoven and Spohr were candidates, the selection of Spohr in preference to Beethoven.' Quoted in Dibble, *Stainer*, 250-251. In fact, Stainer won the post.

Example 82: Op. 152 (second movement), bars 34–41

A climactic fortissimo section (the composer calls for Great and Swell manuals to be coupled, seeking a more penetrating sonority than would otherwise be available) is based on the same rising arpeggios which have proven to be so important in the *Più mosso* material. Unusually, Stanford directs the player to add a 16-foot Swell stop – as well as a much more conventional 8-foot Swell stop – at bar 106.⁴⁶ Only with Stanford’s return to the original relaxed tempo does the Stainer-echoing five-note figure resume a large role (maybe, given the repetitions to which Stanford has already subjected it, too large a role) in the proceedings. The motif acquires an increasing modulatory enterprise, moving from G flat major, to the B flat major tonic, then to A flat minor, then – via a beautiful, and decidedly Schubertian, A-flat-to-G-sharp enharmonic manoeuvre – to E major.⁴⁷ Subsequently it makes its way to B flat minor and, ultimately, to the initial B flat major. With one last reference to the *Più mosso* section, and its staccato pedal quavers, all is restfully concluded.

⁴⁶ ‘The full swell’, Stanford wrote in 1911, ‘is a fascinating sound, [but] it must be used as a contrast only, and a rare contrast too’ (Stanford, *Musical Composition*, 109).

⁴⁷ Within the theory of harmonic analysis propounded by Leipzig professor Hugo Riemann in his 1887 treatise *Handbuch der Harmonielehre*, the enharmonic relationship between chords a third apart is known as a *Leittonwechsel*. Riemann’s pupils included Reger, who (particularly in his organ works) demonstrated a marked fondness for precisely such enharmonic key-changes. For a possible reference to Reger on Stanford’s part, see below, in Section 6.4.4.

Breezily dispelling the *Larghetto's* peace is the forthright start to the third movement, which Stanford has marked *Allegro molto e ritmico*. No metronome indication is given, but here is one instance where such an indication on Stanford's part would have been extremely useful, if only to remove the existing uncertainty as to how much the *ritmico* should qualify the *Allegro molto*.

Example 83: Op. 152 (third movement), bars 1–18

Allegro molto e ritmico.

Any reader conversant with the Croft *Hanover* melody will notice how Stanford begins quoting it in his very first phrase. There is hardly a single bar of the movement – and there is certainly no bar in the opening section – which cannot be, ultimately, traced back to Croft's tune.

Pavilioned in splendour,
And girded with praise.

O tell of His might
And sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light,
Whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath
The deep thunder-clouds form.
And dark is His path
On the wings of the storm.

Thy bountiful care,
What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light;
It streams from the hills,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
In the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust,
And feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust,
Nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies, how tender,
How firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer and Friend!

O measureless might,
Unchangeable love,
Whom angels delight
To worship above!
Thy ransomed creation,
With glory ablaze,
In true adoration
Shall sing to Thy praise!

This textual ecumenism must be stressed here, if only because Stanford – favouring as he did the British Empire – shared, by this attitude alone, the general awareness of the Empire (and of the monarchical principle more generally) as, at least in potential, transcending ethnicity *and religion*. If the Empire failed to constitute such a means of

transcendence in actuality, it was not for want of trying. Modern readers cannot examine either Kipling's prose or Kipling's verse without becoming newly aware of how much most imperial officials disliked involving themselves with making theological distinctions in any context. Provided that a subject of the Empire remained loyal to the Empire itself, and to its sovereign, it mattered little in authority's eyes whether he or she happened to be Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, or Zoroastrian.⁴⁹ Defenders of the Empire emphasised that very fact. They feared that without the Empire's overlordship, Hindus and Muslims in South Asia would be at each other's throats. The carnage attendant upon Indo-Pakistani Partition in 1947 made it difficult for posterity to say with confidence that this fear was excessive. But in 1947 Stanford had been twenty-three years dead; and his immediate concern in 1917, as has become obvious already and will be noted again afterwards, was trying to prevent similar mayhem among Catholics versus Protestants in British-ruled Ireland.

The imperial military effort against the Central Powers could at least, Stanford hoped, subsume the Emerald Isle's sectarian differences in the common aim of trouncing the Kaiser. (France had recently surprised foreigners through bringing about subsuming of exactly that kind. No outside observer could have predicted such a grand rapprochement on the strength of France's existential conflicts during the generation before 1914, conflicts which had amounted to a low-level civil war: the late 1880s' Boulanger Affair, the late 1890s' Dreyfus Affair, and the 1905 governmental enforcement of *laïcité*. Yet in the French army of 1917, the most passionate Catholics and the most passionate anti-Catholics shared the same trenches and the same hardships. They discovered that they all bled alike.)

⁴⁹ Kipling's own most obvious tribute to this phenomenon is his 1894 poem 'The Mother Lodge,' in which he paid homage to his own experiences of Freemasonry in British-ruled India. It includes these lines: 'We'd Bola Nath, accountant, / An' Saul the Aden Jew, / An' Din Mohammad, draughtsman / Of the Survey Office too; / There was Babu Chuckerbutty / An' Amir Singh the Sikh, / An' Castro from the fittin' sheds, / The Roman Catholick!' This last line suggests that official Vatican sanctions against Lodge membership were as ineffectual in Lahore (where Kipling joined the Masons) as in many other parts of the world.

Hence, surely, Stanford's choice of a hymn like *Hanover*, with its text's mostly non-specific monotheism, as the raw material for Stanford's argument.⁵⁰ That nearly all of *Hanover's* text proclaims God's majesty ('O worship the *King*'), and not His compassion – let alone whatever transient emotions individual mortals might have concerning Him – should also be noted, given that George V was theoretically still chief of the armed forces.

There can be no overlooking *Hanover's* contours in any part of the movement, but fortunately, this is another example of Stanford avoiding the tedium that comes with unsubtle repetition. Burgoyne's remark that the movement, 'although it is sixteen pages long, presents little in new or innovative ideas'⁵¹ is accurate enough as far as the overall structure goes, but it would be regrettable if such a remark were thought to mean a lack of ingenuity on Stanford's part. At various points Stanford shows considerable canniness in implying more polyphony than is actually present. He does so by quoting the same phrase at intervals of a fourth (as per the upbeats to bars 67 and 74), accompanied by agitated quaver passagework in the left hand.

⁵⁰ Eisenhower's famous utterance from 1952, voiced between his first election and his first inauguration, is relevant here: 'Our form of government,' he said of his compatriots, 'has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith – and I don't care what it is!' Historians have disagreed as to Eisenhower's motive for this comment, and have variously attributed it to cynicism, prudence, fundamental humility, or fundamental banality. But something like these words must have occurred to every commander-in-chief of international forces where more than one religion is permitted.

⁵¹ Burgoyne, 'Five Organ Sonatas,' 25.

Example 85: Op. 152 (third movement), bars 62–77

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system, starting at bar 62, features a piano accompaniment with a treble staff containing a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system, starting at bar 68, introduces a guitar (Gt.) and a snare drum (Sw.) part. The third system, starting at bar 74, continues the piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The phrase most systematically developed in the movement is the rising major scale that, in the first verse of *Hanover*, is set to the words ‘Pavilioned in splendour.’ Often with earlier Stanford’s pieces based on a pre-existing theme, one has to wait until near the end before the use of the theme as a whole becomes so obvious that even the least attentive hearer will register it. So with this finale. The aforementioned ‘teleological genesis’ is again operative, particularly when the climax unmistakably asserts (aided by a left-hand Reed solo) the hymn’s opening bars.

Example 86: Op. 152 (third movement), bars 198–206

198

202

[Solo Reed.]

[Gt.]

As Berlioz and Ravel understood, rapid modulations in a climactic passage are a sure means of keeping audiences alert. Stanford demonstrates this truth here, particularly when (bars 301–306) a timpani-like pedal line reinforces the tonic D against tonally restive manual chords. A pedal solo, based on a descending first-inversion dominant seventh, adds to the prevalent exuberance. The concluding phrases echo the very first phrase's hemiola rhythm, as well as the hymn-tune's final two bars. They bring to a suitably vivacious close a sonata that, taken as a whole, might not be among Stanford's very deepest creations but is unquestionably among his liveliest ones.

6.4.4 Sonata No. 4 in C Minor, Op. 153, 'Celtica'

Stanford's central political conviction – one could call it his central spiritual conviction also – was a belief in the fundamental indissolubility of Irish civilisation and English civilisation. It would be misleading to contend that Stanford harboured (to quote a gibe that would attain great twentieth-century currency on both sides of the Atlantic) 'dual allegiances.' Rather, where Britain was concerned, he harboured a *single* allegiance, culturally bifurcated.

Accordingly, Stanford viewed the entire notion of Irish Home Rule as a disaster in the making. He never forgave or forgot the *volte-face* by which Gladstone, during the second (1880–1885) of his four terms as Prime Minister, jettisoned his long-standing opposition to Home Rule and declared himself a convert to it. Francis Jenkinson – Jennie Stanford’s brother-in-law, and a man known to the composer ever since Cambridge student days – reported in 1885 that Stanford had taught his small daughter Geraldine (then a mere two years old) to say repeatedly the words ‘Gladstone is a traitor.’⁵²

Not content with having conscripted his younger child to disseminate such domestic agitprop, Stanford inveighed – in the correspondence pages of *The Times* during early 1914 – against a fellow Protestant: Erskine Childers, whose novel *The Riddle of the Sands* had become a best-seller. Childers dismissed as ‘delightfully old-fashioned’⁵³ Stanford’s attitude to Hibernian politics. This taunting further enraged the composer, who assured *Times* readers:

The fact is that Ireland does not want Home Rule ... the farmers who have purchased their land dread it ... The priests are sitting on the stile ... The dreamers and the schemers are the only Irish supporters of the bill. If it were dropped tomorrow there would be a sigh of relief from the Giant’s Causeway to Valentia ... The true feeling of Ireland was voiced this week by an Irish Railway Porter [*capitals in original*] from Limerick, a nationalist and a Roman Catholic who said to me: ‘What are they doing with us all? Why can’t they leave us alone?’⁵⁴

Solemnly Stanford cautioned that both in Ireland and in India, any withdrawal of British military force would ensure civil conflict. That in both instances his warning proved to be far-sighted did not make the warning easier for his opponents to tolerate. In 1913 Sir Charles had proclaimed his anti-Home-Rule sympathies in a less direct manner, through his *Fourth Irish Rhapsody* (subtitled ‘The Fisherman of Lough Neagh and what he saw’), which bears as epigraph a line from Tennyson’s *The Princess*, this line possessing obvious relevance (unintended by its author) to the Ulster situation: ‘Dark and true and tender is the North.’ Vaughan Williams’s biographer James Day, in

⁵² Quoted in Rodmell, *Stanford*, 131.

⁵³ Childers to *The Times*, 1 April 1914, 9; quoted in Rodmell, *Stanford*, 285–286.

⁵⁴ Stanford to *The Times*, 9 April 1914, 10; quoted in Rodmell, *Stanford*, 285–286.

1999, ranked the *Rhapsody* as ‘one of the few “Irish” works where he [Stanford] allowed his political views to come to the surface ... also one of his most deeply felt, most individual and most moving.’⁵⁵

Stanford, in publicly upbraiding Childers as he did and when he did, exhibited considerable recklessness. Already the Curragh Mutiny had broken out in County Kildare, location of the main Irish headquarters for the British Army. The mutiny’s leaders announced that rather than take up arms against their fellow Ulster Protestants (as the Asquith administration, determined to grant Home Rule in some form or other, was intending that the mutineers be forced to do), they would resign their commissions or endure being dishonourably discharged. They would almost certainly have carried out their threat if the Great War had not intervened. Since it did intervene, Asquith found himself forced to shelve all Home Rule plans in practice – a Home Rule Bill did become law in theory during September 1914 – while Continental hostilities dominated the agenda of his government.

That government depended for its survival in the House of Commons upon the backing of the Irish Parliamentary Party, led since 1900 by the moderate (and Catholic) John Redmond, who gave to Asquith and to the British war campaign his full support. ‘Let Irishmen come together in the trenches,’ the sanguine Redmond proclaimed, ‘and risk their lives together and spill their blood together, and I say there is no power on earth that when they come home can induce them to turn as enemies upon one another.’⁵⁶ (In such utterances, Redmond made the widespread mistake – one shared with those possessing far greater military expertise than he – of assuming that Britain would be swiftly victorious. As early as November 1915 he insisted that ‘so far as the western front is concerned, Germany is beaten.’)⁵⁷

⁵⁵ James Day, *‘Englishness’ in Music: From Elizabethan Times to Elgar, Tippett and Britten* (London: Thames Publishing, 1999), 180; for a much longer discussion of the *Fourth Irish Rhapsody*, see Christopher Scheer, ‘For the Sake of the Union: The Nation in Stanford’s *Fourth Irish Rhapsody*,’ in Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (eds.), *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 159–169.

⁵⁶ Joseph P. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity: 1912–1918* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 101.

⁵⁷ Finnan, *Redmond*, 101.

The political tactlessness which Stanford showed in his newspaper skirmish with Childers, he exhibited anew elsewhere. He took to boasting in such a way as to give the entirely bogus impression of having acquired top-secret strategic knowledge. In September 1914 he sent, to the long-suffering Plunket Greene, a postcard which said: 'A letter from the Provost Marshal on _____'s staff came to _____ yesterday saying that we are to "be of good cheer" and that he has such good news he must not say what it is. This from a Boss at Headquarters.'⁵⁸ Any rumours – however fanciful – about the war's progress which Stanford heard, he promptly passed on to Parry and other RCM colleagues, with (as Parry, more amused than awed by such gossip, put it) 'the air of their being the latest from headquarters ...!'⁵⁹ Sometimes, we are told, Stanford 'imagined that these reports were meant to be secret, and so he relayed them in Greek.'⁶⁰

In reality, Stanford knew no more and no less about the battlefield than did any other newspaper-reader during the first months of a war which, before the Western Front's stalemate, was widely and optimistically expected to be 'over by Christmas.' He remained singularly free from that prudence which would inspire a slogan prominent on British posters during the 1939–1945 conflict: 'Careless talk costs lives.' The idea that careless civilian talk might indeed cost soldiers' lives had either never occurred to the Stanford of 1914 or, supposing it had occurred to him, never struck him as a needful constraint on his own behaviour.

But if in numerous military respects Stanford was too outspoken for his own good, in others he observed unusual discretion. This discretion has special bearing upon the *Celtica* (dedicated 'to my friend Harold Darke'), which possesses good claims to primacy among the five sonatas because of its passion and zest. Rodmell, it is true, showed little enthusiasm for it, or for the Fifth Sonata, insisting that 'neither work tapped an inspired vein, though they both include imposing writing.'⁶¹ By contrast,

⁵⁸ Plunket Greene, *Stanford*, 268.

⁵⁹ Dibble, *Stanford*, 421.

⁶⁰ Norris, *Stanford*, 561.

⁶¹ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 315.

John F. Porte – writing in 1921, during Stanford’s lifetime – hailed the *Celtica* in a veritable debauch of Woodrow Wilson-type prose:

This is a magnificent work, stirring in its strength of character and Celtic romanticism. Its spirit is of the open air, keen and pure from the mountains. The fire of true inspiration runs through it, ranging in mood from the tender and intimate to the strong and invigorating. ... Its beauty and feeling is [*sic*] elemental, and full of the romanticism and eloquence of the Celt ... it is in the *Celtica* that the flame of inspiration is at its greatest ... the *Celtica* has the elemental fire and inimitable wild beauty of the Celtic spirit and surroundings.⁶²

Predictably, Stanford refused to give details of any exact non-musical meaning that he could have intended for the work. As mentioned earlier, he increasingly associated such verbiage with the hyper-descriptive Strauss of *Don Quixote* and the *Domestica*.⁶³

With a man as talkative, bellicose and extroverted as Stanford, what he does *not* say is often at least as instructive as what he does say. On the topic of the Easter Rising that turned Dublin into a slaughterhouse during April 1916 (‘a Passion Play with real blood,’ as Irish historian and cabinet minister Conor Cruise O’Brien scathingly called it),⁶⁴ the voluble Hibernian tongue of Sir Charles remained strangely silent. It is worth considering the hypothesis that inasmuch as Stanford voiced any feelings on the issue, he did so through the indirect means of the *Sonata Celtica*.

The *Celtica* is a mystifying work in several respects. Completed in January 1918,⁶⁵ it is a curious blend of regular Stanford features with techniques that he rarely if ever elsewhere used. From the very first page there is one feature most unexpected in Stanford. Namely, the repeated use of trills, at which he worries away like a dog fretting over a bone.

⁶² Porte, *Stanford*, 115–116.

⁶³ Probably Stanford never encountered Mahler’s dictum, as expressed to Berlin critic Max Marschalk: ‘I know for myself, so long as I can sum up my experience in words, I would certainly not make any music from it (*Ich weiss für mich, dass ich, solange ich mein Erlebnis in Worten zusammenfassen kann, gewiss keine Musik hierüber machen würde*). Yet Stanford subscribed closely enough to the idea that motivated Mahler’s aphorism. Herta Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler: Briefe* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 1996), 171.

⁶⁴ Patrick West, ‘Why Ireland’s idealists turned into gunmen,’ *The Catholic Herald* (14 April 2016): 10.

⁶⁵ Porte incorrectly gives (*Stanford*, 115) 1920 as the year of the *Sonata Celtica*’s production. Similarly, ‘1921’, as indicated (*Stanford*, 120) by Porte for the Fifth Sonata’s date, is incorrect. That also was finished prior to the war’s end.

Example 87: Op. 153 (first movement), bars 1–10

Allegro molto moderato.

MANUAL. *Gt. mf*
coupled to Full Sw.

PEDAL.

4

8

To say that such trills are otherwise completely unknown in Stanford's organ music would be wrong. (They can be found in Op. 182 No. 5: see Example 28 above.) Yet the lavish trilling here, which Harry Wilkinson deplored,⁶⁶ is atypical. Could it contain a coded message? Long and menacing trills do occur with great frequency in Reger, who had died in the very year of the Easter Rising.⁶⁷ Although Stanford did not have the slightest enthusiasm for Reger's organ works, one of his colleagues evangelised a good deal on Reger's behalf: namely Parratt, who had been the first Englishman to interest himself consistently in Reger's organ output, and in Karg-Elert's, and in Franck's.⁶⁸ Given that Stanford and Parratt were employed in the same building (and that, as mentioned earlier, Stanford periodically stayed with Parratt at Windsor to escape air-

⁶⁶ 'The over-use of the trill weakens, to a great extent, the first movement of the *Celtica Organ Sonata No. 4*, which is generally considered the best of the group of five ... the trills around a diminished-seventh chord sound almost absurd.' Wilkinson, *Stanford*, Vol. 1, 145.

⁶⁷ Not, obviously, that Reger had been the only recent composer to preoccupy himself with trills. Debussy's *L'Île Joyeuse* and Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance* both incorporate prominent trills as structural devices rather than mere ornaments. But trills were rare in Germany's pre-Reger organ literature: Bach, for example, confined them to the role of occasional expressive aids; and Mendelssohn generally avoided them.

⁶⁸ Harold E. Darke, 'Sir Walter Parratt as Teacher,' *RCM Magazine* 20:2 (Easter 1924), 52–54, at 53.

raids), it is at the very least possible that Stanford encountered some of Reger's scores through Parratt. In view of Stanford's anti-German passion from 1914 onward, he might have meant those organ trills as a rude gesture at the recently dead Reger's expense.⁶⁹

Whether or not this interpretation be valid, there is no shortage of Teutonic character in the movement as a whole. Burgoyne understandably mentions similarities between the movement and Rheinberger's idiom, her enthusiasm for conveying these similarities leading her to burst into italics: *'This reminds us again that no composer lives in isolation, or is ignorant of historical models and as such they are therefore all musically related. ... It is astonishing how Stanford can move from Germanic counterpoint (as Rheinberger) to an English Choral music style so imperceptibly and quickly in a few measures.'*⁷⁰

No particular Irish or, indeed, anti-German sentiment governs the *Celtica's* middle movement, entitled *Tema con variazioni*. This name proves rather misleading, because rather than write a set of variations with obvious beginnings and endings, Stanford prefers to develop particular ideas from the theme in a continuous musical discussion. The initial three-note figure plays an ever more important role as the movement progresses. Instructive is the tempo indication at the beginning; Stanford deliberately avoids the potential for contrasting mood which a slow central movement would have granted.

⁶⁹ For the hypothesis of a possible Reger-Parry connection, see Graham Barber, 'Parallels between the organ chorales of C. Hubert H. Parry and Max Reger,' *Musikgeschichte in Mittel- und Osteuropa* 18 (2017), 149–163. Barber mentions in his essay (152–153) the fact that as early as January 1894 a British magazine, the *Monthly Musical Record*, favourably reviewed Reger's Op. 7 *Drei Orgelstücke*; but he admits the conjectural nature of his conclusions, since 'there is no evidence that Parry knew Reger's organ works' (158).

⁷⁰ Burgoyne, 'Five Organ Sonatas,' 25.

Example 88: Op. 153 (second movement), bars 1–8

Even when the metre changes (first to $\frac{6}{4}$, then back to $\frac{4}{4}$), the tactus remains unaltered. Stanford directs that the $\frac{6}{4}$ section's dotted minims be kept at the same speed as the first section's minims, while the reversion to $\frac{4}{4}$ requires that the preceding music's crotchets have the same relationship to the second $\frac{4}{4}$ passage's quavers. Throughout, the atmosphere is of an unexpected *Gemütlichkeit*, since the opening resembles a Mendelssohn song without words, not to mention the famous *Adagio cantabile* (likewise in A flat major) from Beethoven's *Pathétique*. If Stanford really had wished to warn his public against the depredations of German culture, he was going about the task in a peculiar fashion. For Burgoyne, there is a German analogue here as well as in the preceding movement: she mentions⁷¹ Reger's Op. 73 *Variations on an Original Theme*, which likewise takes a symphonic rather than sectional approach to the variation genre.

As for the *Celtica's* finale, it proclaims the zeal of Stanford's love for his birthplace. The Irish tune *St Patrick's Breastplate*, which Stanford had done more than anyone else to popularise, is heard unmistakably at the very start. To reinforce the message, Stanford actually wrote the title 'St Patrick's Breastplate' on the sheet music.

⁷¹ Burgoyne, 'Five Organ Sonatas,' 25.

Example 89: Op. 153 (third movement), bars 1–15

III.
St Patrick's Breastplate.

Allegro maestoso.

f *G* coupled to *S*.

6

11

The image shows a musical score for 'St Patrick's Breastplate' in three systems. The first system starts with the tempo marking 'Allegro maestoso.' and a dynamic marking '*f*'. A performance instruction '*G* coupled to *S*.' is written above the first staff. The score is in 3/4 time and features a complex texture with multiple voices in the upper register and a steady bass line. The second system begins at bar 6, and the third system begins at bar 11. The notation includes various chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines across three staves.

A few pages later, we hear – also unmistakably – another Irish theme: *Gartan* (which is traditionally associated in Britain with *St. Patrick's Breastplate*, at the point where the words totally change their meter, though in America and Australia congregations tend to use the *Deirdre* tune instead). Stanford had already employed *Gartan* in an earlier organ composition: Opus 105 No. 5. Here, though, he treats the theme more elaborately and with greater abandon.

Example 90: Op. 153 (third movement), bars 53–62

53
(♩ = quasi ♩. ma poc piu mosso.)

58

We can but guess as to what, if anything, Stanford thought about the fate of his adversary Childers in post-independence Ireland. So horrified was the new Irish government by the murder (August 1922) of Michael Collins, that it passed an emergency law decreeing the death penalty for any Irish citizen who possessed a firearm without specific permission from the police. Childers owned a 32-calibre semi-automatic pistol that he had neglected to register. There could only be one punishment for Childers, who by this time had become so distrusted as to inspire suspicions that he had been a British agent from the beginning. In Dublin, on 24 November, Childers faced a firing squad. His final gestures, even after a lapse of almost a century, are hard to contemplate without emotion. He shook the hand of each member of the firing squad in turn; and he then told them all: 'Take a step or two forward, lads. It will be easier that

way.⁷² During his last days on death row, he commanded his son – Erskine Childers Junior, the future Irish President – to track down, and to shake the hands of, every single official who had signed the execution warrant.

Stanford avoided baring his soul in either letters or private journals. As Dibble said of him: ‘He did not keep a diary (as far as is known) and much of the day-to-day correspondence was evidently discarded.’⁷³ All that can be offered here, by way of interpretation, is that the *Celtica* stands among his most fervent works for any medium. Its ardour makes especially unmerited James Day’s belittling verdict on most of Stanford’s creations:

Stanford’s Irish nationalism generally failed to achieve more than pretty-pretty local colouring superimposed on a thoroughly Brahmsian idiom, simply because it was basically the genteel and purely cultural rebellion of a musician born into the protestant [*sic*] Anglicised professional middle classes.⁷⁴

By the time Stanford died, the melancholy fate that he had predicted for his homeland had occurred. The departure of British troops had resulted, not in the outbreak of universal brotherhood that certain Irish spokesmen had euphorically prophesied before they had attained power, but in civil war nasty and vicious even by the standards of other twentieth-century internecine battles. It is strange that so little commentary upon Stanford has even attempted to weigh the impact of such battles upon his psyche. Although Massachusetts musicologist Aaron C. Keebaugh, in his 2011 doctoral dissertation on Irish music,⁷⁵ devoted his entire third chapter to Stanford⁷⁶ – and elsewhere in the dissertation alluded to the Fourth *Irish Rhapsody*⁷⁷ – he made no mention of Sir Charles’s possible reactions to the 1916 tragedy. Yet the Rising and its disastrous outcome must have aggravated Stanford’s problems as an outsider in his

⁷² C. D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870–1914* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1987), 32.

⁷³ Dibble, *Stanford*, viii.

⁷⁴ Day, *Englishness*, 180.

⁷⁵ Aaron C. Keebaugh, *Irish Music and Home-Rule Politics, 1800–1922* (PhD diss., University of Florida, Gainesville, 2011).

⁷⁶ Keebaugh, *Irish Music*, 110–138.

⁷⁷ Keebaugh, *Irish Music*, 28, where there is also a reference to *In Memoriam*, Bax’s musical threnody for the Easter Rising leader Padraic Pearse. Fear of political consequences caused Bax (who died in 1953) to suppress this work during his lifetime.

adopted nation: too Protestant for Catholic Dublin; too Irish for London or Cambridge; and someone, moreover, whose accent confirmed his fundamentally alien standing literally every time he opened his mouth.

6.4.5 Sonata No. 5 in A Major, Op. 159, 'Quasi una fantasia'

Concluding the cycle of Stanford's organ sonatas comes Op. 159, a product of May 1918, though not published for another three years, when the Augener firm released it. The subtitle *Quasi una fantasia* is instructive, and it calls to mind not only Beethoven's Op. 27 sonatas, but also a work which Stanford never lived to hear: Sibelius's Seventh Symphony. Sibelius wanted to call that piece *Fantasia Sinfonica No. 1* (under which title its first performance was given in Stockholm). Not until 1925 did he arrive at the sensible decision that the score did in fact belong with his first six symphonies. Mahler, plagued by superstitious fear that he would die after finishing his Ninth Symphony, wished at first to classify *Das Lied von der Erde* under that heading: a classification that posterity has rejected.

Like Sibelius's Seventh, Stanford's Op. 159 is in one movement with several different sections. In Stanford's case, the first section is marked *Allegro moderato*, the second section *Allegretto non troppo mosso*, the third section *Allegro*, and the fourth section *Tempo del primo Allegro moderato, ma più largamente*. As with the Fourth Sonata, then, Stanford has eschewed a slow movement proper. The last section, where alone the speed substantially decreases, occupies only a page. The contrasts between the last two sonatas are, nevertheless, much more conspicuous than their similarities. First of all, Stanford uses the same fundamental stock of melodic material throughout the Fifth Sonata, rather than confining it to separate movements as he did in the Third and Fourth (and indeed for most of the Second). Secondly, the germinal theme this time, instead of being taken from some outside source, is Stanford's own: a hymn-tune, *Engelberg*, which he wrote during a 1904 visit to the Swiss resort of that name.

Stanford intended *Engelberg* for a new edition – also 1904 – of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, originally published in 1861 by organist-composer William Henry Monk (who himself was responsible for several beloved tunes, among them *Eventide*, habitually sung to 'Abide With Me'). In 1875 Monk brought out a second *Hymns Ancient and*

Modern edition. A third edition, overseen not by Monk but by Royal Academy of Music organ professor Charles Steggall, appeared in 1889. Bertram Luard-Selby, organist of Rochester Cathedral, edited the 1904 version, which duly included *Engelberg*. Stanford intended that *Engelberg* be attached to words by William Walsham How, Anglican Bishop of Wakefield in West Yorkshire, beginning 'For all the saints who from their labours rest.' Disappointingly for Stanford's hopes, only two years later a rival collection – *The English Hymnal*, edited by High Anglican clergyman Percy Deamer of Primrose Hill in London – appeared, with an alternative tune (*Sine Nomine*), intended for the identical text, by Vaughan Williams. Since Deamer had appointed Vaughan Williams as his editorial assistant, the presence of *Sine Nomine* might have appeared unduly self-serving, were it not for the fact that on purely melodic grounds, *Sine Nomine* much surpasses *Engelberg*. So completely did the former tune eclipse the latter that few churchgoers are aware of 'For all the saints' ever having had a non-Vaughan-Williams setting.

The difference between *Engelberg* and *Sine Nomine* is the difference between hymnodic talent and hymnodic genius. Stanford weakens *Engelberg's* ending by making his final note a singularly inconclusive dominant, which is apt to baffle a congregation, and which has already ended two of the preceding three phrases. Vaughan Williams commits, in *Sine Nomine*, no such error of melodic judgement. He also imparts more variety to *Sine Nomine's* rhythms than *Engelberg* demonstrates.

Example 91: (a) Stanford, *Engelberg*, 1904; (b) Vaughan Williams, *Sine Nomine*, 1906

(a)



(b)



Unexpectedly, long after Stanford's death *Engelberg* did achieve considerable popularity in America, which it retains to this day. There, more often than not, it is sung to words written – as recently as 1971 – by the Methodist minister Fred Pratt Green.⁷⁸ It is pleasant to conjecture that Stanford would have welcomed the specifically musical invocations of Green's verses, invocations to which few if any other hymns furnish an equivalent. Green's text begins:

When in our music God is glorified,
And adoration leaves no room for pride,
It is as though the whole creation cried
Alleluia!

How often, making music, have we found
A new dimension in the world of sound,
As worship moved us to a more profound
Alleluia! ...

⁷⁸ Another text sometimes used in the USA (and elsewhere) for the melody is one from 1967, beginning 'We know that Christ is raised,' and written by a Congregationalist minister, John Geyer. Both the Green and the Geyer texts are cited in Edgar Highberger, 'British organ literature: British organ composers of the 19th, 20th, and 21st Centuries, Part II,' *The American Organist*, 53:12 (December 2019), 97.

Given Stanford's desire to associate *Engelberg* with 'For all the saints,' one might well wonder whether he intended a non-musical program for the Fifth Sonata as a whole. He gave no sign of having done so. Nonetheless, the longer European hostilities dragged on, the more relevant to the Western Front's casualty lists Bishop How's lines became. (In May 1918 there seemed every reason to assume, America's support notwithstanding, that the war would rage for several years more.) Particularly martial is the imagery of Bishop How's third and sixth stanzas:

So may your soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
 Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
 And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
 Alleluia! ...

The golden evening brightens in the west:
 Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest,
 The peaceful calm of paradise the blessed.
 Alleluia!

Engelberg emerges in an unusually blunt style from the sonata's opening bars. No hint of 'teleological genesis' here. Stanford – perhaps through sheer partiality to his own melodic creation – lets his audience hear the theme at the start, enunciated in octaves so that there can be no missing its significance.

Example 92: Op. 159 (first movement), bars 1–11

The musical score for Example 92, Op. 159 (first movement), bars 1–11, is presented in two systems. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The key signature is two sharps (D major). The score is divided into 'MANUAL' and 'PEDAL' parts. The manual part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a prominent octave melody. The pedal part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a bass line with octaves. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 1-4 and the second system covering bars 5-11.

Thereafter, as will be clear from the above extract, Stanford isolates the opening four notes and makes them the basis for the subsequent figuration, sometimes mingling them with the *next* four notes. He does so in a way that suggests fantasia-like improvisation, and the frequent use of brief pauses adds to the music's off-the-cuff character. At bar 18 he begins to emphasise a dotted rhythm that will become increasingly important.

Example 93: Op. 159 (first movement), bars 14–26

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 14-18) begins with a treble staff containing a melodic line and a bass staff with a dotted rhythm. Dynamics include *ff* and *f*. The second system (bars 19-22) continues the melodic development. The third system (bars 23-26) shows further figuration.

Fuller Maitland’s mild complaint about the organ sonatas in general – ‘Now and then the invention seems to flag a little, and there are occasional dull passages’⁷⁹ – does apply to parts of the Fifth. It might be argued that Stanford over-emphasises the dotted motif, imparting inadequate variety to it, particularly given the *forte* and *fortissimo* markings. But at the very point where a listener or player could be forgiven for arriving at this conclusion, the composer sheds a new light on the motif, at first combining it with a menacing figure (itself dotted) in the pedals. The motif’s registration marking warrants special notice: Stanford tells the performer to add a reed stop, so that there can be no chance of the motif being overlooked amid the manuals’ outbursts.

Example 94: Op. 159 (first movement), bars 44–47



A subsidiary theme in E major, quieter than the first but very clearly deriving from it (especially in its opening upward leap of an octave), provides in its unforced lyricism a point of repose. Such repose, nevertheless, is brief. The music reverts to the heroic temper of the initial section, this time in a proud C major, and with echoes of the semiquaver display that played a marked role beforehand.

⁷⁹ Fuller Maitland, *Parry and Stanford*, 103.

Example 95: Op. 159 (first movement), bars 87–95

Yet this celebratory material does not have the last word. A quiet, chromatic, and decidedly Franckian bridge-passage takes us to F sharp major and to the second movement (*Allegretto non troppo mosso*), which follows the first with only a very short break.

Example 96: Op. 159 (first movement), bars 168–174

Geoffrey McConnell discerned a link between the arpeggio-dominated triplet figuration of the second movement's opening bars, and that of the First Sonata's second

movement (bars 43–49).⁸⁰ (He did not suggest that Stanford *consciously* echoed the latter passage when writing the former passage.) At any rate, the resemblance certainly deserves mention. In both passages Stanford’s fondness for duple-against-triple rhythms comes to the fore, but whereas with the earlier work the contrast between duple and triple quavers was primarily vertical (triple rhythms in the left hand simultaneously with duple rhythms in the right hand), with the later work the contrast – at first, in any event – is horizontal, in a fashion familiar to us from Bruckner’s symphonies. Only from bar 9 does Stanford resort to duple rhythms in one hand and triple rhythms in the other.

**Example 97: (a) Op. 159 (second movement), bars 1–8;
(b) Op. 149 (second movement), bars 40–49**

(a)

Allegretto non troppo mosso

5

⁸⁰ McConnell, *Stanford's Preoccupation*, 63–65.

(b)

Musical score for measures 40-44. The score is in G-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The right hand plays a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. Measure 40 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The piece concludes with a 'Ch.' (Chord) marking and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Musical score for measures 45-49. The score continues in G-flat major and 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. Measure 45 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The piece concludes with a 'Ch.' (Chord) marking and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

The *Engelberg* tune is much less conspicuous in this movement than in the first. Still, it seldom disappears entirely: for instance, the opening left-hand theme harks back to the original tune's second bar. Besides, the decidedly chorale-like development which begins at bar 62 – again, redolent of Franck – owes much to the tune, in terms of the large melodic leaps. While the key of G flat major is atypically lush for Stanford, it makes perfect sense in the context, since it is F sharp minor's enharmonic parallel major.

Example 98: Op. 159 (second movement), bars 61–73

61

67

Stanford, in a manner typical of him, proceeds to explore the possibilities of combining the chorale-like writing and the opening staccato passagework. More and more, the staccato passagework preponderates; but when the composer very clearly returns his listeners to the mood of the opening section, he switches melody and accompaniment, so that the tenor takes the triplet lead and the legato line is now in the top voice. Burgoyne notes this exchange.⁸¹ The prevalent emotion is of calm, albeit calm with hints of peril (most notably in Stanford's tendency to modal indecision: the music settles neither in F-sharp minor nor in F-sharp major). A reversion to a chorale-like chord sequence, this sequence being marked *crescendo* over four bars, announces A major's dominant seventh, loud and celebratory. Then, a momentary break, whereupon the third movement – *Allegro* – starts.

The nature of this A-major *Allegro* is not just festive and exuberant, but polyphonic. Although Stanford avoids writing a conventional fugue (of the sort which he could

⁸¹ "Whereas in the opening section, the (modified) melodic fragment was in the tenor, accompanied by triplet eighths [quavers], the roles are here reversed, the melody being in the soprano with triplet eighths in the tenor." Burgoyne, 'Five Organ Sonatas,' 22.

have supplied with unruffled expertise), he cleverly manages to give the impression of subject and answer following one another in an orderly fugal sequence.

Example 99: Op. 159 (third movement), bars 1–13

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system, labeled 'Allegro' and 'mf Gt. uncoupl', contains six measures. The right hand plays a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system, starting at measure 7, includes markings 'Sw.' and 'Gt. piu f'. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Once again, Stanford places great emphasis on the leap of an octave, and this time he alludes more openly to *Engelberg* than he did in the preceding movement. The theme which dominates the first two bars, and which is heard repeatedly thereafter, comes directly from *Engelberg's* last phrase. A Beethovenian joviality prevails: the joviality which comes from argumentative strenuousness, as with the *Hammerklavier's* finale (which Stanford knew well). Swift modulations – the music touches on C minor, then on A flat minor, E flat minor, C major, and F major within the space of eight bars – ensure that the prevalent mood is not merely strenuous but briefly rather grim, as the melodic interest shifts to the pedals, which sound the theme in a rising sequence.

Example 100: Op. 159 (third movement), bars 129–140

129

135

dim.

At bar 145, the manuals announce the *Engelberg* theme in its original rhythm, while the pedals furnish a commentary on it in staccato quavers. But only after a good deal of virtuoso semiquaver display (followed by a suitably theatrical pause) does Stanford present the theme in full. He marks the concluding section *Tempo del primo Allegro moderato, ma più largamente*; and he demonstrates anew – much as he had done with the *Britannica's* finale – the dramatic value of adorning a climax with modulations more rapid than those which have generally occurred earlier in the work. In fact, the entire last page deserves to be quoted here, for the sheer regal splendour with which Stanford brought his organ sonata sequence to a heroic close.

Example 101: Op. 159 (third movement), bars 263–289

263 *Tempo del 1^{mo} Allegro Moderato, ma più largamente*

270

277

283

ff Gi.

Cple Sw.

with Reed

rall.

fff

[May 1916]

6.5 Conclusion

The more one surveys Stanford's achievements as composer for the organ, the more impressive these achievements' consistently high standard seems, a few lacklustre efforts (notably Op. 187) aside. Such a survey makes it harder than ever to condone the dismissal *en bloc* of Stanford's organ writing by Peter Hardwick, a Toronto-based organist. Although Hardwick had polite words for Op. 57, for Op. 105 No. 6, and for the Second and Third Sonatas, he rejected most of what Stanford accomplished in the medium:

On the whole, the later organ works are disappointing. Typically, the First, Fourth, and Fifth Sonatas show much industry on Stanford's part but little inspiration. ... The level of inspiration and craftsmanship in most of Stanford's organ corpus is decidedly mediocre.⁸²

Let us hope that the present chapter's discussions of Stanford's organ scores will have sufficed to indicate the unfairness of Hardwick's remarks. Nor do Harvey Grace's complaints – made in 1926 – suggest that he knew Stanford's organ sonatas particularly well:

It must be confessed that Stanford's late start in organ composition proved to be a drawback. ... In the Sonatas we are too often conscious of a lack of invention.⁸³

From much more recent times (1994) comes the following flippant and ahistorical censure of the music:

The large-scale organ sonata was not a form which attracted much attention from British composers of the day [!], the most obvious role-models for Stanford's five being the sonatas of Rheinberger. For all its strong Teutonic bent, Stanford's music never becomes as turgid as Rheinberger's – but it's a damn close-run thing!⁸⁴

Previously cited commentators (Ernest Walker, Arthur Benjamin, Herbert Thompson, Thomas F. Dunhill) believed that Stanford the miniaturist surpassed Stanford the creator of epics. Grace himself credited Stanford's shorter works for the organ with being 'an almost unbroken series of successes.'⁸⁵ Yet Stanford's biggest organ compositions likewise possess enough variety, dignity, and emotional power to justify far more numerous performances than they have ever been accorded. The *Sonata Eroica* and the *Sonata Celtica*, in particular, will repay systematic revival.

Certainly Gavin Brown's rather condescending verdict on all five sonatas – 'we would do well to hear them complete occasionally, and individual movements quite

⁸² Peter Hardwick, *British Organ Music of the Twentieth Century* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 23, 26.

⁸³ Harvey Grace, 'Modern English Organ Composers, Part One,' *The Rotunda*, 1 (March–April 1926), 41–48, at 44.

⁸⁴ Marc Rochester, '[CD Review],' *Gramophone* 72:856 (September 1994), 84.

⁸⁵ Grace, 'Modern English Organ Composers,' 45.

regularly'⁸⁶ – should not be the last word, although it has its unintended historiographical value as indicating a frequent habit among organists of including in their recitals isolated sonata movements (and, in the case of Widor, isolated symphony movements). This habit can still be found among organists at the present time, but it was a great deal more common in 1962, when Brown wrote. Among other instrumentalists, the habit is today unknown, at any rate outside occasional examination rooms. No self-respecting pianist now would ever include the first movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* on a program without the other two movements. Nor would a self-respecting violin-piano duo now play the *Spring Sonata's* initial movement 'untimely ripped' from the rest of the work. Too often, though, organists have behaved in just this cavalier way when it comes to many a composer's larger creations.

By behaving so, they have failed to do justice to Stanford's versatility as the professional's professional. Enough has been said already, in earlier chapters, to indicate the generalist attitude to music which Stanford retained from his boyhood to his old age. Having played the piano and the violin to concert standard in his youth, he later maintained a punitively crowded schedule as conductor – chiefly as choral and operatic conductor – in addition to carrying out his manifold teaching duties over decades. A musician who functions at Stanford's level of multi-talented resourcefulness will be incapable of sealing off his organ output hermetically from the rest of his music-making, even if *per impossibile* he had ever wanted to seal it off thus.

Meanwhile we have the organ works themselves, which, at their best, rank with the hidden treasures of the Romantic organ repertoire. The ill-fated Arthur Eaglefield Hull, in 1927, correctly attributed to Stanford's organ oeuvre 'a fine dignity combined with the utmost economy of means.'⁸⁷ Seventy-five years afterwards, the British critic

⁸⁶ Gavin Brown, 'Re-valuations: (V) Charles Stanford,' *Quarterly Record of the Incorporated Association of Organists*, XLVII: 189 (1962), 19–25, at 19. Wilkinson, in 1957, had passed a decidedly patronising judgement on Stanford's organ music: 'Stanford was seldom venturesome in his deployment of materials, but could express himself in a competent manner ... the second and third movements of [the *Sonata Eroica*] are bombastic *pièces d'occasion*' (Wilkinson, *Stanford*, Vol. 1, 147, 150).

⁸⁷ Arthur Eaglefield Hull, 'Programme Annotations for Organ Recitals,' *The Sackbut* 6:8 (December 1927), 1–16, at 14. The following year, Hull – organist, journalist, early advocate for Scriabin, and founder of the Huddersfield Musical Society – would commit suicide, after his extreme carelessness about citing sources in his final book (*Music: Classical, Romantic, and Modern*) had come

Geoffrey Crankshaw described this oeuvre as bespeaking 'a mind of great vigour and a spirit of unquenchable optimism.'⁸⁸ For sheer terseness and accuracy it is hard to improve upon these verdicts.

to the censorious attention of *The Musical Times* and of lexicographer Percy A. Scholes. But this *Sackbut* article appears to be all Hull's own prose.

⁸⁸ Geoffrey Crankshaw, 'CD Reviews,' *Musical Opinion* (July 2002), 125.

CHAPTER SEVEN: STANFORD'S POSTHUMOUS REPUTATION: RECEPTION HISTORIES IN BRITAIN, IRELAND, AND ELSEWHERE

7.1 Introduction

There exist few if any precedents for the tale of Stanford's repute in the ninety-seven years since his death. Furthermore, there exist few if any analogues in non-British music to this tale. At no stage during those years did his adoptive compatriots ever forget him entirely. Every British textbook on music history mentioned him.¹ But until the 1980s the British seldom felt much interest in performing him.

Two areas alone of Stanford's output achieved some long-term currency: his choral music for Anglican rites, which has never dropped out of ecclesiastical use; and, in the decades immediately following his demise, a handful of his secular songs, whether for ensemble (above all *The Blue Bird*) or for solo voice. His Anglican music, specifically his *Service in A major*, even scored a citation in the young John Betjeman's verse ('Exeter', 1937):

The doctor's intellectual wife
Sat under the ilex tree
The Cathedral bells pealed over the wall
But never a bell heard she ...
Once those bells, those Exeter bells
Called her to praise and pray
By pink, acacia-shaded walls
Several times a day
To Wulfric's altar and riddel posts
While the choir sang *Stanford in A*.²

Novelist A.N. Wilson, as recently as 2018, cited Stanford's C Major Service in his novel *Aftershocks*: 'Because his [the protagonist's] wife still attended the Cathedral, and

¹ Authors of American textbooks have been much less appreciative. In Taruskin's *Oxford History of Western Music*, Stanford's name fails to appear even once. The ninth edition (2014) of Grout-Palisca-Burkholder did mention Stanford briefly; not so earlier editions.

² Riddel posts are posts, located near a sanctuary, which uphold a screen.

Josh sang in the choir, he had continued to go, week by week, to hear Wood in the Fridge, Stanford in C, and Merbecke.’ (‘Wood in the Fridge’ is the label that impertinent choirboys have traditionally attached to Charles Wood’s *Service in the Phrygian Mode*; ‘Merbecke’ refers to the sixteenth-century composer John Merbecke, whose *Communion Service* and *Book of Common Prayer* settings could often be heard in Anglican cathedrals from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth.)

As for the rest of Stanford’s worklist, examining it forces readers to appreciate how little of it the British knew about or cared about, whatever its merits, until very recent years. Of the organ works this is particularly true, once an inter-war flurry of BBC broadcast initiatives promoting such works had ended.

Very occasionally highlights from Stanford operas would be heard; but with suchlike rare exceptions, the concertos, the seven symphonies, the chamber music in all the standard media, the big sacred works to Latin texts, and the piano solos might almost not have been written, given the limited interest shown in resurrecting them (via concert programs or on the radio) before the 1980s. Even the once-applauded *Irish Rhapsodies* very largely ceased to adorn orchestral programs after 1924. Nothing of Stanford’s ever attained quasi-national-anthem status, after the manner of Parry’s *Jerusalem*. Moreover, the lesser but still striking fame of two much bigger Parry works – *I Was Glad* and *Blest Pair of Sirens*, both manifestations of what Milton called ‘a solemn musick’ – far surpassed anything bestowed on Stanford’s ceremonial output.

Nevertheless, while all too much of what Stanford composed slumbered in neglect, this neglect took different forms in different parts of the world. It therefore makes sense to divide the present chapter into several sections: the first giving details of Stanford *Rezeptionsgeschichte* in Britain between 1924 and the marked increase in his music’s popularity during the 1980s; the second giving details of this reception history in Ireland; the third supplying information (what little can be found) of how Stanford was remembered after 1924 elsewhere in Europe and in the USA; and the fourth describing the extremely welcome efflorescence of public interest in Stanford during the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first. One would like to think that his music’s innate qualities would have sufficed to ensure this comprehensive revival. Yet it will be

argued here that non-musical factors in British culture, and most prominently the impact which 'The Troubles' had on this culture during the twenty-odd years after 1969, made it effectively impossible for the Anglo-Irish Stanford to attract much approving attention whilst religious and political conflicts raged in Northern Ireland.

As if a generation's worth of dire nightly news bulletins from across the Irish Sea were not enough to damp down British public fondness for Stanford or any other Hibernian-born composer, two other factors – both of them more overtly related to Stanford's own temperament – contributed to the same outcome: his establishment status (a knighthood, forsooth!), and the conservatism of his compositional technique. Some commentators, in particular James Hepokoski and J.P.E. Harper-Scott, have tried to conscript Elgar into the ranks of musical modernists. This need not be an otiose exercise, since in 1902 at Düsseldorf (where *Gerontius* had won great applause after its hostile initial reception in Elgar's native land), Richard Strauss urged his hearers to drink a toast to Elgar as 'the first English progressivist.'³ Yet whatever might be the case with Elgar, not even the most imaginative historian could hope to conscript Stanford into those ranks. Easier to ignore Stanford altogether, or – like Peter J. Pirie in his overview from 1979, *The English Musical Renaissance*, about which more anon – to dismiss Stanford on the strength of almost no close acquaintance with what he actually composed.

7.2 Stanford reception history in Britain before the 1980s

Newspaper and magazine death-notice for Stanford in his adopted homeland showed suitable respect. *The Times* devoted a column and a half of broadsheet paper to paying Stanford obituary homage, freely using the word 'genius' in its headline and body text.⁴ When the authorities abandoned the original plan to hold the funeral at London's Bryanston Square, and instead decided to accord the composer's remains the privilege of Westminster Abbey interment, news of this change reached not only the London press but Dundee's *Evening Telegraph*.⁵

³ Moore, *Elgar*, 369.

⁴ Anon., 'Sir C.V. Stanford. A Composer of Genius,' *The Times* (31 March 1924), 17.

⁵ Anon., 'The Late Sir Charles Stanford: To be buried in Westminster Abbey,' *Evening Telegraph* (1 April 1924), 6.

On 4 April, *Times* readers benefited from a lavish report, itself occupying almost a column, on the Abbey ceremony. There a former Stanford pupil, Sydney Nicholson, directed the choir, while the young Adrian Boult – not yet Sir Adrian – led the RCM orchestra in three Stanford creations: the Prelude from the *Stabat Mater*, the third movement (*Andante molto tranquillo*) from the Fifth Symphony, and the Funeral March from *Becket*. *Music & Letters* expended fifteen pages of its July issue upon reminiscences by erstwhile Stanford students, while an editorial in *The Musical Times* – edited since 1918 by Harvey Grace, the Rheinberger champion – saluted both Stanford and Sir Walter Parratt, also recently deceased.

Easily the most unusual of the tributes to Stanford came from *Punch*, which printed a eulogy in rhyming iambic couplets, written by Parry's biographer C.L. Graves, and noting the strange coincidence by which Stanford, Parratt, and fellow organist Sir Frederick Bridge had all left the scene within two weeks of one another. After honouring Parratt and Bridge, Graves turned to Stanford and supplied an acute pentametric evaluation of the latter's versatility:

... Last of the three who in a fortnight's space
Finished their memorable earthly race,
In the great Abbey lies by PURCELL's side
The Irish master who was England's pride,
And in his early youth made Cambridge feel
The force of his illuminating zeal.
He trod new paths, while pedants stood aghast,
Yet never sought to ostracise the past.
Finely endowed with the creative gift,
Too critical to imitate or drift,
Fashion he worshipped not, nor humour scorned,
But every aspect of his art adorned,
Revealed and purged the glories that belong
To the rich treasure-house of Irish song,
And magnified in high heroic strain
Our mariners who scoured the Spanish Main.⁶

Possibly Graves's reference to 'pedants [having] stood aghast' represented a thought fathered by the wish. Except for (one presumes) that Carl Reinecke of whose uninspired teaching Stanford had disappointed recollections, it is hard to think of any

⁶ Tovey and Parratt, 147–148.

musician who considered Stanford a shocking revolutionary. But otherwise the poem deserves the gratitude of all Stanfordians.

Overall, it must be conceded, newspaper and magazine accounts of Stanford's passing tended to stress how much of his music had already been forgotten by most musicians, as well as by the general public. On the issue of how posterity would treat his compositions – as opposed to how it would treat his teaching – obituarists tended to haver, as they probably would not have done if Stanford had died a decade or two beforehand. (Musicologist Robert Anderson in 2002 would reach for a cricketing metaphor, saying that Stanford 'had his innings with continental reputation in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, but then Elgar bowled him out.')

⁷ An extract from *The Times*' article merits quoting:

There is matter in his music of every class which repays the closest study, and the most damning reflection on the much-vaunted musicality of this country to-day is the readiness with which it allows the great mass of the work of its most serious musical artists to pass into oblivion as soon as they are succeeded by a newer fashion. ... The number of his larger works which had really taken a firm hold of the public was comparatively small, and the favourable reception of some of his earlier works abroad, particularly in Germany, hardly led to the European reputation for which he had seemed destined.⁸

In *Music & Letters*, Harvey Grace allowed himself some less than enthusiastic judgements on Stanford the creator. Grace commended Stanford's output for voices, while being somewhat tepidly disposed towards his output for instruments:

As is inevitable in so vast an output there is much that is unoriginal, but impeccable workmanship is always evident. The matter may be perfunctory, the manner never. ... In his instrumental music, he was prone, especially in his later years, to use somewhat mechanical methods of development and linking up.⁹

Between 1916 and 1923 Stanford took the trouble to conduct for the gramophone several acoustic recordings of his works. He nowhere disclosed his reasons for making

⁷ Robert Anderson, 'Surveying Stanford,' *The Musical Times*, 144:1882 (Spring 2003), 48–50, at 49.

⁸ Anon., 'Sir C.V. Stanford,' 17.

⁹ Harvey Grace, 'Walter Parratt, February 10, 1841 – March 27, 1924, and Charles Villiers Stanford, September 30, 1852 – March 29, 1924,' *The Musical Times*, 65:975 (May 1924), 401–403, at 402–403.

these recordings, and the chances are that with his persistent shortage of funds, he undertook them chiefly for financial reward. A desire to enshrine his interpretations for later ages could also have been operative; but this would have been, at most, a secondary motivator for him – or for any of his contemporaries – given the speed with which even the cleanest, most carefully stored copies of acoustic recordings wore out. Still, his determination in braving the studio should not be minimised. Until well past 1900, many musicians continued to dismiss the gramophone itself as a mere toy, soulless, without musical purpose, and able to please only those whom Vincent d’Indy expressively called ‘*une majorité des snobs-idiots*.’¹⁰

During 1916 at the Gramophone Company’s headquarters in Hayes, Middlesex, Stanford led an unnamed ‘symphony orchestra’ in two operatic excerpts (*Shamus O’Brien* and *The Critic*), two movements from his Op. 58 *Suite of Ancient Dances*, and a heavily cut version of his *First Irish Rhapsody*.¹¹ Doubtless the so-called ‘symphony orchestra’ was as miniscule as such ensembles needed to be, if the acoustic era’s limited technological resources were to capture them. A substantial amount of musical charm nonetheless manages to cut through the persistent surface noise and to transcend the recording horn’s unforgiving reductionism.

Much the same is true of Stanford’s third and last visit to the recording studios seven years later.¹² For Columbia, he conducted the London Symphony Orchestra and

¹⁰ André Coeuroy, *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* (Paris: Kra, 1928), 160. In the years between Armistice Day and his death in 1931, d’Indy conducted several of his own orchestral works for the gramophone; possibly by this stage he had reconciled himself to the *snobs-idiots* whom he had once reviled.

¹¹ The original matrix numbers are: HMV Ho 2296af/D192 (*Shamus O’Brien*); HMV Ho 2297af/D 191 (*Suite*), HMV Ho 2298/9af/D193 (*The Critic*), and HMV Ho 2300af/D192 (*First Irish Rhapsody*).

¹² In the meantime (1918) Stanford did record his *Songs of the Sea*, with the Nottingham-born bass Robert Radford – a former Fasolt and Hunding at Covent Garden – as the soloist; but for whatever reason, this recording was never commercially released (Christopher Howell, ‘Historical Stanford at CHARM: A Survey of Recordings Available for Download.’ *Music Web International*, 13 December 2013 (http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2013/Dec13/Stanford_historical_recs.htm, accessed 22 March 2020).

Australian-born baritone Harold Williams in *Songs of the Fleet*, mercifully unabridged.¹³ Since no recording equipment at the time could cope with a whole choir as well as an orchestra, the choral passages in this performance were all reassigned to an unidentified male quartet. Presumably Stanford felt obligated to accept the *fait accompli* of such a reassignment; he can hardly have welcomed the barber-shop timbre that all too often results, and that proves especially ruinous to the *Parsifal*-like splendour of the cycle's A-flat-major finale. Stanford's clear, disciplined direction in 1923 continues to impress, and enough orchestral details emerge from the worn matrices to convey something of the music's nautical spirit, which even the four-piece travesty of a chorus cannot altogether dispel. But the outcome inspires keen disappointment at the discographic opportunity which music-lovers lost because of Stanford having died when he did. If permitted a mere two more years of active existence, he could have benefited from – as Elgar took advantage of – the substantial improvements in sound quality that electric recording brought with it from 1925.

None of the Stanford-conducted discs made much impact. (*The Gramophone*¹⁴ began publication in 1923, too late for it to cover the 1916 releases, and it never reviewed the 1923 material.) If Stanford recorded the discs partly in the spirit of T.S. Eliot's subsequent line 'These fragments have I shored against my ruins,' he failed to dispel the recrimination which had already begun amid his last years.

When Stanford issued a rather cantankerous essay – 'On Some Recent Tendencies in Composition'¹⁵ – which he based on a public lecture, and which sniped at consecutive fifths as well as the whole-tone scale, Arthur Bliss chastised him in a later issue of the

¹³ It is thus inaccurate to say, as Plunket Greene did say, that Stanford entirely ceased conducting after March 1921 (Plunket Greene, 'Stanford as I Knew Him,' 83). Matrix numbers for *Songs of the Fleet*: Columbia AX 108/949; Columbia AX 109/949; Columbia AX 110/11/950; Columbia AX 112/951; Columbia AX113/951. All the recordings mentioned in these paragraphs can be found on Pearl's LP reissue from 1974 (*Stanford: The Complete Recordings*, Pearl GEM 123). The *Songs of the Fleet* performance was brought out on CD in 2007 via the Dutton label (CDBP9777), minus its Pearl companions, but coupled instead with composer-conducted recordings from Elgar, Holst, Frank Bridge, and Sir Frederic Hymen Cowen.

¹⁴ Not till the periodical's June 1969 issue was the definite article formally dropped from its name.

¹⁵ Charles Villiers Stanford, 'On Some Recent Tendencies in Composition,' *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 47 (1920–1921), 39–54.

same magazine. An extract from Bliss's reprimand (complete with politically incorrect references to mutual antipathies among African Americans) follows:

I was very glad to pick up Sir Charles Stanford's paper, read to this Association over two years ago, and published now in his book 'Interludes,' in which he puts the case against much of the new music. Coming from one of the greatest European teachers, his arguments are potent and weighty, and yet, as a member of a new generation, I feel I have the right to reply, even if only on the ground that, being Irish, he will not resent an honest antagonist. Like the nigger, related in Walter Page's *Life and Letters*, he may even welcome a hit back. You remember the old nigger that wished to pick a quarrel with another old nigger. Nigger No. 1 swore and stormed at Nigger No. 2. Nigger No. 2 said not a word, but kept at his work. Nigger No. 1 swore and stormed more; Nigger No. 2 said not a word. Nigger No. 1 frothed still more. Nigger No. 2 still silent. Nigger No. 1 got desperate and said 'Look here, you kinky-headed, flat-nosed, slab-footed nigger, I warn you before God, don't you keep giving me more of your damned silence.' So here goes.

The first sign he sees of the retrogression of modern music is the, according to him, prevalent love of writing fifths. ... In the time of the plague, court houses were decked with a pot of herbs to keep away contagion. I am told to this day, the epoch of inoculation, the old custom still survives. And so with consecutive fifths. Some acoustical authority declared they were ugly; the avoidance of them became a rule, and it is still cherished, although the ear has so developed (thanks to the composers) that it delights in consecutive seconds, sevenths, ninths, twenty-firsts, in fact in anything that it can conceive will further adorn any particular passage. Every master broke this rule at the bidding of his own ear [!] and so will every master continue to break it ...¹⁶

That last sentence would have confirmed Stanford's worst suspicions about Bliss's historical literacy. So would Bliss's subsequent crowing about tonality's future, or lack thereof:

He [Stanford] mentions in addition to the consecutive fifths and the whole-tone scale the tendency to overcrowding modulation. But what does he mean by that? Modulation presumes a basis of key system, and generally throughout Europe we find the principle of polytonality or atonality superseding the old key system. We can point to the Schoenberg

¹⁶ Arthur Bliss, 'Some Aspects of the Present Musical Situation,' *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 49 (1922–1923), 59–77, at 65–67. 'Walter Page' refers to Walter Hines Page, American ambassador to Britain from 1913 to 1918.

school in Vienna, the Busoni school in Berlin, the Stravinsky and Milhaud school in Paris, not to speak of Goossens and [Lord] Berners in London. What on earth has modulation got to do with it? His statement leaves one as aghast as if Copernicus appeared to the Royal Astronomical Society and accused them of thinking the earth flat.¹⁷

At least Bliss showed Stanford the courtesy of taking his arguments with some seriousness. Not so Philip Heseltine, alias Peter Warlock, who in 1921 (as editor-in-chief of *The Sackbut*) showed to Stanford more obvious aggression than Bliss had displayed. With uncharacteristic caution – as well as, no doubt, equally uncharacteristic fear of libel laws – Heseltine-Warlock hid on this occasion behind the pseudonym ‘Barbara C. Larent.’ Thereby safeguarded, he wrote the whole article in a spirit of ridicule, as extracts indicate:

SIR CHARLES SNARLS. – There was something quite pathetically fatuous about Sir Charles Stanford’s recent address to the Musical Association. When it was announced that the venerable Professor was to read a paper on ‘Some Recent Tendencies in Composition’ we knew we were in for some fun: but we did not anticipate a more perfect caricature of a pedant proper than could be devised by the most malicious of his critics ... No contemporary names were mentioned. ‘Modern Music’ was just an aggregate – even as one might say ‘old music,’ and vaguely include anything between Pythagoras and Purcell. Two of its chief ‘characteristics’ were an inordinate love of consecutive fifths (with the suggestion that modern composers wrote them merely because they had been told not to do so – the dirty dogs!) and an excessive use of the whole-tone scale! It is scarcely credible, in the face of twentieth-century musical practice, that ‘consecutive fifths’ can still be seriously discussed, where actual composition is concerned. Why, even old Tom Moore wondered ‘whether there might not be some pedantry in adhering to the rule which forbids them:’ – and that was nearly a hundred years ago!¹⁸

It is probably true that Stanford had not expended much time studying the avant-garde of the early 1920s. An overabundance of consecutive fifths would be the last charge which he (or anybody else) could have levelled at, for instance, *Pierrot Lunaire* or Schoenberg’s specifically twelve-tone music. To the extent that Stanford had shown vagueness when naming his targets, and that he should probably have been clearer

¹⁷ Bliss, ‘Some Aspects,’ 67.

¹⁸ ‘Barbara C. Larent,’ ‘Contingencies: Sir Charles Snarls,’ *The Sackbut* 1:9 (March 1921), 418–420, at 418 and 419. Rodmell (*Stanford*, 362) gives the name wrongly as ‘Laurent.’

about precisely whom he was censuring, Heseltine-Warlock had a point. But the fury with which the article proceeds to assail the Royal Musical Association's chairman, as well as Stanford, indicates on the author's part a visceral aversion rather than an intellectual scruple.

Sir Frederick Bridge (Chairman) then came out with the shameless admission that in the old days he could settle down comfortably in his armchair by the fireside with a good cigar ('no harm in that') and read the score of a musical composition, whereas now – on the other hand – when he turned to the scores of young fellows of the present time he found *he couldn't do it anymore!* Rounds of applause and roars of delighted laughter, the utter inferiority of contemporary music being thus incontestably proved. ... No, it was not a dream but an exceedingly disagreeable reality which makes one realise more clearly than ever that music has no more poisonous enemy than the musical profession.¹⁹

In this last paradoxical taunt, Heseltine-Warlock was merely repeating a trope about rule-breaking genius unfettered by professional convention, a trope which Berlioz and Wagner had long since put into currency. Maybe Bridge did make the gauche remarks here attributed to him, though given Heseltine-Warlock's lifelong fantasising, it would be a rash musicologist who placed the slightest trust in unsupported assertions from that quarter. But in denying the musical profession's legitimacy *as such*, Heseltine-Warlock wildly overstated his case, though his stylistic brio could distract readers – at least in the short term – from questioning his essay's unexamined assumption that professionalising music is inherently poisonous, and that by implication all of music's moral authority should be vested in amateurs. (*The Sackbut's* extreme aggression under Heseltine-Warlock alarmed its publisher, Winthrop Rogers, who in September 1921 entrusted the editorship to the more discreet and diplomatic hands of folksinger Ursula Grenville.)

The very year of Stanford's demise witnessed Heseltine-Warlock's boon companion Cecil Gray (in his *A Survey of Contemporary Music*) treating Stanford, Parry and other British musicians with obstreperous contempt. Gray assured his readers:

¹⁹ 'Larent,' 'Contingencies,' 419.

In the same way that Stanford and Parry provided us with second-hand Brahms, Cyril Scott provides us with imitation Debussy; [Joseph] Holbrooke and [Sir Granville] Bantock have followed Strauss, and in the music of Goossens, Bliss and [Lord] Berners we find our English Ravel, Stravinsky and Satie. In every generation it has been the same thing; only the models have changed. ... The outcome of their combined efforts, like that of their forerunners, is precisely nil.²⁰

After Stanford had died, the process of trying to cut him down to size continued. *The Gramophone's* initial editor Sir Compton Mackenzie – novelist, memoirist, actor, broadcaster, champion croquet-player, breeder of Siamese cats, and spy – devoted the opening section of his October 1925 editorial to championing Elgar against the latter's rivals. Echoes of Shaw to be found in Mackenzie's approach are unlikely to be coincidental:

Elgar's renown has been pinched [*pitched?* – RJS] between two stools. On the one hand the pedantic, or perhaps I should say the pedagogic, tradition, which has haunted English music for the last fifty years and which found its least unvital exponent in Stanford, depreciated him because he went too far for their gentlemanly taste.²¹

Future record producer Walter Legge likewise interpreted Stanford's alleged gentlemanliness as artistically indictable. In a *Manchester Guardian* report from 1937, Legge echoed Mackenzie's and Shaw's assumption that defending Elgar meant attacking Stanford:

The clubs and cliques of English music never really liked Elgar. He was too 'professional' for them. They preferred to rally round Parry and Stanford who were socially 'gentlemen' and musically amateurs.²²

Kind words about Stanford's composing which appeared in 1943, the same year as Bax's previously cited dismissal, made little impact. They came from a book by *Radio Times* music editor Ralph Hill, and their failure to attract more than fleeting notice can

²⁰ Cecil Gray, *A Survey of Contemporary Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 251.

²¹ Compton Mackenzie, 'The September Records,' *The Gramophone*, 3:5 (October 1925), 206–210, at 206. Thirty-two years later Mackenzie, in another *Gramophone* editorial, reminisced: 'by this date [1921] Stanford was so infernally disagreeable to younger men that I should not have felt the slightest indignation, however badly Elgar behaved [toward Stanford].' Compton Mackenzie, 'Editorial,' *The Gramophone* 35:409 (June 1957), 1–2, at 1.

²² 'W. L.' (Walter Legge), 'Music of two British composers: The Queen at London concert,' *Manchester Guardian* (2 December 1937), 8.

be blamed on a combination of wartime paper shortages and Hill's self-defeating belligerence elsewhere in the book. Moreover, Hill followed his compliments with a criticism that entirely nullified the effect of the praise. His comments began enthusiastically enough:

Stanford was a first-rate craftsman and surpassed Parry both in versatility and in quantity of output. In every branch of composition he left works of importance – his 'Irish' Symphony, the opera 'The Travelling Companion', the 'Stabat Mater', the Piano Quintet, the 'Songs of the Fleet,' and songs such as 'The Fairy Lough' and 'La belle dame sans merci.' As composer and teacher Stanford represented two important tendencies in the evolution of modern British music: the national element and the German (Brahms) tradition.²³

All very respectful thus far. But Hill's very next paragraph consists, *in toto*, of this reproof:

The only detrimental thing is that Parry, Stanford, and their associates could never forget that they were English gentlemen instead of artists and men of the world.²⁴

Such an assessment would become (to the limited extent that it had not already become) a cliché: judging Stanford primarily on class grounds rather than on musical grounds, and – more specifically – turning his academic training against him. (As early as 1890 Shaw had charged Stanford with being 'far too much the gentleman to compose anything but drawing-room or class-room music.'²⁵)

Despite Mackenzie's and Legge's lack of pleasure in Stanford's muse, not to mention Gray's, Bax's and Hill's animadversions, the Stanford discography had already reached respectable proportions by the time the Second World War broke out.²⁶ The chances are that this increase reflected popular tastes, given how fantastically expensive any gramophone recording was – relative to the average wage-earner's purchasing

²³ Ralph Hill, *Challenges: A Series of Controversial Essays on Music* (London: Joseph Williams, 1943), 54.

²⁴ Hill, *Challenges*, 54.

²⁵ Dan H. Laurence, *Shaw's Music* (London: Bodley Head, 1981), Vol. 2, 65–69.

²⁶ Further details can be found at the CHARM database in Cambridge (<https://charm.rhul.ac.uk/discography/>, accessed 22 March 2020) and in Christopher Howell, 'Historical Stanford.'

power – in Britain, before (and indeed after) the LP's advent.²⁷ Such products' sheer cost discouraged uninformed impulse-buying.

It might be supposed that most early Stanford discs would have been of his Anglican choral compositions, but in reality, this was not at all the case. His secular vocal output (and, in particular, that part of it where the subject-matter had an unambiguous Irish connection) predominated. Various songs of his which in our own time are almost wholly ignored were then much loved. By 1952, enough recordings of Stanford pieces had become available to ensure that the entry for the composer included in that year's *World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music* amounted to almost two double-columned pages of single-spaced text.²⁸

Where, it can reasonably be asked, did Stanford's organ music figure in all of this? In a word, nowhere. It awaited the emergence of LP technology, indeed the emergence of stereo, before it appeared on disc.

There can be no denying that formidable problems of microphone placement and of limited dynamic range afflicted any attempts to make organ recordings (of any repertoire) in 78rpm days. Nonetheless, such problems failed to prevent the BBC's wireless network from giving various Stanford organ works generous coverage. This the network did almost from its beginning, as *Radio Times* back-numbers confirm. While record companies might not have been interested in publicising these compositions, radio administrators incontestably were, as the following table reveals.²⁹

²⁷ 'Records were still expensive products at this time, and Elgar's second symphony on disc cost two pounds – more than the cost of the cheapest gramophone, in the mid-twenties.' John Mullen, 'Music in the home in Britain, 1900 to 1925: initial pointers for research,' contribution to Expert Workshop, *From parlour sing-songs to iPlayers: Experiencing culture in the 20th and 21st centuries* (University of Lincoln, 2014) (https://www.academia.edu/7143472/PDF_full_text Experiencing music in the British home 1900-1925, accessed 22 March 2020). In 1925 the average weekly wage in Britain was approximately £5.

²⁸ Francis F. Clough and G.J. Cuming, *The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1952), 577–578.

²⁹ All these details about BBC broadcasts and *Radio Times* listings derive from <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/> (accessed 23 March 2020).

Table 2. BBC broadcasts of Stanford's organ music, 1927–1939

Date of broadcast	Stanford piece	Organist	Venue
31 October 1927	<i>Sonata Celtica</i>	Harold Darke	Broadcasting House, London
16 December 1927	Op. 105 No. 6	Leonard H. Warner	St Botolph's, Bishopsgate
7 May 1928	<i>Sonata Eroica</i> (last two movements only)	Edgar T. Cooke	Southwark Cathedral
5 November 1928	<i>Sonata Eroica</i> (finale only)	Edgar T. Cooke	Southwark Cathedral
24 September 1929	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	Edgar T. Cooke	Southwark Cathedral
12 November 1929	<i>Sonata Eroica</i> (finale only)	Edgar T. Cooke	Southwark Cathedral
30 March 1932	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	G.D. Cunningham	Birmingham Town Hall
8 May 1935	Op. 105 Nos. 2 and 1 ³⁰	Ronald Chamberlain	Broadcasting House, London
8 June 1936	<i>Sonata Celtica</i>	Harold Darke	Broadcasting House, London
9 August 1936	Op. 105 No. 6	J.H. Alden	Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London
6 July 1937	<i>Sonata Celtica</i>	Harry Moreton	Guildhall, Plymouth
13 December 1937	'Three Short Preludes 1. in G, 2. in F, 3. in G minor' ³¹	Arnold Richardson	Unidentified [West London Synagogue?]

Following Richardson's performances came a broadcasting hiatus, as far as Stanford's organ oeuvre was concerned. This lasted until after VE Day.

³⁰ The *Radio Times* listing for this event identifies the works in Chamberlain's broadcast solely as 'Allegro and Andante tranquillo (on Themes of Orlando Gibbons)'; the tempo indications confirm that these must have been the selections played.

³¹ So reads the *Radio Times* listing. There are several candidates for the Preludes in G and F, but '3. in G minor' can only refer to Op. 101 No. 2.

**Table 3. BBC broadcasts of Stanford's organ music,
1945–1980**

Date of broadcast	Stanford piece	Organist	Venue
27 May 1945	Op. 101 No. 6 ³²	Unidentified	Congregational Church, Coventry
16 August 1949	Op. 105 No. 6 ³³	Melville Cook	Parish Church, Leeds
20 September 1949	Op. 105 No. 2 ³⁴	Gordon Slater	Lincoln Cathedral
22 August 1950	Op. 105 No. 6 ³⁵	Francis Jackson	York Minster
1 January 1952	<i>Fantasia</i> , Op. 103 No. 1	Unidentified [Alfred W. Wilcock?]	Exeter Cathedral
15 January 1952	Op. 105 No. 6 ³⁶	Melville Cook	Parish Church, Leeds
24 May 1957	Unidentified	Lionel Dakers	Unidentified [Exeter Cathedral?]
19 July 1957	Unidentified, possibly as per 13 December 1937	Arnold Richardson	Unidentified [West London Synagogue?]
20 April 1965	<i>Sonata Britannica</i>	Gavin Brown	Parish Church, Brighton
14 June 1971	<i>Sonata Celtica</i>	George Thalben-Ball	Unidentified
22 July 1974	Op. 105 No. 6 ³⁷	David Pettit	Colston Hall, Bristol
24 March 1975	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	Francis Jackson	St George the Martyr Church, Preston
23 April 1975	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	Nicholas Danby	St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh
22 May 1975	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	Donald Hunt	Parish Church, Leeds
23 June 1975	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	Ronald Perrin	Unidentified
24 March 1976	<i>Fantasia and Toccata</i>	Roy Massey	Hereford Cathedral
17 November 1976	'Fantasia in A minor, Op. 105' ³⁸	Brian Martin	Westminster Cathedral
18 December 1978	'Postlude in B minor' ³⁹	Peter Le Huray	St Mary's Parish Church, Little Walsingham, Norfolk

³² The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Prelude No. 6 on an old Irish church melody.'

³³ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude in D minor.'

³⁴ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude on Gibbons Song 22.'

³⁵ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude in D minor.'

³⁶ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude in D minor.'

³⁷ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude in D minor.'

³⁸ No such work exists with that opus number and key. Possibly this is a misidentification of the Op. 103 No. 1 *Fantasia*, which is in D minor.

³⁹ Almost certainly a misprint for the D minor Postlude, Op. 105 No. 6.

Date of broadcast	Stanford piece	Organist	Venue
13 February 1980	Op. 105 No. 6 ⁴⁰	Ronald Perrin	Ripon Cathedral
25 February 1980	Op. 105 No. 2 ⁴¹	John Davies	Winchester College Chapel

Several points could be made in connection with these tables. Four points in particular warrant emphasising here.

First and most obviously, the tables might not include every single broadcast of a Stanford organ work. Habitues of radio stations will know the dangers of fundamentalist literalism when it comes to reading magazines' and newspapers' radio listings. Other Stanford organ works might have gone to air during the relevant periods. Announcers are not always as punctilious as they should be in the logging of tracks which they choose, often at only a few minutes' notice, as 'fillers.' Nor, even if announcers did log those tracks, would *Radio Times* issues (prepared weeks in advance) have been able to include them.

Second, most of the above broadcasts included Stanford's organ works as part of Anglican liturgies. During many of these liturgies, a good deal of Stanford's choral music (and choral music by others) was performed, as the *Radio Times* listings repeatedly confirm.

Third, the tables make it evident how most organists remained content to choose the same handful of Stanford organ compositions while overlooking the rest. The *Fantasia and Toccata* is an admirable piece, but transmitting four different interpretations of it, by four different organists, within three months – between March and June 1975 – suggests oddly inept programming.

Fourth, the difference between the popularity of the organ sonatas (the named sonatas, anyway) before World War II, and their near-disappearance after World War II, is remarkable. Not once was a Stanford sonata heard between 1937 and 1965.

Willingness by the BBC to disseminate Stanford's organ output had no impact on record labels' release lists for all too long a period. In fairness, there could be heard a

⁴⁰ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude in D minor.'

⁴¹ The *Radio Times* listing reads 'Postlude on Gibbons Song 22.'

very occasional voice deploring this gap. The March 1958 *Gramophone* edition published a letter from a reader named H.F. Macklin of Hadleigh, Essex, which listed various British composers – Stanford among them – unrepresented in the catalogues at the time by any organ pieces. To Macklin’s sorrow, most Romantic organ repertoire from any land remained unfashionable:

There is a large amount of various Baroque [composers], Bach, Handel and even César Franck available for which we are properly grateful, but so much remains untapped, notably from the eighteenth-century English composers, and from more recent times ... It is a modern trend to decry ‘romantic’ music and we are in a period when only pre-Bach or the very modern are considered fashionable. Admittedly, a lot of second-rate and third-rate organ music was played 40–50 years ago, but composers such as [Basil] Harwood, [Alfred] Hollins, [William] Wolstenholme, Stanford and [Percy] Whitlock, to name only a few, have composed much that is fine music and well written for the instrument.

In America, where the general public is more organ-conscious than here, there appears to be a demand for all types of organ music. A great variety of organ records is available made on organs capable of reproducing the effects the composers desired. Undoubtedly an opportunity exists for an enterprising company to record [English] organ music, played on a typically English organ and by an English organist.⁴²

Not for another seven years following Macklin’s plea did the discographic situation change. In 1965 the obscure London firm Ryemuse Productions issued Stanford’s Op. 105 No. 2, which the sleeve and label alike identified solely as ‘Postlude on a theme of Orlando Gibbons.’ This appeared not on an LP but on a seven-inch, 45rpm Extended Play release. Lionel Dakers played the Stanford and the other three tracks on the organ of Exeter Cathedral, where he had been employed since 1957 as music director.⁴³ Two years after the Dakers EP record came an LP by Francis Jackson, who had directed the music at York Minster since 1946, and who included Stanford’s *Fantasia and Toccata* in a collection otherwise devoted to works by Franck, Liszt, and the early-nineteenth-

⁴² H.F. Macklin, ‘Organ Recitals,’ *The Gramophone* 35:418 (March 1958), 437.

⁴³ Ryemuse Productions RP7009 (for this and for other Stanford organ releases mentioned in the present chapter, see the *Discography*). The other three tracks are, in the order of appearance on the disc, *Procession*, by Francis Jackson; an organ-only arrangement of the Siciliano from Bach’s *Sonata in E Flat* for flute and keyboard, BWV1031; and an *Air and Gavotte* by Samuel Wesley, father of Samuel Sebastian Wesley. Stanford’s contribution comes at the end.

century Yorkshireman Matthew Camidge.⁴⁴ Abbey, the label which released Jackson's recording, specialised – as did Ryemuse – in British ecclesiastical performance. Both companies, in other words, quite literally 'preached to the choir': their products, not very often reviewed in generalist music periodicals, tended to attract little notice outside the self-selecting ranks of the Anglican cathedral tradition's devotees. Churches' souvenir shops were much likelier than most mainstream record stores to make such discs available for sale.

The same considerations applied to the short-lived Vista company, which included several Stanford pieces in the organ recitals that it issued on LP during the 1970s, but which did not long survive the death in 1979 of its founder Michael Smythe. Vista VPS1040 (1976) offered the most comprehensive coverage to date of Stanford's organ output, containing as it did the *Fantasia and Toccata* along with Op. 101 Nos. 2 and 3, all played by Ronald Perrin on the organ of Ripon Cathedral. Op. 101 No. 6 appeared in 1977 on two separate Vista LPs: VPS1047 (Christopher Herrick, St Mary-at-Hill, London) and Vista VPS1051 (Geoffrey Tristram, Christchurch Priory, Dorset). Also in 1977, Garth Benson included on Vista VPS1045 – recorded at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol – the *Sonata Britannica*: but only its second movement. In 1969 Lionel Dakers had included the *Sonata Celtica's* finale (and its finale alone) on an LP made at Exeter Cathedral by Pilgrim, a label still less celebrated than Vista.⁴⁵ Presumably, committing an entire Stanford organ sonata to disc had not yet become a viable economic proposition, even for boutique enterprises which micromanaged their budgets and viewed a self-selecting minority market as their whole *raison d'être*.

Meanwhile, a greater – if still limited – awareness of Stanford's general creative gifts had begun to emerge. Discussions of Stanford's music in two paperback surveys from the 1940s – *British Music of Our Time*, edited by A.L. Bacharach, and *Music in England*, written entirely by *Grove* editor Eric Blom – were much better-mannered than Shaw, Bax, and John F. Runciman had been towards Stanford's works. These works elicited outright enthusiasm from Scott Goddard, *News Chronicle* music correspondent

⁴⁴ Abbey ABY621.

⁴⁵ Pilgrim JLPS155.

and author of the Bacharach volume's Stanford entry.⁴⁶ According to Blom, Stanford 'narrowly missed, one cannot quite tell why, becoming an Irish Dvořák.'⁴⁷ To inspire even such qualified comparisons with Dvořák is no mean achievement for any composer, and Blom called the *Irish Rhapsodies* 'far better and more musical things of that kind than Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsodies"'.⁴⁸

The 1952 centenary of Stanford's birth attracted some official notice. On 28 September of that year (two days before the composer's actual hundredth birthday), BBC radio gave over the whole of its *Music Magazine* program to Stanford. This program included the affectionate reminiscences by John Ireland of his former teacher. A second BBC commemoration took place on the birthday itself; it consisted entirely of choral works and songs. The *Radio Times* marked the centenary with a short article by pianist Harold Rutland.⁴⁹ Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells both delivered commemorative lectures on Stanford which subsequently appeared in print. Howells, in his turn, received a poignant homage from Guy Stanford at Westminster Abbey, where on 30 September he and Vaughan Williams placed wreaths at the composer's tomb. Guy put on Howells' finger a ring which he himself had been bequeathed by his father.⁵⁰

Yet an influential 1957 tome, *A History of British Music*, by Elgar's biographer Percy M. Young, dealt with Stanford in such a way as to suggest that Goddard and Blom had written in vain, and that Bax deserved to have the last word. Perhaps the very fact of Young being Elgar's biographer contributed to his undervaluing of Stanford and Parry:

It will be appreciated that Parry and Stanford, unwittingly, gave rise to a heresy that had been stirring in the womb of the national music: the

⁴⁶ Scott Goddard, 'The Roots and the Soil: Nineteenth-Century Origins,' in Bacharach, A.L. (ed.), *British Music of Our Time* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1946), 11–30; Eric Blom, *Music in England* (West Drayton, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1947).

⁴⁷ Blom, *Music in England*, 219.

⁴⁸ Blom, *Music in England*, 219.

⁴⁹ Harold Rutland, 'Music Diary: The Stanford Centenary,' *Radio Times* 1507 (28 September 1952), 5.

⁵⁰ Dibble, *Stanford*, 461. Incongruously enough, given Stanford's political conservatism, the ring had once belonged to the regicidal revolutionist Philippe, Duke of Orléans – Philippe Égalité, as he became known – who had left the ring to his daughter. She had escaped to Ireland while the Reign of Terror raged at home. Somehow the ring eventually came into the possession of an uncle of Stanford, who willed it to Charles Villiers (Dibble, *Stanford*, 461).

heresy that an 'educated' musician was superior as musician to an 'uneducated' musician.⁵¹

Clearly, then, for Young (as for Shaw and Hill before him), educated – or, to use Young's scare-quotes, 'educated' – musicians were to be condemned through the very fact of their education. Not once does Young hint at the idea that being uneducated, and attempting to make an asset from anti-intellectualism, might possess artistic dangers at least as great as anything which learnedness causes. Several pages earlier, Young had asserted:

[T]here was, in the early years of the present century, a frequent tendency to overestimate the value of their [Parry's and Stanford's] compositions. With the advantage of perspective it is now to be conceded that Parry's 'nobility' was often plain dullness, and the brilliance of Stanford was no more than fluency, guided by an imaginative intelligence, but restrained by a faulty sense of aesthetic values. Parry and Stanford have been joined together in a partnership but this association has really benefited neither. In the long run their works, with very few exceptions, have been consigned to the scrap-heap.⁵²

The conspicuous implication of the last sentence is that the 'consign[ment] to the scrap-heap' had been fundamentally warranted. Young went further. Employing yet another line of attack which attained cliché status, he echoed Shaw's and Bax's accusations of insufficient Hibernian fervour on Stanford's part, combining these echoes with a belated and unabashed attempt to teach the dead Stanford how to compose:

Stanford's Irishness was vitiated by a disbelief in any vital form of national expression. He fell back upon watery legend and comfortable fancies to please drawing-room galleries. ... But before Ireland made any obvious impression on his music he had thoroughly schooled himself in styles that were antithetical to all that truly Irish was. And, for that matter, to everything that English music should have been.⁵³

Even those who, unlike Gray and Bax and Young, continued to esteem Stanford tended to treat him persistently as a teacher who happened to compose, rather than as a composer who happened to teach. This annoyed the composer's son Guy Stanford a

⁵¹ Percy M. Young, *A History of British Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 524.

⁵² Young, *British Music*, 506.

⁵³ Young, *British Music*, 517.

good deal, and the latter complained in 1952 that in published accounts of his father, 'far too much emphasis has been given to his teaching and far too little on his composition.'⁵⁴ *The Times*' death-notice for Stanford (unsigned, like all that newspaper's necrologies) contains the astute remark: 'A man who is a composer does not want to be remembered by anything else.'⁵⁵ Later in the same notice comes the observation: 'He [Stanford] was an artist through and through, and when his friend Parry died he was heard to say that the only memorial a composer wants is that his works should be published, performed, and so live after him.'⁵⁶

Frank Howes (chief music critic at *The Times* from 1943 to 1960) published in 1966 *The English Musical Renaissance*, a much bigger survey than anything that the austerity-pinched Bacharach and Blom had dared to attempt, and a survey that treated Stanford the composer with consistent respect. Admittedly, Howes remained silent on the organ music, save for a stray and careless reference to 'six [*sic*] organ sonatas.'⁵⁷ But Howes even found kind words for the university training of musicians (Shaw and Runciman, not to mention Heseltine-Warlock the Oxford dropout, would have loathed such kindness):

The university connections of Parry and Stanford are important, because an infusion of general culture was necessary, even with a genius like Elgar appearing from nowhere ... The word ['academic'] ought not to carry a reproach, for it implies both erudition and skill, an approach to the things of the mind that regards them as intrinsically worth while for their own sake without ulterior purpose.⁵⁸

Nonetheless, gratifying though such favourable notices were, they failed to generate a keener interest among musicians in the main body of Stanford's work. When Kathleen Ferrier died in 1953, the public taste for Stanford's solo songs had seemed to die with her, if we may judge by the subsequent absence of new recordings. Nor did Stanford revivals, where they did happen, habitually prompt Fourth Estate

⁵⁴ Quoted in Rodmell, *Stanford*, 374.

⁵⁵ Anon., 'Sir C.V. Stanford. A Composer of Genius. Pioneer Work for Music,' *The Times* (31 March 1924), 17. The obituarist incorrectly gave the Christian name of Stanford's father as 'Robert', perhaps through confusion with Sir Robert Prescott Stewart.

⁵⁶ Anon., 'Sir C.V. Stanford. A Composer of Genius,' *The Times* (31 March 1924), 17.

⁵⁷ Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), 152.

⁵⁸ Howes, *English Musical Renaissance*, 149, 151–152.

compliments. Critic Martin Cooper (father of the pianist Imogen Cooper), reporting on the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford for the Stanford centenary, spoke for most of his colleagues with his verdict on Stanford's *Stabat Mater*. This work received at least two performances in 1952 (independently of the Three Choirs rendition, the Cambridge Musical Society broadcast the work on 29 November).⁵⁹ In *The Musical Times*, Cooper damned with faint praise:

[Stanford's] memory still remains green among the older generation and above all among his pupils. To the rest of us his fluent Italianate music, so redolent of Dvořák and Verdi, is hard to reconcile with what we expect from a composer who appears in the history-books as one of the Founding Fathers of the British school; and perhaps for that reason it was not a happy choice ... but so long as no odious comparisons obtruded themselves, no unprejudiced listener can have failed, I think, to enjoy and then to forget the eminently respectable music.⁶⁰

In a similar condescending spirit, Sir Malcolm Sargent's biographer Charles Reid upbraided Sir Edward Bairstow (York Minister's chief organist from 1913 until his death in 1946) for having called Stanford's Anglican works 'as fresh to me now as on the day when I first heard them ... far and away the most perfect settings since Tudor times.'⁶¹ To this commendation, Reid objected:

No gulf could be greater than that which separates Stanford's facile eclecticism from the grave, gleaming purity of Byrd and his peers. ... When it came to post-Wagnerian techniques, Stanford was uncertain of touch and intemperate of tongue.⁶²

Cooper's and Reid's rebukes, though, count as mild censure compared with the treatment meted out to Stanford in Peter J. Pirie's 1979 book *The English Musical Renaissance*. Devoid of staff-notation examples, and suffering from its author's obdurate

⁵⁹ Rutland, 'Music Diary,' 5.

⁶⁰ Martin Cooper, 'Three Choirs Festival,' *The Musical Times* 93: 1317 (November 1952), 513–514, at 513. 'Eminently respectable' clearly served as British musical journalism's equivalent to the jibe current in British theatrical circles during the 1950s: 'well-made play.' The whole idea of turning the adjective 'well-made' into a term of abuse, when in all previous societies it had been an encomium, is a concept which deserves to be unpacked one day by a future sociologist or cultural historian.

⁶¹ Quoted in Charles Reid, 'Britain from Stanford to Vaughan Williams,' in Arthur Jacobs (ed.), *Choral Music: A Symposium* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1968), 266–285, at 267.

⁶² Reid, 'Britain from Stanford to Vaughan Williams,' 266–268.

propensity to confuse a mere assertion with a reasoned contention, the book demonstrates a *parti pris* according to which music must be evaluated by its adherence or otherwise to Teutonic modernist principles: more especially those of Schoenberg. In consequence, not altogether surprisingly, Pirie's attitude towards Stanford (and towards Parry also) was from start to finish hostile. 'A clever man of talent'⁶³ is as near to commendation of Stanford as Pirie ever allows himself. These excerpts will speak for the rest:

The sum total of our musical achievement in the Victorian era was meagre, reactionary and undistinguished. Stanford, who lived until 1924, by which time Schoenberg had introduced serial technique, is shrivelled in the blaze of a composer like Richard Strauss. ... [E]xamining all the facts, and weighing his pupils' reactions to him, it is hard to resist the conclusion that Stanford's legendary reputation as a teacher has been exaggerated. His methods do not appear to have been subtle; his outlook was anything but liberal and constructive. ... the result of his teaching, in the majority of cases, was to reinforce a conservatism that was already present in all his pupils, the only one of whom showed any radical bent in later years was Frank Bridge. ... It seems a pity that a teacher who had so little sympathy with the music, not only of his own time, but the more progressive music of the immediately preceding generation, should have been able to exercise so much influence at this juncture in English musical history.⁶⁴

It will not have escaped readers' notice that Pirie's attacks manage to avoid any engagement with Stanford's actual music beyond the superficial. Once every allowance has been made for the holes in the Stanford discography of 1979, and for the prevalent difficulties in tracking down performances of Stanford's non-liturgical creations, the likelihood remains that Pirie (who died in 1997) had heard almost nothing which Stanford composed; had not bothered to seek out library copies of Stanford's sheet music; and felt unabashed by these rather grievous lacunae in his knowledge.

Pirie had so committed himself – along with, it has to be said, many other writers on music at the time – to a modernist philosophy of the most teleological sort, that he could not have done Stanford any historiographical justice without violating his own

⁶³ Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Gollancz, 1979), 39.

⁶⁴ Pirie, *English Musical Renaissance*, 37–38.

principles. Nor could his contemporary Peter Racine Fricker, who in 1959 had bragged of the unique cosmopolitanism with which composers of his generation were allegedly endowed: 'What has happened,' Fricker loftily assured a *Times* interviewer, 'is that since the war we've become aware that Europe exists.'⁶⁵ That Stanford, Parry, Elgar and Vaughan Williams had been equally 'aware that Europe exists'; that George Butterworth had carried his awareness of Europe to the extent of getting himself killed on European soil: these truths had somehow failed to impinge upon Fricker's attention, or at any rate they failed to trouble him.

Nonetheless, others in the Britain of 1979, and long afterwards, could well have found Stanford objectionable on specifically geopolitical grounds, rather than on more general grounds of insufficient avant-gardism or ostensible provincialism. In 1979, 'The Troubles' had already plagued Northern Ireland for ten years. Day after day, month after month, they had forced events in Belfast (and in Dublin) to the very forefront of British governments' policy; and the power of pro-IRA sentiment in the United States threatened to make nonsense of Whitehall's 'special relationship' with Washington. For three decades, successive Labour and Conservative administrations tried all possible methods of ending the violence, methods which encompassed the extremes of coercion and lenity, but which alike failed to realise their stated aim. Had Britain been afflicted at this stage with the 24/7 news cycle which plagues us in the twenty-first century, the public fear of Irish nationalist terrorism would have been still greater than it was. As matters stood, the fear became quite great enough, particularly after the 1979 assassination of Lord Mountbatten, and after the almost successful attempt on Margaret Thatcher's life five years later.

Anyone who lived in Britain through some or all of The Troubles will vouch for the frequency in everyday conversation (as in the mass media) of casual anti-Irish sentiments, and, in particular, the unease which even the most stoic individuals were apt to feel when they heard a Hibernian accent. Such accents had been indelibly associated in the public mind with balaclava-wearers seeking to perpetuate another bloodbath. It was unreasonable to suppose that while The Troubles seethed, a figure as

⁶⁵ 'Special Correspondent,' 'Composer's integrity as an artist,' *The Times* (7 September 1959): 3.

nationally ambiguous as Stanford would be taken to the UK public's collective bosom. During the 1970s, even Stanford's Anglican choral works were surprisingly rare visitors to the recording catalogue. When *Gramophone* reviewers Edward Greenfield, Robert Layton and Ivan March released the 1975 edition of their *Penguin Stereo Record Guide*, they did not include a single entry for Stanford. The Lyrita label, which did so much exemplary pioneering work in the 1970s to revive overlooked British compositions, left Stanford alone until the 1980s.

Although Greenfield himself later voiced great admiration for Stanford's music, the effortful jocosity of the headlines applied to his Stanford-related *Guardian* columns – 'The ill luck of the Irish' and 'Brit with a brogue' – indicates a certain journalistic unease with the subject.⁶⁶ (The headlines, needless to say, could have been devised by someone other than Greenfield.) Praising in 1982 a new LP – conducted by Norman Del Mar – of Stanford's *Irish Symphony*, Greenfield mourned what both the Emerald Isle and England had lost, in musical terms, amid civil strife: 'Bless the time (not without its troubles) when an Irish protestant could write a symphony which so unselfconsciously reflects a love of his country.'⁶⁷

Symptomatic was the fateful inability (through whatever cause) of a lifelong Stanford enthusiast, Frederick Hudson, to finish the Stanford biography at which he toiled. Hudson, in 1963, became the first professor of music at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. During his tenure, he acquired and catalogued large numbers of Stanford manuscripts.⁶⁸ For this diligence, every subsequent student of Stanford owes Hudson a vast debt.⁶⁹ Moreover, Hudson wrote the Stanford entries in *MGG* as well as

⁶⁶ Edward Greenfield, 'The ill luck of the Irish,' *The Guardian* (3 August 1982), 9; 'Brit with a brogue,' *The Guardian* (21 August 1985), 11.

⁶⁷ Greenfield, 'The ill luck.'

⁶⁸ As early as 1964 Hudson had written the following letter to *The Sunday Times*: 'Dr Frederick Hudson [Dept. of Music, The University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne] would be grateful to receive full details (title, media, words, opus number, date, signature) of autograph manuscripts of Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), the composer, in private possession, libraries and other institutions.' Frederick Hudson, 'Information wanted,' *The Sunday Times* (14 June 1964), 19.

⁶⁹ Adèle Commins, 'In Stanford's hand: the manuscript collection of Charles Villiers Stanford at the Robinson Library, Newcastle University,' *Brio*, 49:2 (2012), 77–91. The present writer had the inestimable honour of being granted permission to examine several of these manuscripts, during January 2020, by the Robinson Library's staffers (who also very kindly supplied digital copies of other manuscripts when COVID restrictions made in-person visits to the library untenable).

in the 1980 *New Grove*; and he discussed in three *Musical Times* articles various aspects of Stanford-related primary sources.⁷⁰ Lamentably, Hudson's promised *magnum opus* never eventuated: a deficit all the more regrettable in that Del Mar's 1982 recording proved to be a portent, as the next twenty years of frequent Stanford revivals showed. The more of these revivals took place, the more Plunket Greene's 1935 biography began to suffer from its age; and the more obvious the need grew for more scholarly and formal accounts than Plunket Greene's own (its assets notwithstanding) as regards Stanford's career.

7.3 Stanford reception history in post-independence Ireland

To read *The Irish Times'* eulogy for Stanford, one might almost suppose not only that Ireland's war of independence had never taken place, but that the Irish Sea had been abolished by divine fiat. 'A Great Musician: Death of Sir Charles Stanford,' ran the newspaper's headline.⁷¹ Whether the composer, given his previously noted objections to Yeats's politics, would have approved of everything which the obituarist wrote must be conjectural:

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, who died on Saturday, at his residence in Lower Berkeley Street, London, W., in his 72nd year, was to musical Ireland what W.B. Yeats is to literary Ireland.⁷²

But Stanford would hardly have baulked at either the article's detailed descriptions of his Continental acclaim, or its later assessment of his creativity:

His rare imaginative gifts and solid learning had earned for him the profound respect of foreign musical circles, in which his works were better understood than at home. He had produced operas at Hanover, Hamburg, Breslau, [and] Leipzig, and he conducted concerts in Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels, and Paris, in all instances with success. By many English critics he was still regarded as pre-eminently a musician for musicians, but, as knowledge of his art increased, together with a more accurate perception of its individuality, a better judgment prevailed, and

⁷⁰ Frederick Hudson, 'C.V. Stanford: Nova Bibliographica,' *The Musical Times* 104:1448 (October 1963), 728–731; 'C.V. Stanford: Nova Bibliographica II,' *The Musical Times* 105:1460 (October 1964), 734–738; 'C.V. Stanford: Nova Bibliographica III,' *The Musical Times* 108: 1490 (April 1967), 326.

⁷¹ Anon., 'A Great Musician: Death of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford,' *The Irish Times* (31 March 1924), 6.

⁷² Anon., 'A Great Musician.'

his genius became more widely appreciated. ... Sir Charles Stanford's versatility as a composer was amazing. He left no branch of his art untouched. His songs are universally known. To the library of modern chamber music he has made a generous contribution. He has greatly enriched that of Church and organ music. Though even now more familiar in Germany than in England, his operas are prized by the best-instructed classes of British musicians, doubtless in time to find their rightful place in the popular repertoire. His symphonies, distinguished by the finest scholarship, full of original thought, and perfect in style, are works that will live.

The list of Sir Charles Stanford's compositions, though very extensive, represents but a tithe of the labour he accomplished during a long and busy career in his capacities as professor, conductor, and teacher. Like the pilgrim of the Canterbury Tales, 'a trewe swynkere [*true labourer*] and a good was he,' and the sterling services which he rendered to the British school of music can never be forgotten.

Preaching from the words 'He was transfigured before them,' at the 3.15 Service yesterday afternoon in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, the Rev. J.M. Harden, DD, LLD, made a brief reference to the death of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. They all, he said, mourned the passing away of that great musician. His life was devoted to the lifting up of the music of the Church, both religiously and artistically.

At the conclusion of the Service, Dr G.H.P. Hewson, Cathedral organist, played the Dead March in 'Saul,' the congregation standing.⁷³

Such a panegyric suggested that during the first years after the Irish Civil War, sanity was breaking in. Radio Éireann began broadcasting to the country in 1926, and it hired orchestral players from the start, implying a certain preparedness to take its wider cultural responsibilities seriously. Fate decreed the aborting of such plans. Dire postponements frustrated all but the most basic infrastructural preconditions for performing activity. One notorious case of such deferrals: Dublin had to wait until 1981 to acquire a public concert hall suitable for a standard orchestra, let alone suitable for an orchestra big enough to provide adequate interpretations of *Heldenleben*, *Gurrelieder*, *The Pines of Rome*, the *Symphony of a Thousand*, and the *Poem of Ecstasy*. Ireland's operatic life languished in just as sickly a state.

⁷³ Anon., 'A Great Musician.'

Historians wishing to assign blame for this deplorable situation can identify one conspicuous figure. From 1932 to 1973 Éamon De Valera dominated Irish politics, first as Taoiseach, subsequently as two-term President. On the rare and temporary occasions when he found himself deprived of office, his shadow continued to fall across the Hibernian political landscape. Unfortunately, De Valera possessed no enthusiasm for classical music. Still more unfortunately, and in patent contrast to most other modern politicians, he felt no need to counterfeit such enthusiasm. Mervyn Wall, an official in Radio Éireann, bemoaned De Valera's attitude:

The regrettable thing was that he hadn't the slightest understanding of, or interest in, the arts. He didn't think them important. I remember a public statement of his in which he said that he couldn't see any reason for playing the work of foreign composers in Ireland, as we already had our own beautiful Irish music.⁷⁴

If this was the standpoint of 'Dev' regarding works by non-Irishmen in general, one can imagine how chary he would have been about expenditure of taxpayers' funds to promote works by expatriate Irishmen: more especially expatriate Irishmen of Protestant allegiance like Stanford. Besides, living Irish composers during De Valera's rule could have been pardoned for thinking that if any musicians were permitted (in the spirit of Lazarus) to gather up the crumbs from under the austere Taoiseach's table, they themselves had a better claim upon such crumbs than did any dead composers, however gifted the latter were. The principle of 'let the dead bury their dead' has, after all, Gospel sanction. Hardly any wonder, then, that the title of a recent Irish tome referred to Ireland's classical music as 'the invisible art.'⁷⁵ Those native-born composers who emerged in Ireland after independence – they included Geoffrey Molyneux Palmer (whose settings of verses by James Joyce won compliments from the poet himself), Brian Boydell, Thomas Christopher Kelly, Seán Ó Riada, A.J. Potter, and Gerard Victory – paid no discernible attention to Stanford's example. Radio Éireann's archives⁷⁶ furnish

⁷⁴ Quoted in Brian P. Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1991), 29.

⁷⁵ Michael Dervan (ed.), *The Invisible Art: A Century of Music in Ireland 1916–2016* (Stillorgan, Ireland: New Island, 2016).

⁷⁶ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/> (accessed 8 May 2020).

no evidence of any music by Stanford having been broadcast by that network during De Valera's lifetime (he died in 1975) or for the rest of the century.⁷⁷ This all fitted with the dual reputation from which Stanford suffered in posterity's eyes: that of being too Irish while simultaneously not Irish enough; too English while simultaneously not English enough. An astringent 1965 epigram from Conor Cruise O'Brien acquires a special pertinence to Stanford reception: 'Irishness is not primarily a question of birth or blood or language; it is the condition of being involved in the Irish situation, and usually of being mauled by it.'⁷⁸

Predictably in view of this neglect, Irish commemorations of the 1952 Stanford centennial amounted to little. F.C.J. Swanton, employed for many years by the Church of Ireland as an organist (he gave various recitals on Radio Éireann), did pay honour to Stanford in an *Irish Times* essay. After discussing Stanford's versions of Irish tunes popularised by Thomas Moore and by the latter's collaborator Sir John Stephenson, Swanton mentioned an unexpected connection in which the composer continued to have a Hibernian following. It involved the Feis Ceoil, an organisation dating back to 1897 and aiming to encourage Irish-born musicians by means of annual competitive festivals.

Stanford's own original songs have been kept alive by the competition started in the Feis Ceoil by the late Madame Coslett Heller and given each year for a different branch of his composition. The songs are imbued with a characteristic Irish flavour, a perfection of accompaniment, whereby the maximum effect is obtained by economy of means. The late E.J. Moeran had a very high opinion of the songs of Stanford, as he told the writer.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Surprisingly, Stanford fared a little better on Irish *television* than on Irish radio. A Church of Ireland clergyman, John Thomas Farquhar Paterson of Ballsbridge, discussed Stanford's Anglican church music on Radio Telefís Éireann's *Outlook* program (9 August 1974). 'Our Correspondent,' 'Church of Ireland Notes: Grubb Institute Irish Conference,' *Irish Times* (6 August 1974), 9.

⁷⁸ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Writers and Politics* (New York: Pantheon, 1965), 98–99.

⁷⁹ F.C.J. Swanton, 'Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, 1852–1952: a centenary appreciation,' *The Irish Times* (1 October 1952), 4. Early participants in the Feis Ceoil contests included the young John McCormack and none other than James Joyce, the latter having shown considerable youthful promise as a singer. Mme Coslett Heller taught at the Leinster School of Music, which had been founded in 1904, and which continues to operate today.

Even Swanton, nevertheless, had to admit how small a proportion of Stanford's total output could be encountered, by the Irish in 1952, outside ecclesiastical ceremonies:

At present the works of our composer are considered rather out of fashion. They are held to have not enough orchestral colouring and modern chording. Time alone will show what his fate as a composer will be ... Meanwhile at least his works for the Church live on, in the continuous Services heard everywhere. History teaches us that the Church has often kept alive the works of composers whose secular works fell out of use, to be revived by later generations.⁸⁰

Looking back on such neglect – a neglect temporarily interrupted when a 1960 instalment of the *Irish Times's* 'London Letter' commented on the BBC Operatic Society's revival of *Shamus O'Brien*⁸¹ – Dublin music journalist Michael Dervan noted:

... rejection of the likes of the staunchly Unionist Stanford seems to have a lot to do with political nationalism. Stanford spent his life as a hugely important mover and shaker in England, and he may still be tainted by the kind of thinking that rejected as un-Irish the Irish men and women who fought in the British Army during two world wars. ... It's hardly surprising then that it was not an Irish record company, but an English one, Chandos, which first recorded the orchestral works of Hamilton Harty in the 1980s (with the Ulster Orchestra) and followed up with the symphonies and *Irish Rhapsodies* of Stanford.⁸²

7.4 Stanford reception history in Continental Europe and the USA

The Great War, destroying so much else, also obliterated most of Stanford's wider European fame. Though his passing did not go totally unreported on the Continent, such mentions as it inspired were brief and cursory, as they would not have been if he had died in 1914 or in 1904. A Vienna-based newspaper, in its '*Tagesneuigkeiten* [daily news]' round-up, mentioned that 'in London the famous composer Charles Villiers

⁸⁰ Swanton, 'Stanford,' 4.

⁸¹ Anon., 'London Letter,' *The Irish Times* (10 October 1960), 5.

⁸² Dervan, *Invisible Art*, xx.

Stanford has died at the age of 72 [*recte*: 71] years.’⁸³ The composer’s former pupil Edward J. Dent, in his 1924 article on modern British music for Guido Adler’s *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* – an article which Dent updated in 1930, and which is best known for its fierce denunciation of Elgar – referred sometimes to Stanford but in less detail than would have been expected from him before the war.⁸⁴

Radio Wien, the Austrian national broadcasting service founded in 1924, transmitted on the afternoon of 30 December 1937 various British pieces, among them the ‘Caoine’ movement – a ‘caoine’ is an Irish lament – from Stanford’s Clarinet Sonata. (This movement was heard in a newly released recording by Britain’s leading clarinetist of the age, Frederick Thurston, who omitted the sonata’s other movements.)⁸⁵ Still, such occasional Continental reminders of Stanford’s existence made a bleak contrast with the days when Joachim, Kreisler, and Mengelberg performed his works. Even these reminders, harking back as they did to a pre-1914 European cultural pluralism, would cease as Hitler’s empire metastasised. Within three months of the ‘Caoine’ broadcast came the *Anschluss*, whereupon Austria’s new rulers closed down Radio Wien, and established in its place the *Reichssender Wien*, which depended completely upon Berlin for its program content.

After the Nazi regime’s end, a very few European musical events gave a hearing to Stanford pieces. At Norway’s 1953 Bergen Festival, local conductors Thorlief Aamodt and Lars Heggen directed some of Stanford’s sacred works, though media coverage of the festival leaves unclear which of his sacred works audiences heard.⁸⁶ Yet from the chief centres of post-1945 European concert activity, Stanford’s name was absent.

In America, Stanford’s fame fared somewhat better at first. Leopold Stokowski, erstwhile Royal College of Music student, had conducted Stanford’s Third Symphony twice before the Great War: the first time at Cincinnati in 1911, and the second time at Philadelphia in the following year. Already Stokowski had included various Stanford

⁸³ ‘In London starb der bekannte Komponist Charles Villiers Stanford im Alter von 72 Jahren.’ Anon., ‘Tagesneuigkeiten,’ *Neues Wiener Journal* (2 April 1924): 10.

⁸⁴ Edward J. Dent, ‘Moderne: Engländer,’ in Guido Adler (ed.), *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte unter Mitwirkung von Fachgenossen* (Frankfurt: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1924), 1044–1057.

⁸⁵ Anon., ‘Radio Wien,’ *Neues Wiener Journal* (30 December 1937), 17.

⁸⁶ Olin Downes, ‘Tribute to Grieg: 110th Anniversary of Composer’s Birth Observed With a Festival in Norway,’ *The New York Times* (28 June 1953), X7.

choral works in the music lists for St Bartholomew's (Episcopalian) Church, New York City, where from 1905 to 1908 he served as choirmaster and chief organist.⁸⁷ During 1915 Carl Stoeckel, a wealthy music-lover who directed Connecticut's Norfolk Festival, had invited Stanford to conduct some of his compositions, including the Second Piano Concerto. Stanford had hoped to accept this invitation, and to receive while in the States the honorary doctorate which Yale wished to give him. These hopes the *Lusitania* disaster wrecked (Chapter Two gives further information about Stanford's abandonment of his plan to cross the Atlantic). In Stanford's absence, the Norfolk concert still went ahead – with Anglo-German Harold Bauer as the solo pianist, and with Ohio-born Arthur Mees acting as substitute conductor – while both the concerto's autograph score and its published score bear a dedication to Stoeckel.

With Stoeckel's death in 1925 (Mees had predeceased Stoeckel by two years), Stanford lost his greatest Stateside admirer. There remained enough interest in Stanford among Americans to justify the local manufacture of a few Stanford recordings. *The Blue Bird* appeared on two Victor 78rpm releases between 1924 and 1930, the earlier sung by a group identified merely as 'Mendelssohn Chorus', the later sung by the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia. (In neither case is a conductor named.) Grainger, while in the States, committed to disc two Stanford piano miniatures, *Maguire's Kick* (in 1917) and the *Fourth Irish Dance* (in 1922).⁸⁸ But it is significant and symptomatic that Stokowski, after permanently quitting the organ loft for the orchestral conductor's podium, never revived the Third or performed any other Stanford symphony. Given the penchant which Stokowski exhibited, both in concert and in the recording studio, for reviving even the most out-of-the-way compositions (such as *Etenraku* by Hidemaro Konoye – brother of Japanese prime minister Fumimaro Konoye – and *Bali*, an invocation of gamelan music by the Chicago-based Henry Eichheim), it does seem as if he no longer cared for Stanford's orchestral writing. Besides, even if he had still cared for it, he wished to conceal from his American audiences any reminders of his British

⁸⁷ Rollin Smith, *Stokowski and the Organ* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2004), 6.

⁸⁸ https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/talent/detail/67076/Stanford_Charles_Villiers_composer (accessed 10 May 2020).

origins. He sought to convey, not least with his idiosyncratic speech patterns, an ethos of *Mitteleuropa*.⁸⁹

No other American conductor of Stokowski's time revealed a desire to resuscitate Stanford. An immense (2,164-page) discographic survey from 1981 called *Recorded Classical Music*, by librarian and conductor Arthur Cohn, did not list a solitary Stanford composition – in any genre – as being available to American record-buyers.

Stanford's organ output appears to have been entirely neglected in the USA, save for the already noted 1957 doctoral thesis by Harry Wilkinson, which comments upon it, and upon the composer in general, without any marked authorial enthusiasm. To the limited extent that the British cathedral tradition could be transplanted to American soil (mostly on or near the East Coast, where Episcopalianism has traditionally been at its strongest), some of Stanford's Anglican works were assured of reasonably frequent hearings. In January 1941, *The New York Times* briefly acknowledged the recent death of Stanford's widow.⁹⁰ But the aforementioned non-appearance of Stanford's very name in America's two most renowned collegiate textbooks of music history indicates how little impact such an imported tradition had on the country's wider musical life.

7.5 The drought breaks: Stanford revivals after 1980

When the first Compact Disc of classical music (a Philips recording, originally made in 1979 by Claudio Arrau, of Chopin waltzes) appeared on the market in 1982, it would have required the clairvoyant powers of a dozen sibyls in order to predict the astounding growth of recorded repertoire which took place by the end of the twentieth century. Works that many aficionados had despaired of ever hearing on record, and

⁸⁹ '[H]e didn't begin to acquire his strange Slavic accent until 1912. His wife ... even helped his publicist, Daniel Mayer, make up the publicity biography that metamorphosed Leopold Anthony into Leopold Antoni Stanislaw Bolelawowicz. About the same time Stokowski began to cultivate the strange Slavic accent that he was to affect for the rest of his life: a sentence structure that might be used by, say, a Russian émigré with the elimination of articles and pronunciation of certain words in their original language – or how he *thought* they would be pronounced in their original language. [Actress] Blanche Yurka, who first heard his new accent in 1916, described it as that of a man who "had *learned* to speak English, perhaps even with difficulty. It was the perfect vocal makeup for a great European conductor".' Smith, *Stokowski*, xvi.

⁹⁰ Anon., 'Lady Stanford,' *The New York Times* (23 January 1941), 21. The same newspaper had referred sketchily to her husband's demise seventeen years earlier, merely recycling some sentences from the London *Times*: Anon., 'Boston Leader in London,' *The New York Times* (20 April 1924), 6.

that they had often cherished all their lives – large servings of Hildegard von Bingen’s output; Rossini operas seemingly doomed forever to remain mere passing references in Stendhal; complete Bax symphony cycles – soon began not just to appear on CD, but to prove good investments for the small independent labels which usually released them. This last point must be underlined. The old orthodoxy had been that the six biggest labels of the Western world (Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, EMI, RCA, CBS, and Philips) would forever dominate the market, and that they could explore recondite material only if their biggest stars insisted on it, or if they had already cross-subsidised it through an almost endless supply of *Four Seasons* and *Pathétique* Symphony recordings. Now to a large extent this orthodoxy was reversed. Once CD players had become part of the ordinary household furniture, major labels discovered to their consternation that fewer and fewer of their *Four Seasons* and *Pathétique* recordings were managing to stand out from the crowd. Meanwhile Hildegard and Rossini and Bax discs from boutique, usually British, companies (such as Hyperion, Opera Rara, and Chandos) secured very respectable turnover, and often actual profits, for their manufacturers.

As the cost of making CDs came down while the cost of purchasing them continued to be sizeable, a separate musical phenomenon occurred circa 1990: the Naxos Effect, whereby music-lovers could soon acquire almost the entire Western canon of classical music (skilfully and often excellently performed, in many cases by little-known artists from the former Soviet bloc) for less than a third of the sums which full-price labels charged. Soon the full-price labels decided to meet Naxos’ competition – and simultaneously to augment public interest in their own older recordings – by reissuing largely forgotten productions of their own, at similarly modest rates, to cash-strapped consumers. Frequently these productions derived from the early stereo era, with sound quality that yielded little or nothing to the average brand-new all-digital job. When we look back on that halcyon epoch, amid the ruins of a twenty-first-century recording industry pillaged by Napster and by Napster’s more statutorily powerful heirs, we can appreciate what an improbable concatenation of circumstances music-lovers enjoyed in

the late 1980s and the 1990s. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be buying CDs was very heaven.

From this mixture of benevolent technological and economic forces, a great many late-Romantic composers benefited, even when their music stayed in copyright (thereby enforcing extra costs for the recording companies championing it). Stanford proved to be one such composer.⁹¹ By the year 2000, the recorded coverage of Stanford had become unrecognisable from what it had been twenty years beforehand.

The first complete recording of Stanford symphonies came from Vernon Handley and the Ulster Orchestra of Belfast. It appeared – first in single-disc instalments, eventually as a boxed set – between 1987 and 1992 from Chandos, which contemporaneously gave the same *intégrale* treatment to the symphonies of Parry. Hyperion proved no less enterprising and, indeed, ranged still wider in its release lists: it ultimately committed to CD several of Stanford's concertos, several of the organ works, most of the choral works, much of the chamber music, much of the piano music, and a great many of the solo songs. Several choral works were recorded more than once, with different performers each time, thus enabling a listener to be almost as choosy about specific executants as he or she would be when shopping among (say) the *Planets* renditions available on Deutsche Grammophon, or the *Fantastique* renditions available on Decca. Not to be overlooked, Naxos issued its own Stanford symphony cycle, with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under David Lloyd-Jones. Already Naxos had supplied accounts of many Stanford choral and chamber pieces, not to mention the Clarinet Concerto, which became popular from the late twentieth century as it had never been before.

And what of Stanford's organ output? It made steady, rather than spectacular, progress in terms of availability to CD collectors. Further information about the relevant CDs is given in the *Discography* of the present thesis. Though usually the organists who turned to Stanford came from Britain (as might be expected), some of the first and best

⁹¹ Stanford's music originally fell out of copyright in 1974, only to go back into copyright in 1993, when new European legislation increased the posthumous protection of artists' works from fifty years to seventy years. As Stanford had died in 1924, his output entered the public domain afresh in 1994.

versions of Stanford's organ sonatas were released in the USA. As early as 1986 Charles Callahan, director of the Vermont Conservatory, released the *Britannica*, *Celtica*, and *Eroica* sonatas on the Indiana-based Pro Organo label. (Perhaps significantly, he chose a British rather than an American instrument, at Bristol's church of St Mary Redcliffe: the same instrument which Garth Benson had used for his LP nine years earlier.) A more celebrated player than Callahan, the late Joseph Payne – whose discs included several involving harpsichord rather than organ – selected the same three Stanford sonatas for his own 1995 recording on the Naxos-affiliated Marco Polo label. Neither Callahan nor Payne ventured further in their Stanford explorations, and the punctilious clarity of Payne's accounts in particular (captured at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth, Texas) inspires keen disappointment that Payne failed to record the other two Stanford organ sonatas, or any other Stanford organ works, before his death in 2008. It was left to an Ulsterman, Desmond Hunter, to offer the first account of all five organ sonatas (1994) on disc. Hunter recorded the sonatas on the organ – designed by Sir Walter Parratt – of the Guildhall at Derry.

Stanfordians had to wait until 2017 for the whole of the composer's organ music to be recorded. In that year, Daniel Cook of Durham Cathedral issued the last of his five volumes devoted to Stanford (a project begun in 2013), though he did not use his own Durham instrument for all of them, preferring to record much of the music on organs as far apart as Salisbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Yet by this stage, other organists had released their own, less complete, surveys. As a consequence, by 2000 even the least popular of the sonatas among record companies (that is, the Fifth) had been recorded at least once, while the First had been recorded on CD twice, the *Eroica* thrice, the *Britannica* four times, and the *Celtica* also four times. The *Fantasia and Toccata* likewise could be obtained in several different CD performances, and so could various miniatures from Stanford's Op. 101 and Op. 105 collections. Again, the *Discography* of this thesis furnishes the relevant data; again, any conscientious historian is obliged to stress the embarrassment of recorded riches which these data convey, as well as how few people imagined the viability of such riches little more than a generation ago.

Amid this plenitude, British historians' commentaries on Stanford from 1980 tended to be much more polite than anything to be found in Pirie, Young, and Cecil Gray. Henry Raynor – biographer of Haydn, Mozart, and Yehudi Menuhin – observed, in his 1980 volume *Music in England*, that 'a great deal of the music he [Stanford] left is too valuable to deserve the oblivion into which it has fallen.'⁹² The same year in which Raynor's book emerged also saw Gerald Norris's study (already alluded to in earlier chapters) of Tchaikovsky and Cambridge; this study included much worthwhile material concerning Stanford. Ten years later *The New York Times* made Stanford the subject of an appreciative feature article by critic Barrymore Laurence Scherer. An extract from the article follows:

Stanford wrote, 'The truest test of all the best musical compositions was the unconscious but inexorable emotion which we British call "water down the spine" – hardly the doctrine of a mere professor. The Ulster Orchestra recordings thus far reveal plenty that passes that test. Stanford's idiom is richly romantic, tinged, to be sure, with influences of Liszt, Brahms (the sweep of the violins in the introductory measures of the *Irish Symphony*, and the subsequent dialogue between high strings and woodwinds are certainly Brahmsian), Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff in the [Second] Piano Concerto (Stanford conducted the British premiere of Rachmaninoff's C-minor concerto in 1910 shortly before starting work on this one). But unlike such a Continental contemporary as Max Bruch ... Stanford was more of an individualist.'⁹³

Mirabile dictu, late in the twentieth century Stanford began attracting attention in his native land. At last he had come to be reckoned a fit subject for Hibernian musicological labours. Harry White, in his pathbreaking 1998 overview *The Keeper's Recital*, reprimanded Stanford for exhibiting what White regarded as the wrong – one might say politically incorrect – attitude towards indigenous art ('[Stanford] assumed if anything an attitude of benign, colonial appropriation').⁹⁴ Elsewhere, as mentioned in a previous chapter of the present thesis, White objected to 'exotic (and sometimes risible)

⁹² Henry Raynor, *Music in England* (London: Robert Hale, 1980), 178.

⁹³ Barrymore Laurence Scherer, 'Resurrecting a pillar of British music,' *The New York Times* (8 April 1990), H29. Rachmaninoff himself was the soloist in the 1910 Stanford-conducted performance, although Scherer does not mention the fact.

⁹⁴ Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 106.

appropriations of the native repertory which underlined the ethnic-colonial division of musical culture ever more emphatically. Stanford's "Irish" music is a case in point.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, even such dismissals as these constituted an improvement upon the previous Irish habit of considering Stanford beneath historiographical notice.

Even while White was publishing his insights, other factors had begun working to Stanford's reputational benefit. The Grand Modernist-Inevitabilist Narrative of musical historiography, a narrative which in the 1980s had already weakened, had by the 1990s altogether collapsed. (What causal relationship, if any, linked this collapse with the contemporaneous end of the Cold War is a topic that awaits its definitive chronicler: though such developments as postmodernism undeniably played an important role in the collapse occurring.) No longer could entire schools of composition be deemed beneath notice by the mere act of calling them 'academic,' as if the ferociously anti-academic Charles Ives somehow represented the court of final appeal against the monstrous regiments of the conservatoire-trained. Recall the temperate conclusion, quoted earlier in this chapter, to which Frank Howes came in 1966:

The word ['academic'] ought not to carry a reproach, for it implies both erudition and skill, an approach to the things of the mind that regards them as intrinsically worth while for their own sake without ulterior purpose.⁹⁶

Lovers of Stanford's art enjoyed further benefits during the new millennium. Both the biographies which have been cited numerous times in these chapters – those by Jeremy Dibble and Paul Rodmell – appeared in 2002;⁹⁷ the scholarly importance of both books cannot be, and will never be, negated. Finally, thanks to Dibble and Rodmell, music-lovers seeking hard data about Stanford's career no longer needed to rely upon Plunket Greene. In 2004 *History Ireland* devoted a long and enthusiastic essay (by former

⁹⁵ White, 'Nationalism,' 268.

⁹⁶ Howes, *English Musical Renaissance*, 149, 151–152.

⁹⁷ Dibble, *Stanford*, and Rodmell, *passim*; but see also Christopher Howell, 'Errors and Discrepancies in Two Recent Books on Stanford.' *Music Web International*, October 2003 (http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2003/Oct03/Stanford_errors.htm, accessed 22 May 2020).

Irish Times columnist Elgy Gillespie) to Stanford the creator; this essay, in passing, gently reproved White.⁹⁸

Three years after Gillespie's article appeared, well-wishers established the Charles Villiers Stanford Society, which aimed to do for Stanford what existing British organisations such as the Elgar Trust, the Vaughan Williams Trust, the John Ireland Trust, and the Finzi Trust had done for those men. The Stanford Society had from its inception the following aims:

1. To substantially widen the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the music of Charles Villiers Stanford both in the United Kingdom and overseas.
2. To encourage performances of Stanford's music and the music of his students and colleagues at the Royal College of Music and Cambridge University.
3. To increase understanding of Stanford's life and music and of his contribution to the development and history of British music.
4. To encourage and support recordings of Stanford's music.
5. To provide members of the Society with an opportunity to share their love of English music and to develop their knowledge of the life and music of Charles Villiers Stanford and of his impact on the history of English music.⁹⁹

Currently Dibble himself serves as the Society's president. Among the Society's feats have been an annual Stanford Festival, which usually takes place in a different English town each year (although, sad to relate, coronavirus considerations obliged the Festival to go exclusively online in May 2020).

The Society's newsletter notes Stanford performances and broadcasts around the world, including such unexpected recent pleasures as a Paris concert in 2018, conducted by Eric van Lauwe, where the program included the Clarinet Concerto and Seventh Symphony;¹⁰⁰ and a concert (also in 2018) at San Jose, California, where Jason Klein

⁹⁸ Elgy Gillespie, 'Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924): Brilliant Dublin boyhood, cantankerous London old age,' *History Ireland* 12:3 (Autumn 2004), 24–27.

⁹⁹ <https://www.thestanfordsociety.org/about-the-stanford-society/> (accessed 22 May 2020).

¹⁰⁰ <https://orchestre-amateur.jimdofree.com/orch-eric-van-lauwe/> (accessed 22 May 2020).

conducted the Saratoga Symphony Orchestra in the Fourth Symphony.¹⁰¹ Especially portentous have been the revivals of Stanford operas. In 2019, the Northern Opera Group staged Stanford's long forgotten *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Leeds Festival; later the same year, Ireland's Wexford Festival turned its attention to *The Travelling Companion*, which also made its CD debut in an English performance. Thanks to these resuscitations, Stanford's obsessive interest in operatic writing appeared no longer eccentric but, instead, wholly comprehensible. His theatrical flair, his outstanding skill in handling the English language's rhythms (a skill widely and falsely thought to have disappeared from England altogether between Purcell and Britten), and his concern for libretti of poetical merit: these virtues all shone through.

Now and then, the old charges against Stanford's creativity have reappeared in print. Max Planck is widely credited with having said that science 'advances one funeral at a time.'¹⁰² He might have been tempted to apply a similar aphorism to the manner in which musical history gets written, and to how long it generally takes musicologists to reduce the impact upon the public of misleading *idées reçues*. This impact can most readily be noticed in generalist sources. Back in 1991, Donald Burrows (best known for his editions of Handel) echoed Shaw's attitude from a century beforehand: 'Few [of Stanford's, Parry's, and Mackenzie's pieces] survive the test of repeated hearings; many display technical prowess that their musical inspiration cannot match.'¹⁰³ A year afterwards, Gérard Gefen, one of the very few French musicologists ever to become acquainted with Stanford's work, called Stanford '*ce compositeur trop parfait et agressivement conservateur*.'¹⁰⁴ '*Trop parfait*': the charge tolls like a knell through Stanfordian reception history. More surprising than Burrows's and Gefen's inferences is the opinion from 2004, in a specialist periodical's pages, delivered by Peter Horton (Samuel Sebastian Wesley's biographer):

¹⁰¹ <http://www.saratogasympphony.com/repertory050618.html> (accessed 22 May 2020).

¹⁰² Planck's actual phrasing of this idea was more sedate: 'A new scientific truth does not generally triumph by persuading its opponents and getting them to admit their errors, but rather by its opponents gradually dying out.' Max Planck, *Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers*, trans. Frank Gaynor (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 33–34.

¹⁰³ Jim Samson (ed.), *Music and Society: The Late Romantic Era, From the Mid-19th Century to World War I* (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 289.

¹⁰⁴ Gérard Gefen, *Histoire de musique anglaise* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 218. I am indebted to Mr Sylvain Kershaw for making me aware awareness of this book.

[S]o much of Stanford's output – including seven symphonies, eight string quartets, many large-scale choral works, nine operas, and a host of smaller choral and instrumental works – ultimately fails the test of greatness ... perhaps the most telling problem was Stanford's seeming inability to express uninhibited love or sensuality.¹⁰⁵

A strange criterion indeed for judging music. Palestrina, Victoria, Tallis, Byrd, Schütz, Buxtehude, Corelli, Mendelssohn, Bruckner, Busoni, Reger, Hindemith, and probably Bach could equally well be taxed with 'inability to express uninhibited love or sensuality.' Horton leaves unanswered the question of whether this fact made those composers, also, 'ultimately [fail] the test of greatness.' It could well be a back-handed compliment to the inherent significance of Stanford's legacy that it continues to inspire dispute among commentators, even when the composer himself has been almost a hundred years gone, and when *ad hominem* assessments therefore can no longer substitute for attempts at disinterested analysis.

Would that copy-editors had conveyed this last fundamental truth to Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes, whose own 1993 production, purportedly dealing with the English Musical Renaissance, is less an exercise in scholarship – or even journalism – than a gallimaufry of eldritch caricatures.¹⁰⁶ (One California-based reviewer called the outcome 'an unsettling melange of Marxism and poststructuralism'.¹⁰⁷ A British reviewer, in *Tempo*, justifiably levelled at it much sharper criticisms: 'the examination is not conducted in a spirit of academic inquiry; it is more like an exposé in the gutter press ... why the cheap sneers and the air of offended rectitude?'¹⁰⁸) Disdaining

¹⁰⁵ Horton, 'Charles Villiers Stanford.' *Victorian Studies* 46:2 (Winter 2004), 351–353, at 352. Rodmell arrived at a somewhat similar conclusion to Horton, but voiced it in more polite terms: 'An interesting comparison can be made between Stanford and Bruckner, whose naivety also led to a chaste mode of expression; Bruckner, however, managed to imbue his music with a sense of conviction while remaining pure and chaste' (Rodmell, *Stanford*, 414).

¹⁰⁶ Robert A. Stradling and Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1860–1940: Construction and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Hinton, '[Book Review],' *The Journal of Modern History* 67:3 (September 1995), 710–712, at 710.

¹⁰⁸ Mike Smith, '[Book Review]', *Tempo* 187 (December 1993), 27–28. Nothing abashed, Stradling and Hughes got wrong the issue in which Smith's article appeared, giving the date as January 1994, an issue that does not exist (Meirion Hughes and Robert A. Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1860–1940: Constructing a National Music* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001], 294). Equally incorrect were the authors' description of Finzi as Vaughan Williams' 'favourite pupil'

anything so bourgeois and elitist as fair-mindedness, this Stradling-Hughes diatribe – an eventual embarrassment to its original publisher, Routledge¹⁰⁹ – rails against ‘folklore’s fascist undercurrents’¹¹⁰ (what these ‘fascist undercurrents’ might have been is left unexplained) and charges Stanford with having ‘left himself open to the charge of being a dishonest, even a treasonable, imitator of [German art].’¹¹¹ Perhaps such irresponsible disregard for rational argument could be predicted from authors whose streams-of-consciousness took such Dadaist forms that they credited the composer of *Faust* with football-playing inclinations: ‘Gounod, a pioneer of the *entente cordiale*, praised the Lord and kicked for touch.’¹¹² The authors’ shared concept of scholastic decency may be gleaned from their facetious caption to a 1941 photograph of the bombed-out Queen’s Hall: ‘The Luftwaffe deconstructs the English Musical Renaissance’.¹¹³ At least they revealed elsewhere a surly frankness about their own motives: ‘we reject the notion that a love of music is a necessary precondition of writing about music.’¹¹⁴

(Hughes and Stradling, 269; Finzi was never a Vaughan Williams pupil at all), and the spelling of Berg’s most celebrated opera as ‘Wozzek’ (Stradling and Hughes, 120; Hughes and Stradling, 146).
¹⁰⁹ ‘Routledge had hedged its bets by printing a mere 650 copies ... In any case, our publisher soon stopped hedging, got off the fence, and firmly kicked the book into the long grass by quietly dropping the idea of a paperback edition’ (Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing A National Music*, 292). As of January 2021, Routledge’s website no longer lists the 1993 edition in its catalogue.

¹¹⁰ Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing A National Music*, 177.

¹¹¹ Stradling and Hughes, *Construction and Deconstruction*, 106. In the 2001 edition of the book, this is bowdlerised to ‘Stanford was aware of being susceptible to the charge of dishonest imitation – a treasonable one in the sense patented by [Cecil] Forsyth’ (Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing A National Music*, 127). But in both editions Stanford is dismissed as a Brahms imitator (‘Stanford never escaped from the toils of Brahms’ [Stradling and Hughes, *Construction and Deconstruction*, 106]; ‘Stanford never escaped from the Brahmsian stranglehold on his aesthetic’ [Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing a National Music*, 128]). Nor did the authors baulk, in the second edition – with a different publisher – at calling both Stanford and Parry ‘minions’ of Brahms and Schumann (Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing a National Music*, 137).

¹¹² Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing a National Music*, 174; Stradling and Hughes, *Construction and Deconstruction*, 143.

¹¹³ Stradling and Hughes, *Construction and Deconstruction*, plate 12, between pages 179 and 180. In the second edition, the authors duly noted (*Constructing a National Music*, 290–292), with undiminished rancour, several of the first edition’s critiques which they viewed as insufficiently sycophantic. Such coverage did not stop them from inconsistently – and, as the relevant bibliographic databases confirm, falsely – complaining that the first edition ‘was studiously ignored by the academic establishment’ (*Constructing a National Music*, 292).

¹¹⁴ Hughes and Stradling, *Constructing a National Music*, 291. By this measure, the authors could have no logical objection to music criticism written by the tone-deaf.

7.6 Conclusion

Rodmell correctly describes Stanford as ‘a man to whom no one who met him could be indifferent.’¹¹⁵ Divisive and controversial in life, Stanford remains divisive and controversial in death. We may be forgiven for suspecting that, deep down, he would have relished this state of affairs. At his angriest and most misanthropic, Stanford can even call to mind the self-penned epitaph of his fellow Irish Protestant Jonathan Swift. *Ubi saeva indignatio ulteris cor lacerare nequit*: ‘Where his furious indignation can no longer lacerate his heart.’

Meanwhile, admirers of British music can rejoice in the chance now afforded them to judge Stanford’s output in its totality; and this chance is an outcome that Stanford (for all ‘his furious indignation’ in other contexts) can only have welcomed. As *The Times*’ obituarist had reminded readers, in words which this thesis has already quoted:

A man who is a composer does not want to be remembered by anything else. ... He [Stanford] was an artist through and through, and when his friend Parry died he was heard to say that the only memorial a composer wants is that his works should be published, performed, and so live after him.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Rodmell, *Stanford*, 337.

¹¹⁶ Anon., ‘Sir C.V. Stanford. A Composer of Genius,’ *The Times* (31 March 1924), 17; *The Times* (31 March 1924), 17.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

By now, it is very much to be hoped, the significance of Stanford's organ output – both in terms of his own achievements elsewhere, and in terms of late-Romantic organ composition more generally – will be evident. This new and gladdening perspective owes much to the extraordinary discographic expansion of recent times. Between the sporadic accessibility of Stanford's music on disc four decades ago, and the abundance of recordings available today, there is a gulf which can only be called abyssal. When pre-1980 commentators sought to minimise Stanford's creative magnitude, it was hard to adduce evidence which would have refuted them. Yet in our epoch (as the previous chapter explained in detail), all of the organ music has found its way onto recordings, as have all of the symphonies and all of the Anglican liturgical works. Both Dibble's and Rodmell's biographies of the composer appeared in the same year (2002). To a Rip Van Winkle who had begun slumbering in 1980 and had not awoken until forty years afterwards, this outcome would have seemed beyond belief.

The present chapter points a way forward to areas where further study of Stanford would be valuable. Much that possesses relevance and innate interest in Stanford's career and writings has been unavoidably omitted from this thesis, and not through space limitations alone.

While Stanford the public figure inspired both intense admiration and intense revulsion within his own lifetime, most of his inner life continues to elude us, as it eluded his colleagues. He seldom bothered to produce anything that could be called an artistic manifesto (the *Fourth Irish Rhapsody*, as noted earlier, marks an exception). For Stanford's aversion to exegesis, students of his art are the poorer. It is perfectly true that many an allowance must be made for the unreliability, and at times the downright disingenuousness, of certain other composers' manifestos as primary sources. (Paradigmatic cases of this problem are Shostakovich and Stravinsky. With the former, we have the justified doubts over how much trust can be placed in *Testimony* as a guide

to his true artistic beliefs; with the latter, mysteries continue to surround the role of Stravinsky's literary collaborator Robert Craft, whom critics repeatedly accused – both before and after Stravinsky's death – of having put words into the maestro's mouth.) Yet better an unreliable or disingenuous source than no source whatsoever; and the lack of any systematic credo in Stanford's case adds extra difficulties to the task of those who would comprehend him.

Chapter Seven has shown how, after half a century when Stanford continued to be remembered for little except his Anglican choral contributions and some of his secular songs, the CD medium's advent did Stanford's creativity wider justice. In the early twenty-first century, stagings and recordings of Stanford's operas have taken place with a frequency that Stanford himself – who always longed to be viewed principally as an operatic creator – had despaired during his own lifetime of ever imagining.

The ubiquity of the CD medium (and, latterly, streaming as well) laid the groundwork for this beneficial change to Stanford's reputation, but cannot account for all of it. Other factors have contributed, including (again, as Chapter Seven discussed) the near-total disappearance of musical High Modernism as the sole gauge for measuring a composer's stature. In 1979, when the reputation among academics of arch-modernist aesthete T.W. Adorno remained at something close to its zenith, the Stanfordophobic Peter J. Pirie's obeisance to such High Modernism could be guaranteed mainstream critical approval. Since the 1990s, such obeisance has seemed downright odd. From the stylistic pluralism that resulted from High Modernism's collapse, Stanford himself – who never wanted to be a revolutionary, but who always viewed himself as a discriminating progressive – gained.¹

Deeply un-modernist also was Stanford's freedom from self-conscious ruminations about his musical patrimony, which patrimony he neither mimicked nor subverted. He acquired a great knowledge of earlier centuries' compositional styles, yet never felt demoralised by them, as Brahms admitted to feeling demoralised by Beethoven, chiefly

¹ Stanford's 1921 lecture, which so annoyed Bliss and Warlock with its expressions of what they regarded as futile conservative intransigence, starts mildly enough (and echoes the crucial word of Strauss's above-cited tribute to Elgar): 'Let me begin by saying that I am, and always have been, essentially a Progressivist, and welcome every innovation, however unfamiliar, provided that it makes for the enhancement of beauty as I consider it.' Stanford, 'Recent Tendencies,' 39.

by the symphonic Beethoven. James Joyce might have made his hero Stephen Dedalus lament that 'History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake', but with such an attitude Stanford had not an iota of sympathy.

If Stanford emerges as neither an obvious historicist nor an obvious anti-historicist, he equally resists neat docketing as either a pure vernacularist or a pure internationalist. Sometimes, as we have seen, he quoted Irish melodies now and again in an explicit manner (Op. 101 No. 6; the finale of the *Sonata Celtica*). Nevertheless, much of his output, whether for organ or for any other medium, possesses no specific connection to Ireland. Chapter Five has explained how developments in French and German writing for the organ had at least as great an impact on Stanford's output for that instrument as any autochthonous stimulus managed to do.

Enigmas endure. The private Stanford remains, in a surprisingly large number of respects, much more inscrutable than the private Elgar and the private Parry. By now, various musicologists know as much about several contemporaries of Stanford as these contemporaries ever knew about themselves. Debussy, Dvořák, Fauré, Janáček, Mahler, Nielsen, Puccini, Saint-Saëns, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss: each of these masters now has a compendious bibliography; the letters of each have been conscientiously preserved and printed; with several of them, their doings for every month of their mature lives are accounted for. Even Elgar and Parry were voluble correspondents, Parry having also been a voluble diarist. Not so Stanford.

Any commentator seeking to do to Stanford what Hamlet dreaded Rosencrantz and Guildenstern doing to himself – 'You would pluck out the heart of my mystery' – soon arrives at bafflement. Stanford proved even less forthcoming about his inner motives than Ravel did. Rodmell complains with justice:

Many aspects of his [Stanford's] life remain shrouded – for example, the happiness of his marriage, and his relationships with and aspirations for his children. ... Of Stanford's wider circle of friends, and of the nature of his relationships with them, similarly little is known. Also obscure are Stanford's recreational activities.²

² Rodmell, *Stanford*, 336.

The shortfalls in our knowledge do not end with the ones that Rodmell's list mentions. A particularly regrettable gap in our understanding of Stanford concerns his religious attitudes. He had in pronounced form a view that would actually become much more common in twentieth-century England than it ever was in his own time: the relegating of religion to Subjects Not Talked About. Parry, on the other hand, could scarcely stop talking about it: his diaries track his move from his boyhood's middle-of-the-road Anglicanism to an idiosyncratic blend of Social Gospel sympathies and passionate Darwinism, tintured with metaphysics substantially closer to German idealism than to British pragmatism. Such faith-related inner struggles as Parry's abounded among intellectuals in nineteenth-century Britain, as the biographies of Tennyson, Thomas Hardy, Leslie Stephen, Edmund Gosse, and George Eliot demonstrate (the very word 'agnostic' had been coined in the 1860s by T.H. Huxley).

Stanford never allowed himself such an *apologia pro vita sua*. His 1914 autobiography recounted the confessional divisions of his Dublin youth; but even there, while willing enough to condemn Protestant and Catholic extremists, he said little about where his own church loyalties lay.

[I]n spite of an antagonism which was only too naturally intensified by close contact, I was seldom if ever conscious of personal intolerance. It showed itself more in the markedly Low Church spirit of the Protestant inhabitants, who resented on principle an east-end organ and choir in their Parish Church, while they inwardly preferred a Cathedral service, when they could go there for relief. I remember a grotesque row, nearly destructive of close friendships, which was caused by a very sensible attempt to place the choir in our church (St Stephen's) near the organ at the East end. This heresy lasted only for one Sunday; there were shrieks of 'Puseyism,' but the loudest protesters were to be found in the stalls of St Patrick's the same afternoon. The feeling, as I afterwards came to know, was accentuated by the Oxford Movement, which in Ireland resulted in a twofold secession, the one in the direction of Rome, the other in that of Plymouth. It had split families, my own amongst them, and it took years for the bitterness to die down.³

³ Stanford, *Pages*, 3. 'Puseyism' refers to the High Church doctrine of the Oxford Movement's Edward Bouverie Pusey, who (unlike the future Cardinals Newman and Manning) remained an Anglican all his life.

The sheer affluence of ‘the Quality’ could well have helped inoculate it against sectarianism of the type which twentieth-century Irish politics would make horridly familiar. But Stanford’s reference to theological quarrels splitting Irish ‘families, my own amongst them’ indicates that sometimes the inoculation failed to work. Had Stanford lived long enough to encounter C.S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity* – published in 1952, though based upon 1940s radio broadcasts – the likelihood is that he would have subscribed to Lewis’s eirenic teachings. (Lewis himself grew up in a Hibernian Protestant environment much harsher than Stanford’s, one that drove Lewis into a decade of atheism.) Stanford certainly never showed any desire to leave the Anglican Church, or to cease writing for it.

And yet, how many other Anglicans of Stanford’s generation showed his own willingness, not once but on more than half a dozen occasions, to fit with music explicitly Catholic texts (the *Stabat Mater*, the Latin Requiem, the Ordinary of the Latin Mass) and to do so often enough in a style of almost Verdian flamboyance? The suspicion arises that Stanford – though never a secret Catholic after the manner of Byrd – might have been much fonder of Catholic ritual than it would have been good for any London-based Protestant of his era and social class (let alone for any London-based Protestant with an Irish accent) to acknowledge to others, or indeed to himself. Two unaccompanied SATB Mass settings, now lost, appear in Stanford’s worklist as Op. 149 and Op. 176 respectively; a third unaccompanied Mass setting, in eight parts, achieved performance during 1920 at Westminster Cathedral under Sir Richard Runciman Terry but has likewise gone missing in the interim. (At least Stanford’s 1891–1892 *Mass in G*, Op. 49, written for the Brompton Oratory, has come down to us and was issued on CD in 2014.)

Did the ‘Scarlet Woman’ – to quote an oft-used epithet by anti-Catholic Protestants of Stanford’s day – offer to the composer the allure of forbidden fruit? This much is incontestable: Stanford, not content with turning several times to Catholic liturgical words, followed attentively (far more attentively than most other Protestant musicians did, and probably more attentively than most other Catholic musicians did) the musical mandates decreed by Pope St Pius X in 1903.

The movement which started a short time ago at the Vatican for the better presentation of sixteenth-century music, for the revival and study of Palestrina and others of the polyphonic vocal school, and for the expunging of irrelevant and unsuitable music, came none too soon ... The *Motu Proprio* decree has had its effect in this country in rousing a desire among the more serious and cultivated Church musicians and amateurs to bring back the masterpieces of the early English school [Byrd, Tallis, Tye, and suchlike composers] into our choir lists.⁴

Stanford nonetheless believed that the papally directed *épuration* had gone too far. As far as Teutonic Catholicism's musical practices were concerned, he proved to be an accurate prophet:

The banning of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven is a sorry proof of the danger of too much zeal. ... I find it difficult to believe that the Hof-Kirche at Dresden and the Hofburg-Kapelle at Vienna will readily acquiesce in the abolition of their staple food.⁵

(Nor did they acquiesce in it. Emperor Franz Josef simply ignored the *Motu Proprio*'s dictates; and Pius X could hardly protest too strenuously against such imperial non-co-operation, since he would never have become pontiff in the first place but for the Emperor wielding his right of veto against a better-known cardinal at the 1903 conclave.)

Alongside Stanford's unexpected interest in musical aspects of the Roman rite went an equally unexpected periodic taste for setting the theologically heterodox verses of Walt Whitman and Algernon Charles Swinburne. Perhaps this choice of texts suggests genuine, if temporary, disbelief in the Christian creed. Yet once more, as with the issue of Stanford's possible Catholic sympathies, we simply do not know; and unless some

⁴ Stanford, *Pages*, 308, 310. The Protestant Stanford had a much greater esteem for the document than numerous Catholics felt. Readers of Joyce's *Dubliners* are unlikely to forget the bitterness with which one female character, Aunt Kate, deplores to her niece the *Motu Proprio*'s banning of women (Kate's own sister included) from Catholic choirs. When the placatory niece invokes the honour of God, Kate retorts: 'I know all about the honour of God, Mary Jane, but I think it's not at all honourable for the pope to turn out the women out of the choirs that have slaved there all their lives and put little whippersnappers of boys over their heads. I suppose it is for the good of the Church if the pope does it. But it's not just, Mary Jane, and it's not right.' That the *Motu Proprio* rankled with Joyce himself – and that Aunt Kate might have been speaking for her creator – is implied by a passage in *Ulysses* where readers are told that Leopold Bloom 'yielded to none in his admiration of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, a work simply abounding in immortal numbers,' but also (as Joyce well knew) a work of the highest offensiveness to the likes of Pius X.

⁵ Stanford, *Pages*, 309–310.

primary source turns out to have survived the destruction of Stanford's private papers which took place sometime in the 1950s, the likelihood is that we never will know.⁶

Absent such discoveries, we are similarly compelled at present to do without any substantiation regarding Stanford's wider aesthetic motives. His hatred of Strauss – a hatred manifested not only in his Great War prose invective but in his laboriously parodistic *Ode to Discord* – always verged on the irrational and often attained it. Teutonophobia forms an incomplete explanation. Stanford failed to single out for comparable insults any significant Austro-German contemporaries of Strauss, such as Schoenberg, Mahler, Humperdinck, Pfitzner, Franz Schmidt, Hugo Wolf, and Eugen d'Albert (although, as mentioned in Chapter Two, Stanford did abhor Max Bruch, wrongly attributing Jewishness to him).

Did Stanford loathe Strauss precisely *because* he recognised, lurking deep within his own nature, certain Straussian traits? Both Stanford and Strauss showed the ability to conduct an ample range of music by other composers. Both men brought to the writing desk an exceptional aloofness of temperament ('the head which created *Tristan*,' Strauss unexpectedly insisted, 'had to be cold as marble').⁷ Both men desired financial reward, and shocked fastidious souls by the bluntness with which they avowed this desire.⁸ Both men demonstrated marvellous fluency in managing to create splendid music, even as their employment timetables abounded in administrative and executant demands so

⁶ At the risk of seeming ghoulish, we can also acknowledge possible significance in the fact that Stanford was cremated. Before a 1902 Act of Parliament, the legality of cremation in the United Kingdom remained unclear; and cremation itself had been associated in the public mind with atheism of a nastily eccentric sort. As late as 1919, when cremation followed the funeral of Bishop Edward Lee Hicks in 1919, the procedure remained unusual enough within Anglicanism to warrant substantial public notice. The Catholic Church explicitly forbade cremation in 1886 (before this, at least one Catholic prelate, Cardinal Vaughan, had been chairman of a cremation society in Manchester). Until 1963 the prohibition remained in force and was vigorously imposed, so that, for example, Catholics who had publicly expressed a wish to be cremated would be denied the last sacraments. Fifty-eight years after Catholicism ended the formal ban on cremation, it continues to discourage the practice. This footnote draws on Frances Knight, 'Cremation and Christianity: English Anglican and Roman Catholic attitudes to cremation since 1885,' *Mortality* 23:4 (2018), 301–319.

⁷ Anon., 'How Richard Strauss Gets His Inspiration,' *The Étude* 32 (October 1914), 760.

⁸ As recently as 2004 a Mahler biographer complained: 'Richard Strauss was unabashedly interested in money. Notoriously, while visiting America for the premiere of the *Sinfonia Domestica* in Carnegie Hall, he conducted two afternoon concerts farther downtown, in Wanamaker's Department Store!' Feder, *Mahler*, 118. Readers are not told why these concerts should have incurred from Feder the adverb 'notoriously,' and the indignant exclamation mark.

varied – and so importunate – as to have destroyed lesser men’s compositional talents altogether.

On this subject, yet again, we lack more than fragmentary clues. We must see through a glass darkly, to the limited extent that we can see anything. But in contemplating Stanford’s frantic willingness to exorcise the Straussian devil and all his works, let us recollect the Wagner-adoring, then Wagner-execrating, Nietzsche’s caveat about the difficulty of differentiating obsessive hatred from obsessive love. ‘He who fights against monsters,’ Nietzsche warned in the fourth chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*, ‘should be careful lest he thereby become a monster himself; and if you gaze too long into the abyss, the abyss will gaze into you.’

Self-evidently, Stanford, at some profound psychic level, found Strauss to be (as current usage or abuse has it) ‘triggering.’ It will be remembered from Chapter Two that Stanford accused Strauss of having purveyed, in *Elektra*, ‘pornographic rubbish.’ Nowhere – the observation bears stressing – did Stanford employ such language about the more blatantly iconoclastic Schoenberg, whose *Five Orchestral Pieces* had already been heard by pre-1914 London audiences with varying degrees of fascinated horror. (From the bewildered Parry, the *Five Orchestral Pieces* occasioned a witticism which Vaughan Williams had the good sense to preserve for later ages: ‘I can stand this fellow [Schoenberg] when he is loud; it is when he is soft he is so obscene.’)⁹

So much we can deduce from the printed record. To say anything more specific than that about the *fons et origo* of Stanford’s anti-Strauss zeal would at the moment be nothing more valid than guesswork. And guesswork it will, for the foreseeable future, continue to be. The Stanfordian mystery’s heart remains unplucked. It doubtless remains better so, given the obvious dangers of psychological speculation.

Increasing Stanford’s elusiveness is the elusiveness of most other musicians who were Queen Victoria’s subjects. In 1989 Nicholas Temperley, the London-born but long Illinois-domiciled musicologist who died in 2020, summed up with one piercing sentence the problem facing not only Stanford’s admirers but those who would win fair hearings for other nineteenth-century British composers as well: ‘Serious Victorian

⁹ David Manning, *Vaughan Williams on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 316.

music is a Lost Chord: the sound of it is out of our reach in a way that the sight and message of other Victorian art is not.¹⁰ Thirty-two years later, Temperley's complaint retains much of its original sad truth, especially as regards mainstream concert performance. Nowadays any Internet user with an adequate search-engine can become reasonably conversant with Victorian Britain's painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature. But Victorian Britain's symphonies, its concertos, its oratorios, and its operas – even its works for solo instruments and for chamber ensembles – continue to be a good deal harder to track down. When Temperley wrote, tracking them down was next to impossible. With luck, the present thesis will have convinced a few readers that concerning Stanford's organ output above all, the diligent searcher's efforts will be handsomely vindicated.

Anybody who wishes to predict Stanford's reputational future must admit that in several respects, the culture where Stanford flourished is almost unimaginably distant from ours, not through chronology alone, but through considerations of the *Zeitgeist* as well. For one thing, these days the organ itself (which meant so much to Stanford) constitutes a side-issue as far as most music-lovers are concerned. The word 'ghetto' is uncomfortably pertinent. A mere two generations back, such organists as George Thalben-Ball, Marcel Dupré, Virgil Fox, and Pierre Cochereau could sell out every seat at their recitals. No organist nowadays can reliably do that; and, indeed, it is hard to think of any organist since the late Marie-Claire Alain whose name the average concertgoer of our epoch will recognise. Wholesale secularisation – which the recent flood of ecclesiastical sex scandals has intensified – must bear most of the culpability for this state of affairs.¹¹ Thalben-Ball, Dupré, Fox, and Cochereau profited from reserves of public goodwill towards (and familiarity with) the very sound of the organ, a sound much more difficult for the casual listener to become knowledgeable about decades

¹⁰ Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *The Lost Chord: Essays on Victorian Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14.

¹¹ Even in the USA, traditionally regarded as far more Christian than most of the Western world, the decline has been marked. 'Since 2009, the share of Americans who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular" has grown from 17% to 26%, while the share who describe themselves as Christians has declined from 77% to 65%.' Katherine Schaeffer, 'U.S. has changed in key ways in the past decade, from tech use to demographics,' Pew Research Center, 20 December 2019 <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/20/key-ways-us-changed-in-past-decade/> (accessed 2 February 2021).

afterwards. Pentecostal congregations – which in English-speaking lands are almost alone among Christian churches in having escaped demographic decline – are too fond of drums, electric guitars, microphone-brandishing solo vocalists, and suchlike appurtenances of ‘praise music’ to be amenable to anyone’s organ-playing.¹²

Another factor which forms a gulf between our age and Stanford’s is this: Stanford gained from cultural ‘soft power’ which he shared with most of his fellow Victorian-Edwardian professors. During Stanford’s time, and long after, few young people even finished secondary schooling. Any possessor of a university degree thus enjoyed a marked social prestige in the eyes of the majority not so favoured. As a result, professors in Stanford’s time enjoyed *ex officio* a vast public deference (of the sort which in parts of France, Germany, and Scandinavia might not altogether have expired even today). No such deference can be conceived in the twenty-first-century Anglosphere, amid an environment as litigious, as watchful of students’ ‘self-esteem’, as oriented towards a mass-market ethos, and as dependent upon contract labour for tutoring, as much of tertiary education in the English-speaking world has become. Probably an academic with Stanford’s record of verbal ferocity towards pupils – a ferocity which, it must be said, most of Stanford’s own pupils tolerated – would nowadays be disqualified for any university job in the United Kingdom. At best, such behaviour in 2021 would militate against the granting of tenure, and would provoke abundant protests (by students and by other staffers) to campuses’ already vigilant ethics committees.

¹² Astonishingly little has been written about secularisation’s impact on the organ world. One very recent and commendable, albeit necessarily Americocentric, analysis of the subject is Alexander Francis Meszler, *The Organ in ‘A Secular Age’: Secularization and the Organ in the United States* (DMA diss., Arizona State University, Tempe, 2020). Meszler spares no sensibilities in his blunt warnings: ‘Though the exact number of organs affected ... in the United States is unknown, based on data concerning lost congregations, a conservative estimate between 2000 and 2010 would be around 2,500 instruments. This number is an estimate, but if it is even remotely correct, this would constitute the most serious crisis the organ has ever faced in the United States. ... Scholars, critics, organists, enthusiasts, as well as the editors of prominent magazines and journals have remained disturbingly silent about secularization, instead choosing to focus on specific denominational failings and such changing aesthetic tastes as the prevalence of praise music. The organ in the twenty-first century confronts an unprecedented crisis of purpose, heritage, and relevance. Without difficult discussions and negotiations, the organ’s relevance in society will continue to wane’ (Meszler, *Secular Age*, 2–3).

Are we to conclude, then, from these circumstances that Stanford can retain for us an exclusively historical noteworthiness, such as belongs to a quaint and amusing Victorian-Edwardian-Georgian relic? Should Stanford be patronisingly credited with (in that deadliest of pseudo-accolades) 'period interest'? Every page of this dissertation attempts to answer this question with a resounding no. If it must be granted that certain aspects of Stanford's accomplishment belong to a civilisation which the Great War severely wounded, and which the combat for Irish independence killed off, it must also be granted that other aspects of his accomplishment continue to be germane to us: are at least as germane to us, actually, as they ever were to our forefathers.

The *Irish Times*, it will be remembered, called Stanford 'a musician for musicians.' There are far worse fates than that of attaining a *succès d'estime*. In terms of populist appeal, Stanford – as has already been noted – could never, even at the height of his European prominence, match Parry or Elgar. But populist appeal is not everything; moreover, the twenty-first-century Anglosphere has surely witnessed enough directly political populism at its most rampageous (and militantly anti-intellectual) to give even the most thorough-going artistic populists second thoughts. Stanford's style inclined, as we have seen, to reticence. It habitually eschewed the extremes of emotion, and as a result, it avoided the perils of demagogic fervour. Possibly on this account it possesses in our time a potential value as balm to frayed nerves, a balm which earlier decades were apt to underrate.

Stanford's own aesthetic approach strove, in its essence, to reconcile rather than to divide. It aimed to amalgamate the indigenously vernacular with the symphonically multifaceted; to amalgamate conservatism with unobtrusive venturesomeness; and to amalgamate discretion with profound, if seldom overtly passionate, feeling.

Some lines by T.S. Eliot – that most self-conscious of literary modernists – acquire, accordingly, considerable relevance in Stanford's case. (This relevance was entirely unintended by the poet, who even after converting to Anglicanism remained indifferent to the composer.) 'The historical sense,' Eliot asserted,

involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence ... Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from

emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.¹³

One other admixture, arguably the most important of all, Stanford embodied: the admixture of the national with the supranational. Notwithstanding his passionate attachments to the land of his birth and the land of his adoption, he rejected provincialism. It was inevitable that he would do so. Stanford the champion of Brahms and Wagner; Stanford the Leipzig student; Stanford the beneficiary (pre-1914) of Teutonic plaudits: these factors made insularity impossible, as well as undesirable, for him. Another remark by Constant Lambert bears citation:

The strength of the English tradition in art is that it has always been open to fruitful foreign influences, which have been grafted onto the native plant without causing it to wither away.¹⁴

Critic Sydney Grew, who unlike Lambert regarded Stanford with consistent reverence, wrote in a similar vein:

[H]owever intensely powerful your nationality, it cramps and confines you unless poured into the larger realities of the universal world of humanity.¹⁵

With three more quotes, these ones (unlike the last three) both written as acts of overt homage to Stanford, we can perhaps take our final leave of the temerarious Hiberno-Englishman. Plunket Greene concluded:

I spoke above of the 'grand manner' which was his [Stanford's] possession. It is to manners what style is to music – indefinite, intangible, inborn. ... It never left him till the hour of his death. I say these last words advisedly. As I sat beside him while he was very near the end, when, if ever, pomp and circumstance would have had their day and gone, I did not think of Heraclitus – that came later, soon enough; I felt only that I was saying goodbye to a great man. ...

¹³ T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent,' *The Egoist* 6:5 (December 1919), 72–73, at 73.

¹⁴ Lambert, *Music Ho!*, 124.

¹⁵ Grew, *Our Favourite Musicians*, 44.

We have had beautiful tributes of admiration from pupils who suffered under him and loved him. But perhaps, there are some, not pupils only, who remember the suffering alone. I wonder if they, too, ever felt in some dim way, as I did in like circumstances long ago, that under the surface of that big, dark, sarcastic, explosive man there was another – gentle, affectionate, emotional, humorous, human.¹⁶

Scott Goddard wrote in 1946:

Whereas with Parry it was the immense vision of music's ennobling properties that influenced the man and through him his pupils, with Stanford it was the cool beauty of music's science that he laid bare before his pupils' gaze. His mind was as active as his brain was fertile, and in his own music he could call on these attributes at will.

Stanford wrote voluminously in practically every genre. His work was always musicianly, often splendidly so, and sometimes sheer magic. ... Stanford had his ideals, largely centred in the art of fine musicianship, and he had faith in himself. He was, in fact, singularly free from that self-questioning which lames a man's spirit and forms both the smallest and the greatest creative artists. But the critical acumen of the alert craftsman never deserted him and although he overwrote, his work was even at its driest never banal.¹⁷

Finally, the words – eloquent in their simplicity – of Stanford student Vaughan Williams: words uttered during the 1952 centennial remembrances:

He [Stanford] has written some of the most beautiful music that has come from these islands. ... The bright young things of the younger generation do not seem to know much about Stanford, and not having had the advantage of his teaching are inclined to ignore what he did and what he taught. But I believe that he will return again. With the next generation the inevitable reaction will set in and Stanford will come into his own.¹⁸

¹⁶ Plunket Greene, 'Stanford as I knew him,' 86. The allusion to 'Heraclitus,' clear to Plunket Greene's public in the 1920s, probably needs explaining a hundred years later. Plunket Greene had in mind a mid-nineteenth-century poem by Eton schoolmaster William Johnson Cory (based on a Greek funerary epigram by Callimachus, who died in approximately 240BC). Cory's poem begins with a couplet beloved in Victorian Britain: 'They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead, / They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.' The 'Heraclitus' thus mourned is Callimachus's friend Heraclitus of Helicarnassus (not the pre-Socratic philosopher of the same name).

¹⁷ Goddard, 'Roots and the Soil,' 18–19.

¹⁸ Vaughan Williams, *Some Thoughts*, 195–196.

APPENDIX: LIST OF STANFORD'S ORGAN WORKS

This list omits all organ arrangements by other musicians of pieces that Stanford originally intended for other media.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of composition</i>	<i>Opus number</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
Prelude and Fugue in E minor	1875?	No opus number	Novello (1876)
Prelude on 'Jesu dulcis memoriae'	1879	No opus number	Royal School of Church Music (1982)
Fantasia and Toccata in D minor	1894 (rev. 1917)	57	Houghton & Co (1894); Stainer & Bell (1917)
Six Preludes for Organ	1903–1905	88	Breitkopf & Härtel (1905?); Stainer & Bell (1912)
Six Short Preludes and Postludes for Organ	1907	101	Stainer & Bell (1907)
Fantasia and Fugue in D minor	1907	103	Stainer & Bell (1907)
Six Short Preludes and Postludes for Organ	1908	105	Stainer & Bell (1908)
Installation March	1908	108	Stainer & Bell (1908)
Te Deum Laudamus	1909?	116/1	G. Schirmer (1910)
Fantasia	1909?	116/2	G. Schirmer (1910)
Canzone [<i>sic</i>]	1909?	116/3	G. Schirmer (1910)
Fantasia In Festo Omnium Sanctorum	1910	121/1	G. Schirmer (1911); Winthrop Rogers (1936)
Idyll	1910	121/2	G. Schirmer (1911); Winthrop Rogers (1936)
In Modo Dorico	1912 / 1920?	132/1	Stainer & Bell (1920)
Sonata No. 1 in F Major	1917	149	Augener (1917)
Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, 'Eroica'	1917	151	Stainer & Bell (1917)
Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, 'Britannica'	1917	152	Stainer & Bell (1918)
Sonata No. 4 in C Minor, 'Celtica'	1918	153	Stainer & Bell (1920)
Sonata No. 5 in A Major, 'Quasi una fantasia'	1918	159	Augener (1921)
Chorale Prelude from 'Little Organ Book'	1920?	No opus number	H.F.W. Deane & Sons (1924)
Six Occasional Preludes, Op. 182	1921?	182	Stainer & Bell (1930)
Fantasia upon the tune 'Intercessor', Op. 187	1922	187	Stainer & Bell (1922)
Four Intermezzi, Op. 189	1923?	189	Novello (1923)
Three Preludes and Fugues, Op. 193	1922	193	Novello (1923)
Three Idylls, Op. 194	1923?	194	Stainer & Bell (1930)

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DISCOGRAPHY

(All recordings are on CD, unless marked with 'LP' or 'EP' – the latter referring to a seven-inch vinyl record – and are complete unless otherwise indicated; organ arrangements by other hands of Stanford pieces that the composer originally intended for other media are omitted.)

Fantasia and Toccata for Organ in D Minor, Op. 57

- Francis Jackson, Abbey ABY621 (LP), 1967 (organ of York Minster).
Ronald Perrin, Vista VPS1040 (LP), 1976 (organ of Ripon Cathedral).
Ian Hare, Priory PRCD1072, 1987 (organ of the University of Lancaster).
David Drury, ABC 432527, 1990 (organ of the Sydney Town Hall).
Jonathan Rees-Williams, Abbey CDCA902, 1991 (organ of Lichfield Cathedral).
Keith John, Priory PRCD370, 1992 (organ of Gloucester Cathedral).
Marcus Huxley, Regent REGCD160, 2002 (organ of Birmingham Anglican Cathedral).
Tom Winpenny, Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1095, 2013 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).
Gerard Brooks, Priory PRCD1099, 2014 (organ of Methodist Central Hall, Westminster).
Daniel Moulton, Regent REGCD434, 2014 (organ of Arundel Cathedral).
Ben van Oosten, MDG MDG3161836, 2014 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).
Owain Park, Hyperion CDA68174, 2017 (organ of Hereford Cathedral).
Simon Earl, Priory PRCD1209, 2019 (organ of Christchurch Priory).

Six Preludes for Organ, Op. 88

- Jane Watts (Nos. 3 and 5), Priory PRCD414, 1994 (organ of Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow).
Francis Jackson (Nos. 1 and 3), Amphion PHICD126, 1995 (organ of Sledmere House, Yorkshire).
Francis Jackson (No. 3), Guild GMCD7122, 1996 (organ of Down Cathedral).
Tom Winpenny (No. 2), Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1095, 2013 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).
Simon Nieminski (Nos. 1, 3 and 5), Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh).

Six Short Preludes and Postludes for Organ, Op. 101

- Ronald Perrin (Nos. 2 and 3), Vista VPS1040 (LP), 1976 (organ of Ripon Cathedral).

Philip Ledger (No. 2), EMI ASD4093 (LP), 1982 (organ of King's College, Cambridge).

Jennifer Bate (Nos. 2 and 4), Hyperion CDA66180, 1986 (organ of St James' Church, Muswell Hill, London).

Christopher Dearnley (Nos. 2 and 4), Motette CD10911, 1989 (organ of St Paul's Cathedral, London).

Francis Jackson, Amphion PHICD126, 1995 (organ of Sledmere House, Yorkshire).

Francis Jackson (Nos. 1, 4 and 5), Guild GMCD7122, 1996 (organ of Down Cathedral).

Christopher Whitton (Nos. 3 and 6), Naxos 8.555794, 2003 (organ of St John's College, Cambridge).

Peter Dyke, Lammas LAMM148D, 2004 (organ of Hereford Cathedral).

Simon Jacobs (Nos. 1 and 2), Regent REGCD204, 2004 (organ of Christ's College, Cambridge).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1106, 2014 (organ of Durham Cathedral).

Robert James Stove (No. 6), Ars Organi AOR002, 2019 (organ of Trinity College Chapel, Melbourne).

Fantasia and Fugue for Organ, Op. 103

Francis Jackson, Amphion PHICD126, 1995 (organ of Sledmere House, Yorkshire).

Graham Barber, Priory PRCD769, 2003 (organ of Ripon Cathedral).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1106, 2014 (organ of Durham Cathedral).

Six Short Preludes and Postludes for Organ, Op. 105

Lionel Dakers (No. 2), Ryemuse Records, SRP7009 (EP), 1965 (organ of Exeter Cathedral).

Gerald Barnes (No. 6), Pilgrim JLP123 (LP), 1965 (organ of Bloomsbury Baptist Church).

Christopher Herrick (No. 6), Vista VPS1047 (LP), 1977 (organ of St Mary-at-Hill, London).

Geoffrey Tristram (No. 6), Vista VPS1051 (LP), 1977 (organ of Christchurch Priory).

Jennifer Bate (No. 2), Hyperion CDA66180, 1986 (organ of St James' Church, Muswell Hill, London).

Christopher Dearnley (Nos. 2 and 3), Motette CD10911, 1989 (organ of St Paul's Cathedral, London).

Magnus Williamson (No. 6), OxRecs OXCD-41, 1990 (organ of Magdalen College, Oxford).

Jonathan Bielby (No. 6), Priory PRCD298, 1991 (organ of Rochdale Town Hall).

Desmond Hunter, Priory PRCD445, 1994 (organ of the Guildhall, Londonderry).

Francis Jackson, Amphion PHICD126, 1995 (organ of Sledmere House, Yorkshire).

Francis Jackson (No. 6), Guild GMCD7122, 1996 (organ of Down Cathedral).
Stephen Cleobury (No. 6), EMI CDC5 55535-2, 1997 (organ of King's College,
Cambridge).
Roger Judd (No. 6), Herald HAVPCD273, 2008 (organ of St George's Chapel,
Windsor).
Tom Winpenny (No. 6), Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens'
College, Cambridge).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1146, 2015 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).

Installation March, Op. 108

Graham Barber, Priory PRCD769, 2003 (organ of Ripon Cathedral).
Daniel Cook, Priory, PRCD1161, 2015 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Te Deum Laudamus Fantasia Op. 116 No. 1

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1106, 2014 (organ of Durham Cathedral).
Simon Nieminski, Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons'
Hall, Edinburgh).

Canzona, Op. 116 No. 2

Tom Winpenny, Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College,
Cambridge).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1146, 2015 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).

Fantasia In Festo Omnium Sanctorum, Op. 121 No. 1

Jane Watts, Priory PRCD414, 1994 (organ of Kelvingrove Art Gallery,
Glasgow).
Simon Nieminski, Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons'
Hall, Edinburgh).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1174, 2017 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Idyll, Op. 121 No. 2

Jane Watts, Priory PRCD414, 1994 (organ of Kelvingrove Art Gallery,
Glasgow).
Simon Nieminski, Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons'
Hall, Edinburgh).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1174, 2017 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

In Modo Dorico, Op. 132 No. 1

Tom Winpenny, Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College,
Cambridge).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1106, 2014 (organ of Durham Cathedral).

Sonata No. 1 in F Major, Op. 149

- Michael Overbury, Priory PR129 (LP), 1983 (organ of Albert Hall, Nottingham).
Desmond Hunter, Priory PRCD445, 1994 (organ of the Guildhall, Londonderry).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1095, 2013 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).
Simon Nieminski, Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh).

Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, 'Eroica', Op. 151

- Charles Callahan, Pro Organo CD7010, 1986 (organ of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol).
Desmond Hunter, Priory PRCD445, 1994 (organ of the Guildhall, Londonderry).
Joseph Payne, Marco Polo 8.223754, 1995 (organ of St Stephen's Church, Fort Worth).
Eric Plutz, Pro Organo SACD7203, 2007 (organ of Princeton University Chapel).
Barry Jordan, IFO Classics ORG7227, 2009 (organ of Magdeburg Cathedral).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1095, 2013 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).

Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, 'Britannica', Op. 152

- Garth Benson, Vista VPS1045 (LP), 1977 (second movement only) (organ of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol).
Michael Overbury, Priory PR109 (LP), 1982 (organ of St Mary Magdalene, Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire).
Charles Callahan, Pro Organo CD7010, 1986 (organ of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol).
Desmond Hunter, Priory PRCD445, 1994 (organ of the Guildhall, Londonderry).
Joseph Payne, Marco Polo 8.223754, 1995 (organ of St Stephen's Church, Fort Worth).
David Briggs, Priory PRCD680, 2000 (organ of St John the Evangelist Church, Upper Norwood, London).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1106, 2014 (organ of Durham Cathedral).

Sonata No. 4 in C Minor, 'Celtica', Op. 153

- Lionel Dakers, Pilgrim JLPS155 (LP), 1969 (third movement only) (organ of Exeter Cathedral).
Charles Callahan, Pro Organo CD7010, 1986 (organ of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol).
Desmond Hunter, Priory PRCD445, 1994 (organ of the Guildhall, Londonderry).
Joseph Payne, Marco Polo 8.223754, 1995 (organ of St Stephen's Church, Fort Worth).

John Dexter, Guild CMCD7122, 1996 (organ of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin).
Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1146, 2015 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).

Sketches, Op. 155

Daniel Cook (Nos. 1 and 2), Priory PRCD1174, 2017 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Sonata No. 5 in A Major, 'Quasi una fantasia,' Op. 159

Desmond Hunter, Priory PRCD445, 1994 (organ of the Guildhall, Londonderry).

Bruce Neswick, Pro Organo CD7251, 2011 (organ of St John the Divine Cathedral, New York City).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1161, 2015 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Six Occasional Preludes, Op. 182

Tom Winpenny (No. 5), Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1174, 2017 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Fantasia upon the tune 'Intercessor', Op. 187

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1174, 2017 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Four Intermezzi, Op. 189

Tom Winpenny (No. 4), Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).

Simon Nieminski (No. 2), Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1161, 2015 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Three Preludes and Fugues, Op. 193

Francis Jackson (No. 2), Amphion PHICD126, 1995 (organ of Sledmere House, Yorkshire).

Andrew Smith (Nos. 1 and 2), CRD3497, 1997 (organ of New College, Oxford).

Tom Winpenny, Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1146, 2015 (organ of Salisbury Cathedral).

Three Idylls, Op. 194

Tom Winpenny (No. 1), Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).

Simon Nieminski (No. 3), Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh).

Daniel Cook (No. 1), Priory PRCD1161, 2015 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Daniel Cook (Nos. 2 and 3), Priory PRCD1174, 2017 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Chorale Prelude from 'Little Organ Book' (no opus number)

James Lancelot, Priory PRCD682, 2000 (organ of Durham Cathedral).

Peter Dyke, Lammas LAMM148D, 2004 (organ of Hereford Cathedral).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1161, 2015 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Prelude and Fugue in E Minor (no opus number)

Tom Winpenny, Resonus Classics RES10104, 2011 (organ of Queens' College, Cambridge).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1161, 2015 (organ of Westminster Abbey).

Prelude on 'Jesu Dulcis Memoriae' (no opus number)

Simon Nieminski, Resonus Classics RES10130, 2014 (organ of Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh).

Daniel Cook, Priory PRCD1106, 2014 (organ of Durham Cathedral).