THE INTERSECTION OF ENGLISH FOLK SONG AND WIND BAND COMPOSITION OF
GUSTAV HOLST, RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, AND PERCY GRAINGER

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CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIND BAND IN ENGLAND AND ITS ROLE IN POPULAR CULTURE

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Percy Grainger secured a place in the history books as the first composers since the time of Mozart and Haydn to compose original works of significance for wind groups. Holst and Vaughan Williams were British by birth, while Percy Grainger, though born in Australia, spent nearly fifteen years in Britain. An examination of English musical life in the decades before World War One shows that the renaissance in art music for wind bands that was spearheaded by Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger was inspired by the wind bands that were active at that time in every town and hamlet.

While wind bands were popular in most western nations in the nineteenth century, the popularity and success of the brass band and military band in England was unrivaled. “In 1889, Wright & Round’s Amateur Band Teacher’s Guide claimed that there were 40,000 amateur wind bands in Britain. A few months later the Brass Band News, also published by Wright & Round, put the number at 30,000.”¹ While the exact number is impossible to determine, the extraordinary popularity of wind bands in England demonstrates their importance in the cultured life of that nation. Though music history texts tend to ignore the topic of the wind band, a good deal of evidence exists to prove that the wind band was very much a part of the popular musical life of western nations. It

was the achievement of Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger to have developed an English musical language that exploited and fit the culture in which wind bands thrived.

We get some idea of that culture from, David Russell: “Popular music was essentially the music of that great majority of the population who, even by 1900, earned less than 200 pounds a year and left school at the end of the elementary stage.” Wind bands in England were indeed considered popular music ensembles under this definition, but to restrict their popularity to this demographic would be misleading. There were, in fact, two very distinct traditions for banding in England: the military band and the brass band. The most striking differences between these two ensembles are quite simple. First, the military band instrumentation utilizes both woodwind and brass instruments, while the brass band utilizes only brass. Secondly, the tradition of the brass band is tied to the working class, as described in Russell’s definition of popular music. The military band, in contrast, was the ensemble favored by middle-class patrons. Though the differences in class are distinct, there is evidence of interconnection between the two types of wind ensembles. In addition, both types of bands suffered from their shared inability to be taken seriously as legitimate ensembles for original composition.

Scholars traditionally claim the orchestra to be the flagship ensemble for instrumental music during the last 250 years, while the wind band in any form is often overlooked or given only passing mention. This is especially true with respect to the critical evaluation of various composers’ works. For example, music textbooks often cite Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* as a monumental work of program music, notable for its revolutionary use of orchestral instrumental tone color. Berlioz’s *Requiem* and his

\[\text{\footnotesize 2 Ibid., 7.}\]
Treatise on Musical Instruments are also duly honored. But what of his Grande Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale, composed strictly for wind instruments. What of the importance of the wind contributions of Rossini, Wagner, Grieg, Saint-Saëns, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky, within their own output? For earlier periods of musical history, we are taught that Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven were great German composers of orchestral, choral, and operatic music. Perhaps briefly mentioned, but usually glossed over, are the serenades, partitas, divertimenti, and marches that these noted composers contributed to wind literature. This is not to dispute that their works in other genres are of notable interest, but virtually eliminating wind music from critical evaluation because of its supposedly incidental function or lack of recognition as high art music, displays a scholarly tunnel vision that needs to be corrected.

Many factors have contributed to the less-than-serious representation of wind works in musical history. These include, in the first place, the social classes that patronized band music, but also the imperfections of the instruments themselves during their development, and the constantly changing instrumentation of the wind band as it adapted to outdoor staging. One might say that the wind band was too versatile and too accommodating for its own longevity, a trait that still plagues the bands of today.

3 Richard Franko Goldman, The Band’s Music (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1938), 44-7. These pages provide a catalogue of original works by these composers, and many others.

4 Military band music was popular among the middle class, while brass band music patronized the lower classes.

5 Brass instruments prior to 1850 did not have valves, limiting the number of notes that could be played. Only the woodwind instruments, utilized in the orchestra, could perform a chromatic scale.
“Versatile” is used here to describe the distinct ability of wind instruments to be useful in any setting, especially outdoor venues where string instruments are ineffectual. The outdoor use of winds ultimately led to their association with marching bands, and to the view of wind music as a medium for the massed public in outdoor venues. In such setting and for such audiences, subtle musicality necessarily took a back seat to an obvious and simplified musical rhetoric.\(^6\)

In the classical era, wind bands were quite prominent for court and military music-making. At that time, an ensemble consisting solely of wind instruments was known in German-speaking countries as a “Harmonie.”\(^7\) Such an ensemble could include flutes, clarinets, oboes, bassoons, basset-horns, pitched horns, and sometimes trumpets.\(^8\)

Prior to 1775, most Harmonie ensembles utilized only six players. Prince Schwarzenburg, in 1776, first introduced the eight-member Harmonie ensemble, consisting of two oboes, two english horns, two horns, and two bassoons. In 1782, Emperor Joseph continued development of the eight-member instrumentation, utilizing oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons.\(^9\) This eighteenth-century Harmonie tradition was inspired by German Baroque wind bands, which descended from “Les Grande Hautbois”

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\(^6\) I use the term “functional” to represent the idea of playing in outdoor venues for large groups of people, often for special occasions.

\(^7\) Janet K. Page defines the Harmonie as “a term used extensively in Germany and elsewhere to mean wind instruments or a small wind band (oboes, horns, bassoons etc.) employed by the aristocracy (and others) from the mid-18th century or a small military band.” See “Band (i), §II, 2: 1600–1800, (ii) Harmonie” in *Grove Music Online*. [URL in bibliography].

\(^8\) Shawms, hautbois, and serpents were available earlier, but this combination of oboes, horns, bassoons, and clarinets was the new rage in comparison to strings.

\(^9\) Roger Hellyer, “Harmoniemusik,” in *Grove Music Online*. [URL in Bibliography]
as well as Italian church wind ensembles which played “Concerti da camera.”

The seventeenth-century oboe bands of Louis XIV (“Les Grande Hautbois”) were made famous by the king’s court composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully.

During the time of Haydn and Mozart, music for the Harmonie became all the rage, and tried to assemble such an ensemble. Haydn composed numerous divertimenti for Harmonie ensembles at the court of Count Morzin, and later at the Esterhazy Court. Many of Haydn’s early Harmonie compositions were intended primarily for military processions rather than for court events. These works tend to be simplistic, possibly due to the limitations of the horns of this time. They certainly seem less developed than Haydn’s string compositions in terms of form, harmony, and thematic development.

Mozart composed three major works for the Harmonie ensemble (K.361, K.375, and K.385) while in Vienna in the 1780s, each of which rivaled his symphonies in both form and thematic quality. Evidence of the popularity of the Harmonie is substantiated by Mozart’s consideration to compose for such an ensemble at the court of Prince Liechtenstein. In a letter to his father, Mozart wrote:

I have my eye here on three sources (of permanent income). The first is not certain, and, even if it were, would probably not be much...(he) is young Prince Liechtenstein, who would like to collect a Harmoniemusik (though he does not yet want it to be known), for which I should write the music. This would not bring in much, it is true, but it would at least be something certain, and I should not sign the contract unless it were to be for life.11

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This letter provides evidence of two facts. First, Mozart seemed to hold no
disdain for wind groups, as demonstrated by his willingness to write for such an
ensemble. Secondly, the Harmonie ensemble was becoming a regular part of aristocratic
life in Vienna and throughout Austria during the 1780’s. Among aristocrats who
employed this style of ensemble, we could single out Emperor Joseph II, Prince
Schwarzenberg, Prince Grassalkovics, Prince Lobkowitz, and Prince Liechtenstein.\footnote{Ibid., 164.}
David Whitwell states, “it appears that after the Emperor formed his Harmoniemusik,
every major Viennese Prince soon adopted this new ‘status symbol’.”\footnote{Ibid., 162.}

It is important to understand that the invention of the Harmonie represents the
first ensemble of winds comprised primarily of modern instruments. Minus the use of
trumpets and trombones, this ensemble was to become the wind section for the modern
orchestra. However, it included few brass instruments, due to their inability to play the
entire chromatic scale.

The Harmonie gained popularity in courts during the second half of the eighteenth
century and became a recognized part of aristocratic life. At the Esterhazy Court, Prince
Anton, the son of Nicolas, dismissed the orchestra two days after his father’s death in
1790, but retained the use of the Harmonie.\footnote{Ibid., 161-2.} It is surmised that while the orchestra was
important to the aristocracy, the Harmonie served as an artistic and functional alternative
for occasions and special functions, especially in outdoor settings.

\footnote{Ibid., 164.}
\footnote{Ibid., 162.}
\footnote{Ibid., 161-2.}
The Harmonie prospered in a Bohemian-Austrian-Hungarian triangle between Prague, Vienna, and Budapest during the late-eighteenth century. It had a more limited role in Germany and England, but the popularity of these pure wind groups paved the way for the development of chromatic brass instruments compatible with woodwinds. The horn was a popular instrument with composers of the eighteenth century, but they would probably have given almost anything for a horn that could play chromatically. Musicians struggled with crook systems that allowed horn players to change key, facilitating versatility with certain notes in a scale. Crook systems were compromises at best when compared to fully chromatic string and woodwind instruments.

Due to note limitations in their natural forms, improved cornets and horns were central to the development of the modern wind band. In the nineteenth century, brass players would not have to wait long for numerous inventions and modifications that would finally bring their instruments up to the chromatic abilities of the woodwinds. The first major invention was the keyed bugle, developed by Joseph Halliday of Dublin in 1810. Keyed bugles function in a similar manner to the clarinet, utilizing drilled holes and keys that change the length of the air column in the instrument. Shortly thereafter, in approximately 1815, inventors began experimenting with the addition of valves to horns, developing the first valved instruments called “pistons.” Wilhelm Wieprecht, the great Prussian band leader, designed the “Berlin Pistons” in the early 1820’s. By 1828, Jean-

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Hilaire Asté Hilary, a French inventor, designed the “cornet-à-pistons” which was referred to in England as the “Cornopean.”¹⁶

The invention of valves opened the door to a whole new realm of sound and possibilities for the wind band. During the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, the military band across Europe slowly but steadily made the change to the combined brass and woodwind sound that we know today. Prior to chromatic valved brass instruments, woodwind instruments were utilized as the primary core of the military wind band. However, as they proved more practical in outdoor settings, brass instruments emerged into the military band instrumentation due primarily to their greater volume.¹⁷ Great forces were acting in different areas of Europe to encourage this change in wind band instrumentation toward a more modern form that included larger numbers of brass instruments.

Perhaps the area of greatest achievement was in Prussia, under the leadership of Wilhelm Wieprecht (1802-1872). He was a trombonist and a visionary who fell in love with the wind band at a very young age. As a result, he created the most advanced military bands in Europe during the middle of the nineteenth century. Wieprecht reinvented the instrumentation of military bands for outdoor functions, effectively creating a large full-sounding band, similar to what we know today as the concert band. Hector Berlioz, on a trip to Berlin in 1843, remarked that

as for military bands, one would have designedly to avoid them not to hear at least some, since at all hours of the day, either on


¹⁷ Adolph Sax promoted brass instruments in military band instrumentation. Through competition, Sax proved that brass instruments provided a fuller sound with greater volume.
foot or on horseback, they are passing through the streets of Berlin. These little isolated bands do not, however, give any idea of the majesty of the grand whole, which the head bandmaster of the military bands at Berlin and Potsdam [referring to Wieprecht] can collect whenever he chooses. Imagine he has a body upwards of six hundred musicians under his command, all good readers, all well up in the mechanism of their instruments, playing in tune, and favored by nature with indefatigable lungs and lips of leather. Hence the extreme facility with which the trumpets, horns, and cornets give those high notes unattainable by our artists [in France]. They are regiments of musicians rather than musicians of regiments.¹⁸

By 1867, the greatest of all military band contests had been organized in Paris, which hosted bands from France, Austria, Prussia, Belgium, Spain, Russia, Holland, Baden and Bavaria. The contest stipulated that bands were to perform a required work and one of their own choosing. First prize was divided three ways between Austria, Paris, and Wieprecht’s band of Prussia, toting 85 musicians.¹⁹ Having faired well in the contest, Wieprecht was no doubt one of the greatest band leaders of nineteenth century Europe. However, it was in Paris that the most pronounced evolution of the wind band was taking place due to the innovations of a young inventor named Adolph Sax. Sax’s contributions to brass instrument development would prove to be a driving force behind the developing culture of the British band movement. Although Britain was not represented in the Paris band contest of 1867, the British band movement was both strong and flourishing. Prior to valved brass instruments, wind bands existed in England with a similar instrumentation to the Harmonien of central Europe, although not as well

¹⁸ Whitwell, A Concise History, 207.

developed. Most of these ensembles existed as town bands, pulled together from musicians with instruments that were readily available.

Before Sax’s valved brass instruments were introduced to Britain, he spent much time trying to win over French military band leaders, with whom he had great difficulties. In the 1840’s, many of these band leaders were not willing to accept changes that would lead to an instrumentation including more brass. Michele Carafa, director of the Gymnase de Musique Militaire, an institution created to preserve the Harmonie ensemble tradition in French military bands, was an adamant antagonist of Sax’s. Almost immediately after his arrival in Paris, “Sax was subjected to vicious press campaigns. His best workers were tempted away by higher salaries, a mysterious fire destroyed part of his factory, and he was even physically attacked.” Nevertheless, he continued to develop and introduce his new instruments.

In 1845, Sax was provided a fair chance to bring his case to the public when a commission was appointed to study the conditions of French military music. Carafa and Sax were selected to bring ensembles of forty-five members, using instrumentations based on the two styles they represented. Carafa had the very best players at his disposal while some of Sax’s players had just been introduced to the new instruments one day earlier. Before the contest Carafa had seven of Sax’s players kidnapped. Sax went on to perform with thirty-eight players to Carafa’s forty-five. Despite all odds, Sax was victorious with his instrumentation of seventy-five percent brass to Carafa’s forty percent. With fewer players, some of whom were not very good, the performances by


21 Ibid., 215.
Sax’s band received notably greater cries of applause and enthusiasm than did those by Carafa’s band.\(^{22}\)

With the success of Sax’s new instruments, doors began to open for him but progress was still slow. It was not until nine years after the contest between Carafa and Sax that a government ordinance set the official instrumentation for infantry and cavalry bands to include saxhorns. However, one year before this famous contest, a touring British family brass group called the Distin Family Quintet had received its first introduction to saxhorn instruments.

In 1844, the Distins came into contact with Sax and his instruments while on tour in Paris, through a concert set up by Hector Berlioz. Their initial response to these instruments was mostly excellent, but Sax agreed to make modifications requested by the Distin family. The introduction of these new instruments into the Distin’s ensemble brought saxhorns to the forefront of wind music in British culture.

However, to think that brass instruments did not exist in England prior to the introduction of saxhorns would be a mistake. The cornopean, the first valved cornet, made its way to England in the 1830s.\(^{23}\) It was the first chromatic brass instrument that was easy enough for the average person to learn without extensive training. This was in great contrast to the training required, for example, to master the bassoon and oboe. The ease of playing valved brass instruments increased their popularity among working-class amateur musicians, but the great sound and durability of saxhorns took brass playing to a new level. Saxhorns had the ability to cover a large tonal range, thus augmenting the

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 218.

\(^{23}\) Sheldon, “Before the Brass Band,” 96. See also Whitwell, *A Concise History*, 240.
horn and bass ranges of bands. They achieved a resonant and blended sound superior to that of the horn and ophicleide.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1851, the popularity of saxhorns greatly increased in England through their extensive display at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London.\textsuperscript{25} With the increasing demand for saxhorns in Britain, many instrument makers undertook their production. The Distin Family became one of these instrument makers, having begun their careers on piston instruments (primarily the cornopean made by Pace) as well as the slide trumpet, horn, and trombone.\textsuperscript{26} After their conversion to saxhorns, they began their own manufacturing of saxhorn-style brass instruments in 1850. This occurred at the best possible time in Britain, as the popularity of making music was growing among the working and middle classes and the music profession was on the rise.\textsuperscript{27}

When saxhorns and valved brass instruments became readily available in England (after 1850), participation in amateur brass bands and military bands greatly increased. The average working-class musician found saxhorns rather easy to learn, making their assimilation into amateur bands effortless. Also, saxhorns were somewhat interchangeable among players, so that if one person was missing or moved away, another member of the band could fill in on the open instrument. The ability to interchange players on different instruments was much more difficult with ensembles

\textsuperscript{24} The ophicleide was a large keyed brass instrument that utilizes a brass mouthpiece, but looks like a baritone saxophone. It was used to fill out the bass range in wind groups prior to the tuba. See also Reginald Morley-Pegge, “Ophicleide,” Grove Music Online. [URL in bibliography]


\textsuperscript{26} Herbert, The British Band, 27.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 31.
containing a mixture of brass and woodwinds. Thus, the logical idea for factory, town, and family bands was to switch to the instruments of the saxhorn family. Standard brass band instrumentation soon evolved that included saxhorns; these eventually phased out french horns, ophicleides, and keyed bugles.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the growing number of British brass bands demonstrated the medium’s rise in popularity and the development toward a standard instrumentation. However, the military band was also undergoing innovations that paralleled those seen in the brass bands. In 1857, a music class was created at Kneller Hall in hopes of standardizing military band training. This eventually became the Royal Military School of Music at Twyckenham, designed to create a new breed of musicians and bandleaders that would enable British bands to diminish their reliance on foreign musical talent.28

The need for the creation of such an institution arose out of a band crisis of sorts when in 1854, two-thousand British bandsmen were combined in Scutari for review by Queen Victoria. This event was one of the most famous blunders of military band history. According to accounts, the band appeared magnificent and quite impressive by sight. However, when the band struck up God Save the Queen, what resulted was the most hideous and unbearable sound from many different massed bands all trying to play their own arrangements of this work, each in their own key. This was a defining moment in the history of British bands as military leaders finally realized what needed to be done.

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The creation of a military band music class at Kneller Hall, which became the Royal Military School of Music, was the final result.\(^{29}\)

With the creation of a music school at Kneller Hall, British military bandleaders aimed to achieve multiple objectives. One of these was to create a standard military band instrumentation providing composers with a “conception of the capabilities” of the military band.\(^{30}\) Another was to “stimulate the acquisition of musical knowledge amongst [English] countrymen,” thus eliminating a reliance on foreign-trained band leaders and musicians.\(^{31}\) Before the creation of the Royal Military School of Music, many of the bandmasters and a good number of musicians were foreign. There was a prevailing British cultural belief that foreign musicians were superior to those of England.\(^{32}\) This double standard even applied to Gustav Holst, one of Britain’s most accomplished composers, while engaged to perform as a trombone player with the White Viennese Band at seaside resorts. Holst recalls how “acting” foreign gained the musicians higher pay:

> In the [eighteen] nineties I was one of a little band that used to look for seaside jobs in the summer. One summer, we had an English conductor, and one-third foreign musicians. We got paid two pounds a week, no traveling expenses. The next summer we had a foreign conductor, were dressed up in uniforms with gold braid, and were billed as a foreign orchestra. Two-thirds of the players were still English, but the

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 9-10.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 9.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

difference was this: we got paid three guineas a week and all expenses found.33

British culture perpetuated the idea that English musicians were of inferior quality, while most accounts show this notion to be contrary to the truth. Even with the work at Kneller Hall, it is still evident that this musical inferiority complex continued into the beginning of the twentieth century.

It should be understood that Holst performed with groups called military bands that in actuality were civilian wind groups. The use of the term “military band” did not necessarily refer to any association with the military, but rather to the instrumentation, which was similar to the combined woodwinds and brasses of the military-style bands. While the working class fostered the development of the brass band, the middle class adopted the military band as its popular music ensemble. When compared to the orchestra, the popularity of the civilian military band around the turn of the nineteenth century was quite remarkable. In reference to Gustav Holst, who was a young trombonist looking for work, Jon Mitchell explains, “Most of the jobs for young trombonists at the time were not with the fine symphony orchestras of the London area, but with the ‘civilian’ military bands that played engagements at summer resorts.”34 While the working-class had its brass bands, the middle-class had its civilian military bands. They were especially popular at seaside resorts, where almost every resort had its own band pavilion. Perhaps bands found favor with the middle class because their sound was similar to that of an orchestra.


34 Mitchell, From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith, 4.
Military bands had little music of their own, and spent most of their time performing transcriptions of “overtures, opera potpourris, Viennese waltzes, character pieces, quadrilles, solo pieces, polkas, operatic cavatinas, and some arrangements of the better-known classics.”³⁵ There was no doubt that many musicians and band leaders would have liked to perform original art music, but civilian military bands were businesses that focused more on entertaining and pleasing their audiences rather than providing original intellectual art music. Many of these bands would spend their time playing dance tunes into the late hours of the night for the middle-class patrons, not allowing time for artistic or intellectual engagement. To understand why bands spent so much time reproducing popular tunes, it is key to remember that sound reproduction did not exist on a wide scale, and the live performance of music was a primary means of transmission. Military bands were the ensembles of live music for outdoor occasions, with their powerful wind instruments able to project long distances. In a sense, they were the musical reproduction machines of the pre-recording era, recreating all kinds of music, none of which was original for the wind band.

The lack of original music motivated band leaders to encourage composers to engage in providing original works for the wind band. Understanding the reservations of composers, band leaders often crafted their pleas for new compositions around the positive rewards. The most important of these was monetary, given the large demand for wind band music, as well as the frequent number of performances new works could potentially receive. Composers would often arrange wind transcriptions of their new

compositions so that they could debut their music to the masses. In 1912, Lieutenant John Mackenzie Rogan, bandmaster of the Coldstream Guards, gave a speech in which he stated,

> A young composer should realize that the military band is one of the best means by which his music can – and in many cases does – become known. It offers him one of the best, most profitable markets, and in many cases it is practically the only way in which his name and work will become known, as it frequently happens that his orchestral compositions are played, as such, not more than once or twice a year, and often not that.36

The beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed a renewed push for military band composition, “awakening from its position of simply being the supplier of popular music for the middle classes and attempting to establish itself as a legitimate art form.”37 Both the brass band and military band were attempting to enact this “awakening.” However, the military band, with its middle-class status, met with far less opposition from composers than did the brass band.

The brass band was often excluded from original composition due to its association with the working-class musician. A widely held opinion viewed the experience of “banding” as a mechanism to keep the working class out of trouble!38 This was the often the view of the upper and middle classes, who feared an uprising of the

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37 Mitchell, *From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith*, 15.

working class. While the military band provided musical entertainment for the middle class, the brass band engaged the working class as a competition-based pastime. In fact, it is safe to say that the majority of brass bands thrived on competition. The upper classes appeared only moderately concerned with the artistry and musicality of brass bands, choosing to focus on their ability to keep the working class out of trouble. If artistry was a byproduct of this past time, it was an added bonus for the participants.

To the delight of the upper classes, competition thrived among brass bands, which in turn kept the working class well occupied. As brass band competitions grew in great popularity among the working class, and with the invention of the railroad, thousands of people traveled hundreds of miles to attend these musical contests. The brass band competition was less like a concert and more like a sporting event. Upwards of 60,000 would attend the national band championships held at the Crystal Palace in London. Each band performed some of its own music, often transcriptions of popular classics, as well as a test piece that every group was required to sight-read. Public interest in these competitions was driven by such factors as rivalry and bragging rights, similar to the sporting events of our time. There was always a winner, and each group was constantly being compared and scrutinized.

Positions in civilian military bands were considered professional jobs, as these ensembles did not take part in competitive sport. Because they were often businesses that paid their musicians, a high level of professionalism was expected, similar to what an audience would expect from continental European bands and orchestras. In contrast, brass bands thrived on the talent of amateur musicians. They were usually town factory

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or colliery (coal mine) workers, few of whom performed professionally. Brass bands were more synonymous with clubs, or a team sports, utilizing the working class talent that was available.

Subscribing to the amateur talent available in one’s own family, town, colliery, or factory made versatility of instrumentation necessary to a band’s survival. Sax’s family of valved brass instruments, with their similar fingerings, allowed players to easily move to different instruments within the ensemble. This new system increased the versatility of the ensemble, as players were able to fill in instrumentation deficiencies as needed. For example, before the all-brass system, it was difficult for a clarinetist to play the cornet if a band’s cornet player moved away. Sax’s system made it easy for an alto or tenor horn player to move to cornet. Of course, clefs and transpositions were required to aid in this venture. To keep the valve fingerings the same on all instruments, regardless of range, the treble clef was used for all voices, and all lines were transposed at the interval relevant to the particular horn. In practice, even bass saxhorns were written in treble clef despite the fact that the sounding pitch would normally be notated in bass clef. Although musical notation may have been awkward in this system, it served to increase versatility allowing brass bands to more successfully maintain a competitive ensemble.

Competition drove the brass band and its popularity, but at times this same factor offended both the public and serious composers, causing most to dismiss the brass band. Hooliganism was often associated with the culture of the brass band. This term generally refers to the antics of bandsmen when they became disgruntled by a judge’s decision or by illegal acts of other bands. Brass band competitions were plagued by problems such

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as corruption in judging, gambling among supporters, gambling among musicians, and outbreaks of violence (in the most extreme cases). “Performing the Dead March was a favored method of showing disapproval after an unflattering or unpopular decision.”

Judges often required protection from band members who were seeking some sort of physical revenge. Such inappropriate behavior by bandsmen and those associated with the competitions was distasteful to the upper classes, and forms one of the primary reasons why a serious composer would not want his name associated with such a movement. To compose a work for these working-class ensembles was often considered career suicide, as it could have resulted in negative public opinion. Any fine conservatory-trained musician, it was supposed, would be associated with an orchestra or a civilian military band, not with a brass band.

The division between conservatory-trained musicians and amateur brass band musicians also kept serious composers away. The brass band had its own style of rehearsing, with its own musical language. David Russell explains this as follows:

Bandmen used a musical vernacular unknown to outsiders. The word ‘trainer’ is a case in point, with its undertones of both the playing field and the circus, while players spoke of their performance as ‘banding’ or ‘blowing’. Many could read music (albeit often only in the treble clef, tenor and bass being rarely used by publishers), but a majority of the musicians were ignorant of musical theory and much terminology. The scale of B flat, for example, was more likely referred to as the ‘scale of two flats’. Moreover, most bandsmen would have used dialect, which, for example, in the Huddersfield area transformed ‘soprano’, ‘trombone’ and ‘bass’ to ‘soprana’, ‘tram’ and ‘bass’ (as in the fish or beer, depending on one’s taste) respectively. There was also a ‘tap-room’ feel, an element of what one commentator has referred to as an

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atmosphere of ‘masculine gaiety’ behind some of the goings-on, with shirtsleeves, pipes and tobacco-chewing. Additionaly, the rather sharp tuning of the brass band, often honing in at around A 452.5, was foreign to the training of conservatory musicians. Such brass band conventions were often unknown to educated musicians due to the cultural separation maintained between brass bands and other musical ensembles. Even Gustav Holst, who played trombone in civic military bands, had to make inquiries into the conventions of composing for brass bands, specifically about the instrumentation and clefs used.

While the aura of the brass band steered serious composers away from the ensemble, some did cross social lines by providing original musical material for brass bands. After 1920, British composers Elgar, Holst, and Vaughan Williams humbly engaged in this practice, but this did little to change widely held attitudes of disdain toward brass band composition. In fact, prominent musical figures continued to express prejudice against the brass band. Not long after Holst’s contribution of A Moorside Suite, Sir Thomas Beecham began an abrasive attack on the brass band movement. While members of the brass band movement tried to draw Holst into the controversy, Holst always declined answering criticisms, choosing to let his works speak for him.

Although the brass band movement was undeniably a great achievement for the working class, upper-class biases never allowed these working-class musicians to achieve great significance on a cultural level. One must remember that the upper classes were more interested in the ability of the brass band to detour trouble among the working class.

42 Ibid., 225.
43 Mitchell, From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith, 92-3.
44 Ibid., 98.
The more refined military bands, with their often conservatory-trained musicians, functioned as a connection to high-brow art music for the middle class while maintaining separation from high-brow culture. Thus, wind bands typically served the functional purpose of bringing art music to the masses while maintaining a cultural divide between socially separated musical audiences.

In his book *National Music*, Vaughan Williams states the view that a great work of art can only be born under the right surroundings and in the right atmosphere. Bach himself…was only able to produce his fugues, his Passions, his cantatas, because there had preceded him generations of smaller composers…[who] had no other ambition than to provide worthily and with dignity the music required of them: craftsmen perhaps rather than conscious artists. But is not the work of Bach built up on two great foundations, the organ music of his Teutonic predecessors and the popular hymn-tunes of his own people?

Essentially, Vaughan Williams held the view that composers ventured into composition influenced by the musical environment to which they were exposed. In early twentieth-century England, the thriving wind band tradition in popular culture had undoubtedly affected Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger. This tradition was such a part of their environment that two of them actually participated in it. Holst served as a trombonist with civilian military bands, and Grainger enlisted as a saxophonist in an American military band. Vaughan Williams, although not a wind musician, received exposure to this tradition through both his friendship with Holst and his life as an Englishman.

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It is undeniable that England had a strong wind band tradition that gained momentum in the mid-nineteenth century. It did not gain significance from an association with scholarly art music, but instead it established itself as a popular art form through a process of evolutionary development. Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger made significant attempts to aid the evolution of the wind band with their original compositions for the genre. While their contributions stand as some of the first notable wind works by composers of scholarly significance, they always took into account the audiences to which these works appealed, and never strayed from maintaining public appeal in popular culture.

The involvement of these composers with band music was only made possible by the culture of wind bands in England that surrounded them. Although traditional musicology does pay the homage due to this musical genre, wind bands have continuously sustained years of development and popularity among the massed public. While the contributions of these composers helped encourage the use of wind bands for original music, one cannot deny that these works can be enjoyed in any setting due to the great versatility of wind bands. Trying to define the wind band’s role as either artistic or functional would be a disservice to this versatility. Just because music is played outdoors does not mean it cannot be artistic. Similarly, if music is played indoors, it can still serve a functional purpose rather than an artistic one. These three composers bridged the gap between art and functionality, contributing works to the wind band genre that were popular with outdoor crowds, while consistently entertaining the most adept listeners at indoor concerts.
CHAPTER 2

THE FOLKSONG REVIVAL AND THE ENGLISH MUSICAL RENAISSANCE

In 1914, Oscar Schmitz published *Das Land ohne Musik* (The Land Without Music), an attack on the character of English music prior to World War I.¹ This commentary on English music, published suspiciously after the outbreak of the First World War, attempted to undermine the achievements of the English musical renaissance that began with Sir Edward Elgar. It served as a clear example of the rivalry and envy that grew between Germany and England during the end of the nineteenth century and continued through the Second World War. This rivalry was one that thrived on the envy of respective national possessions. Germany envied the British Navy, specifically its supremacy that allowed Britain to expand and colonize all over the globe. Britain, on the other hand, envied Germany for its dominating cultural hold on music.²

To any student of music history, it is obvious that German music had dominated Europe since the time of Bach. In the opinion of some scholars, “by the [time of the] death of Beethoven, German musicians had either invented or perfected every genre, and every technique subsequently acknowledged to be of lasting significance.”³ Even after the death of Beethoven, the German musical legacy was carried on into the twentieth century by a strong lineage of Romantic-era composers.

³ Ibid., 128.
Resentment of German musical dominance, and the great influence of German
music, was an important factor that drove the idea of “Nationalism” in the music of many
European nations during the late nineteenth century. England was not immune to this
envy, as British composers often found themselves subservient to the techniques and
forms of German composition. Indeed, Edward Elgar, who initiated one direction of the
English Renaissance, was often styled as a British composer who was subservient to
German influences such as Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann, and even Wagner. This
inescapable subservience to style, along with the frustration of being considered an
unmusical nation, led British composers to the revival of folk song and its inclusion in
composition.

For many years prior to Das Land ohne Musik, England had already been
described as a land with few musical works of significance. This characterization by
Schmitz was not new to British composers, but it was a well-timed attack on British
culture. Previously, some critics even placed nations under British rule, such as Wales
and Scotland, on a higher level in terms of folk music documentation. Carl Engel, in his

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4 Stradling and Hughes, English Musical Renaissance, 57, 66, 112, 114. Elgar is
described as composing in symphonic forms much like the work of Brahms, as well as
other prominent German composers. When Elgar denounced the use of folk song in the
English Renaissance, composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst, and Stanford were
turned against him.

5 Ibid., 14. Beedell, Decline of the English Musician, 44, 47.

6 Stradling and Hughes, English Musical Renaissance, 111. George Bernard Shaw “is
convinced of his island’s own superior musicality.”
publication on national music, essentially calls the English people as “lazy” towards their music.\(^7\)

The bias of the English people toward their music was as much to blame for their own musical inequality as was the musical genius and innovation of the Germans. The middle and upper classes of English culture believed that for music to be of quality, it had to be foreign. Anything native to England was deemed substandard. British composers found themselves fighting this notion in almost every aspect of music, from orchestras to the military bands. Not only were British composers and musicians looked down upon by Germans, but also by their own people.\(^8\)

Additionally, the quest for a national musical style occurred later in England than in other nations. This delayed attention was a setback to English musical achievements. Around the mid 1860s, there was a rising concern over England’s inability to produce a composer of significance.\(^9\) One possible reason for England’s deficiency in creating a national composer of significance lay in its geographical separation from the other European nations. Unlike the British, the land-locked nations of Europe did not have their attention naturally drawn to overseas expansion.\(^10\) In his book excoriating German music, Forsyth indicates that “national musical productivity is in inverse ratio to sea-


\(^10\) Ibid., 100.
Consequently, England embraced its folk music later than every other European nation. The Russians even managed to embrace their folk music and the idea of nationalism prior to the British, via composers such as Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Borodin, and Modest Musorgsky. The renewed vigor with which these composers pursued a national style influenced other nations to raise the level of their own music, including the British.

As European nations developed national musical styles they were often governed by two general principles. First, composers should avoid German techniques and forms. Second, composers should find and manipulate native folk songs to create greater works of art music. Practicing these principles, a composer should be able to compose music free of German influence in both form and style that was native in its thematic content. However, due to German influence on their musical training, British composers faced difficulties trying to employ these principles, since the dominance of German influence in British music had taken hold centuries earlier.

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) is considered one of the most influential English composers prior to Sir Edward Elgar. After the death of Purcell, England was ripe for musical colonization, and the Germans followed suit. Cecil Forsyth, a critic and composer, began a campaign denouncing the influences of German music on English culture. His book, *Music and Nationalism*, proved extremely important to expanding his influence. In 1911, Forsyth argued that “England was a colonized community in terms of

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11 Ibid., 101.

music.” He believes that this colonization took place by the “arrival of Handel to inaugurate the age of alien domination.” Forsyth adamantly argued for the removal of German influence on English music, theatre, and culture, a call echoed by Vaughan Williams’s suggestion that only English music be performed in English concert halls for a period of five years. Forsyth essentially believed that England was ripe for this type of cultural colonization because it spent so many years diverting the nation’s attention from the finer things, such as art and music, focusing instead on overseas expansion. Forsyth “expressed what many English musicians inwardly believed, or half-believed,” that many British composers and musicians also shared feelings of musical rule and domination by the Germans, similar to those of Forsyth. The growing tension led to British composers and scholars looking to their homeland’s folk idiom for a renewed musical life. Vaughan Williams proposed “the future of English Music was to be found…in its ‘historical-past’ – as Shakespeare put in Hamlet – the folk-song, the Tudor inheritance, the eternal verities of history and landscape.”

To begin the transition away from German influence, the British began the process of documenting their folk music. They took their cue from the rival Germans, who had already spent a great deal of time documenting their national music. Carl Engel,


17 Ibid., 60.
a German exile, wrote a text called *An Introduction to the Study of National Music*, which was published in 1866 in London. He identified national music as coming from the German idea of *volksmusik*, which he explained as “music, which appertains to a nation or a tribe, whose individual emotions and passions it expresses, exhibiting certain peculiarities more or less characteristic.”

“Engel likened National Songs to the ‘wild flowers indigenous to a country, which thrive unaided by art’” and argued that folk dancing and national poetry “were inseparable from national music.” The metaphor “musical wildflowers” was a later adopted by Cecil Sharp, and, not surprisingly, also by Percy Grainger in his program notes to his band work, *Lincolnshire Posey*, which he described as a group of “musical wildflowers” from the countryside.

By the 1870s, Engel’s book, in which he was quick to note the tardiness of British national music documentation, had been published in the *Musical Times*. Engel indicated that the Germans, Russians, French, Scots, and even the Welsh had documented their own musical tradition, but the English lagged far behind:

> It seems rather singular that England should not possess any printed collection of its national songs with the airs as they are sung at the present day; while almost every other European nation possesses several comprehensive works of this kind…It certainly appears singular that English musicians should have neglected to investigate the national songs of the different provinces of their own country…surely there are English musicians…who might achieve good results if they would spend their autumnal holidays in some rural district of the country, associate with the villager, and listen to their songs.  

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While English composers would have preferred to ignore the fact that a German sparked their quest for a national music style, this publication was a major factor in igniting the drive of the British to begin collecting their folk music. Stradling suggests that, “the putative Renaissance was galvanized by this German prompt.”\textsuperscript{21} The first active collection of folk songs began in England shortly after this publication. John Broadwood and J. H. Dixon were among the first to begin collecting after the 1879 publication by Engel. Lucy Broadwood followed up her father’s work in Sussex.

In the 1880s, Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould engaged in a great deal of folk song collecting, some of which is documented by James Reeves in his book, \textit{The Everlasting Circle}. Baring-Gould was apparently driven to the collection of folk song for two primary reasons. The first was his belief that the recovery of folksong was “a local and national patriotism” for English culture.\textsuperscript{22} This revival was able to save and record the musical heritage of these folk singers, whose art was soon to have died out. The second reason was that “English music, especially vocal, was in a parlous condition and needed to be re-vitalized and saved from the all-pervasive influence of Germany.”\textsuperscript{23}

Finally, in 1898, under the stewardship of a number of the best composers that England could boast at that time, the Folk Song Society was founded under the leadership of Sir Hubert Parry. One of the guiding philosophies of the society stated, “The Society shall have for its primary object the collection and preservation of folk-songs, ballads, 


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 2.
and tunes, and the publication of such of these as may be deemed advisable. 24 Among its inaugural members were Sir John Stainer, Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir A. C. Mackenzie, and Parry, all respected composers. Also among its ranks were two influential collectors of folk song, Lucy Broadwood and Frank Kidson, as well as about one hundred other members. Later, its roster would boast the additional membership of Cecil Sharp, Ralph Vaughan Williams, H.E.D. Hammond, George Gardiner, and Percy Grainger. 25

Sir Hubert Parry provided the inaugural address for the Folk Song Society, in which he “voiced a missionary spirit” about the collecting of folk song and the place it would have in English musical history. 26 Parry clearly outlined that folk music was “an answer not only to musical evil, but to the social and political vice a well.” 27 While this statement sounds quite simple, in merely one sentence Parry has managed to disseminate three major beliefs of the English folk revivalists. In effect, Parry envisioned the folk song revival as both an answer to the dominance of Austro-German music, and a cure for the social problems of industrial urban life.

In addition to outlining his basic ideological beliefs, Parry also discussed the process and problems of collecting folk tunes. One issue concerned the difficulty in


25 Pearsall, Edwardian Popular Music, 117; Reeves, Idiom of the People, 1-2; Karpeles, Cecil Sharp, 49.

26 Reeves, Idiom of the People, 2.

27 Stradling and Huges, English National Music, 143
determining what is authentic versus that which is emasculated. 28 He also discussed how accompaniments to folk songs take away the rhythmic variations that the folk singers were able to produce by singing a simple melody. “For accompaniments attack with less conviction the irregular meter of subsequent verses and the imposition of metrical regularity, which is achieved by the folksinger’s ability to attach more importance to words than the song.” 29

One of the first problematic issues facing the Folk Song Society was whether the words or the music should receive the primary focus in the collection process. In 1905, Baring-Gould explained his ultimate purpose of collecting, as an effort “to rescue the melodies: the melodies are far more precious than the words, and we have been more concerned to rescue these than the words, which are often common place and may be frequently found on broadside ballad sheets.” 30 The attitude that melodies were more important than the words seemed to become a commonly-held belief among the members of the Society.

When Cecil Sharp joined the Folk Song Society, he spent approximately four years preparing a report on the state of folk song in England, and came to some conclusions about the preservation of the words versus the melodies. In his 1907 report, Sharp stated, “my own estimate is that the tunes are of the utmost value, but that words are of less account.” 31 His discussion of the words of folk song focused on the typical

28 Reeves, Idiom of the People, 10-11.

29 Ibid.

30 Reeves, Everlasting Circle, 2.

31 Ibid., 3.
qualities of the texts. For example, folk song had little concern with patriotism or sport. The outlaw was generally more popular than the hero. And surprisingly, gypsies were extremely popular.\textsuperscript{32} The truth, with respect to the publishing of folk songs throughout the movement, was that many of the texts were considered “bawdy, rude, or indelicate.”\textsuperscript{33} For these reasons, texts often had to be altered when inappropriate or when their character was going to hold back the publication or reception of these folk tunes as national treasures.

One of the subjects of Baring-Gould’s collections was James Olver, described by Baring-Gould as the “son of very strict Wesleyans.” While growing up, Olver was “allowed to hear no music save psalm and hymn tunes.”\textsuperscript{34} In order to hear the true folk idiom in action, Olver would sneak out of the house at night and venture down to the local tavern to hear the folk singing of miners, music considered by some to be unsavory.\textsuperscript{35} Words were often revised because publishers would not allow texts that referenced fornication or made inappropriate suggestions. Baring-Gould would often supply an entirely new set of words just to get his folk songs published, which, according to James Reeves, was in a sense “domesticating the wild flowers.”\textsuperscript{36} Folk song collectors of the society seemed to share the attitude that they were not going to let improper texts

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 5.
\item Ibid. 13.
\item Reeves, \textit{Everlasting Circle}, 3.
\item Ibid., 3.
\item Ibid., 8.
\end{enumerate}
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get in the way of their preservation efforts. They would indeed “domesticate the wildflowers” in order to get their efforts published and distributed to the English people.

While the Folk Song Society served to organize those interested in the common idea of preserving the folk idiom, its early work of field collecting and publication of the tunes was considered unimportant by some. In 1895, prior to the founding of the Folk Song Society, Baring-Gould flagrantly declared, “the professional musician of today knows nothing, absolutely nothing, of English folk music.” With this in mind, Cecil Sharp joined the Folk Song Society in 1904, with his first action being a “vigorous attack” on its lack of progress in the movement to collect English folk songs. “The society…was moribund, and had done nothing it set out to do except publish…songs in successive issues of journals. Above all, it had not coordinated the individual efforts of its members, and the proposed campaign…remained spasmodic and inadequate.”

Sharp attempted to address the need for the Folk Song Society to do more than just organize the folk song movement’s collection processes in England. Sharp’s vision of the folk movement music, a view shared by Vaughan Williams, was not one that only served the preservation of these “native wildflowers” of England. Sharp insisted that the movement should expand to the promotion of folk song integration into the cultural life of everyday Britons, so as to teach the English people about their national music. Likely due to his role as a school principal, Sharp saw the insertion of these songs into education as a fundamental means to achieving this goal. In a sense, Sharp tried to

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38 Ibid., 4.

correct the situation, stated by Baring-Gould, that the professional musician knew nothing of English folk music.

Sharp’s intercession into the Folk Song Society could not have taken place at a better time for those like Baring-Gould who wanted to expand and increase the collection and publication of folk songs. In a plea to the society in 1905, Baring-Gould wrote:

> few counties of England have been worked. Sussex has been well explored by the late Rev. John Broadwood, and then by Miss Lucy Broadwood; Yorkshire, by Mr. Frank Kidson; Northumberland, by Dr. Collingwood Bruce and Mr. John Stokoe. Mr. Cecil Sharp is now engaged on Somersetshire, and Dr. Vaughan Williams on Essex. Who will undertake Lincolnshire, Dorset, Hampshire, and other counties?  

Baring-Gould clearly believed that there were not enough collectors in the field, and his request to fill these voids was answered in the same year. Percy Grainger, in cooperation with Lucy Broadwood, engaged in collecting tunes from Lincolnshire. Henry E. D. Hammond and his brother Robert Hammond started work in Dorset, while George B. Gardiner took up folk song collection in Hampshire. Gardiner became a collector near the end of his life, when pressed by Lucy Broadwood to take up the work in Hampshire. Unlike many folk song collectors, he was primarily concerned with textual recovery, relying on colleagues such as H. Balfour Gardiner to notate the melody. Additionally, the Hammond brothers extended their work to Somerset, Worcestershire, and Wiltshire, collecting 600 songs and variants between 1905 and 1908. Both Henry Hammond and George Gardiner died suddenly in 1910.

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40 Reeves, *Everlasting Circle*, 3.

41 Ibid., 9.

42 Ibid., 9-10.
The Folk Song revival could not have existed without the contributions and dedication of the many collectors, such as Hammond and Gardiner. However, it was Cecil Sharp’s drive, egoism, and vision that helped motivate the movement beyond just publishing collected tunes. He imposed himself as the new leader of the Folk Society, if not of the entire folk song revival movement, which in turn helped to make great advances for the movement.

To understand Sharp’s motivation for folk song preservation, one must recount an event that occurred several years earlier, in 1899, when he first came into contact with Morris Dancing during a Christmas holiday trek to the West country. While at Sandfield Cottage, Headington, one mile east of Oxford, Cecil Sharp looked out the window to discover eight men dressed in white, decorated with ribbons, with pads of small latten-bells strapped to their shins, carrying coloured sticks and white handkerchiefs; accompanying them was a concertina-player and a man dressed as a ‘Fool’. Six of the men formed up in front of the house in two lines of three; the concertina-player struck up an invigorating tune, the like of which Cecil Sharp had never before heard; the men jumped high into the air, then danced with springs and capers, waving and swinging the handkerchiefs which they held, one in each hand, while the bells marked the rhythm of the step. The Dance was the now well-known Morris Dance, ‘Laudnum Bunches’ a title which decidedly belies its character. … He plied the men eagerly with questions. They apologized for being out at Christmas; they knew the Whitsun was the proper time, but work was slack and they thought there would be no harm in earning an honest penny.  

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43 Karpeles, Cecil Sharp, 25.
Sharp denotes this incident as the beginning of his interest in folk music and its revival, however, it did not motivate him to enter into the folk revival. In view of biographer Maud Karpeles, “the seed that was sown at Headington took time to germinate.”

The next major turning point for Sharp was with the collection of his first folk song in the summer of 1903. On a visit to the Rev. Charles Marson at Hambridge in Somerset, Sharp heard a folk song called *The Seeds of Love*, sung by Marson’s gardener, John England. According to Karpeles,

> Cecil Sharp was sitting in the vicarage garden talking to Charles Marson and to Mattie Kay, who was likewise staying at Hambridge, when he heard John England quietly singing to himself as he mowed the vicarage lawn. Cecil Sharp whipped out his notebook and took down the tune; and then persuaded John to give him the words.

This song became the very first notation of a folk song by Sharp, and the precursor to his becoming the head of the revival of folk music. Shortly after this event, Sharp made his notable 1904 entrance into the business of the English Folk Song Society.

As a musician, Sharp was not on the level of the more prominent British composers such as Parry, Stanford, and Vaughan Williams. However, this did not slow the vigor with which he approached the folk song movement. His experiences as a musician were limited to singing and piano playing, but his profession was really teaching and educational administration, in his role as Principal at the Hampstead Conservatory of Music. It is likely that his experience as a principal drove Sharp to push the integration of folk song into the schools. According to Karpeles, “for some time

44 Ibid., 25.

45 Ibid., 32.

46 Ibid., 12-3, 21.
[Sharp] had been feeling that the normal musical education, based on German music, did not supply all that was needed for young people.47 Both as a musician and teacher, Sharp was extremely interested in what folk song could do create a national musical character for England and steer the younger students away from the cosmopolitan style of Germany.

Fortunately for Sharp, the Board of Education took notice of the need for folk song in schools, yet he still faced difficulties pushing his beliefs on the type of folk songs that should be taught in schools. Much of the difficulty was a result of Sharp’s unpleasant association with the respected British composer and teacher, Charles Villiers Stanford. In 1906, Stanford and Sharp were involved in a rather fierce debate concerning when a folk tune is genuine in nature or is composed and developed by skilled musicians. Stanford was “heated and rude” with Sharp as the two pushed their points of view.48 Sharp may have been more convincing in his arguments, but Stanford had extensive experience as a composer and a collector, having done research documenting his native Irish folk music. Additionally, Stanford’s position on the Board of Education created difficulties for Sharp in his attempts to push for a broader curriculum of folk song in schools. The poor relationship between Sharp and Stanford was probably not healthy for the interests of the Folk Song Society. Neither personality ever tried to “mend” their relationship, as Sharp remained unyielding on his position and his criticisms. He was

47 Ibid., 25.

often “crossing swords” with Board of Education members Charles Stanford and Arthur Somervell, especially with comments to the national press.\footnote{Stradling and Hughes, \textit{English National Music}, 65.}

Despite their disagreements, Sharp and Stanford did agree on the basic need to bring some form of folk music into the school curriculum, and eventually into every avenue of English society and culture. Despite his differences of opinion with Stanford and the Board of Education, Sharp did manage to publish his \textit{English Folk-Songs for Schools} in 1906, with the help of Sabine Baring-Gould. However, Sharp did not appear totally supportive of the constraints enforced by the Board of Education; in the preface to the publication he stated, “this collection has been made to meet the requirements of the Board of Education and is composed of melodies strictly pertaining to the people, to which words have been set as closely adhering to the original as possible considering the purpose of this book.”\footnote{Karpeles, \textit{Cecil Sharp}, 52.}

The resulting publication for schools was a milestone in Sharp’s great campaign to “bring the folk song back into the daily lives of the English people.”\footnote{Stradling and Hughes, \textit{English National Music}, 65.} His achievement of this goal helped to demonstrate that England was actually a very musical nation. Also, since these folk tunes were the natural treasures and resources of the land, Sharp and other collectors viewed them as a representation of what English music truly is. In 1906, Sharp proclaimed, “one reason why we have no national school of music in England is because we have so unaccountably neglected our folk music.”\footnote{Ibid., 60.} Vaughan
Williams similarly stated that the future for English music was to be found in its historical past, and compared the historical folk song to the likes of Shakespeare’s masterpiece *Hamlet*, a work of art based on the historical past.

These beliefs in reverting to the past and saving the natural treasures of the land are ideas that resonate with the ideals of the Socialist movement. A large number of the members of the English Folk Song Society were also Socialists, and were highly influenced by the philosophical writings and teachings of William Morris. Unlike the teachings of Karl Marx, Morris’s were not focused on economic philosophies, but primarily focused on the creation of Utopia through attitudes towards art and community.

William Morris was also the head of the Arts and Crafts movement, centered at Cotswold. This movement predates the folk song revival, but was similarly concerned with the place of functional and useful works of art. For Morris, functional pieces of art, such as decorated pottery, were just as important as masterpieces such as the Mona Lisa. In fact, useful art and art for the masses holds a more important societal role than art for the privileged few. It was Morris’s quest to raise the respect for the level of the skilled artisan who creates useful and artistic items out of natural materials.

Some members of the Folk Song Society, influenced by Morris’ Socialism, looked to folk songs as “natural materials” of the land, ripe for transformation into higher art forms or useful works. In his opening address to the Folk Song Society, “Hubert Parry sounded the keynote of ‘return to nature’, positing the vitality of the countryside as

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53 Ibid., 225.

the antidote to the decadence of cities.⁵⁵ This reversion to past folk music, as the works of the land, rings synonymous with the beliefs of Morris’s form of Socialism. Some of the most prominent members of the Folk Song Society had either associations with William Morris or believed in some form of Socialism. Gustav Holst, for example, was later a member of the Hammersmith Socialist Club. Between 1895 and 1900, Holst attended many Socialist meetings at the Kelmscott House, and even played the harmonium while Socialist propaganda was distributed on street corners.⁵⁶ Similarly, Cecil Sharp was a strict Fabian Socialist, who believed in strict isolation from any political parties.⁵⁷ Additionally, Percy Grainger believed in Morris’s “pre-raphaelite” attitude toward art. These and many more members of the Folk Song Society were influenced by Socialist values to merge music with the land.

The interest of these Folk Song Society members in Socialism was partly a response to the industrial revolution, which brought many people from rural areas into urban city settings to work long (by our standards, crushingly long) hours in factories with terrible living conditions. The Socialist movement rose in opposition to the monarchy and a class-based culture that preyed upon the working class for its needs. William Morris’s teachings preach an atmosphere in which class structures no longer exist. He discussed his Utopia as

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\text{a condition of society in which there should be neither rich nor poor, neither master nor master’s man, neither idle nor overworked, neither brain-sick brain workers, nor heart-sick}
\]


hand workers, in a world, in which all men would be living in equality of condition, and would manage their affairs unwastefully, and with the full consciousness that harm to one man would mean harm to all – the realization at last of the meaning of the word Commonwealth.\(^{58}\)

With respect to art, Morris encouraged respect for the decorative arts, or the decorating of useful objects and tools that are a useful part of our daily lives. In his lecture entitled “The Lesser Arts,” Morris stated, “To give people pleasure in the things that they must perforce use, that is one great office of decoration; to give people pleasure in the things they must perforce make, that is the other use of it.”\(^{59}\) This belief in the decorative arts gained practical reality through the Arts and Crafts movement, around Cotswold, in which Morris and followers savored and encouraged decorative objects over high art.\(^{60}\)

Through the influence of Morris, it is possible that composers and collectors saw the folk song as a decorative art, native to the land, which served the purpose of both art and utility. It was also believed, by composers of the Pastoral school\(^{61}\), that the process for creating a distinctly English music involved the manipulation of these natural songs into useful art forms. The band suites of Holst and Vaughan Williams, and works for military band by Percy Grainger, are among the neglected examples of the usage of the folk idiom in art music.

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\(^{59}\) Ibid., 86.


\(^{61}\) Pastoral school is comprised of British composers who utilize pastoral elements, such as folk song, in their compositions.
Although it appeared to be an answer to developing a national style, utilizing English folk song in composition was not always an easy task. Holst and Vaughan Williams soon found that the folk materials often resisted transmutation into higher forms of art.⁶² Both composers experienced a stylistic crisis while trying to transform the natural music of England into larger art works. Although William Morris’s socialist philosophies were influential and helpful to composers of the pastoral school, he passed away in 1895, ten years before the Folk Song Society really began to flourish. Thus, Morris never provided members of the pastoral school with any substantive direction for the use of folk music in composition. Due in part to the difficulties posed by the use of the English folk idiom, Holst turned to Asian influences and his study of Sanskrit to find new compositional ideas. Subsequently, Vaughan Williams went to France to work with Ravel to try to polish his musical style.⁶³ 

Socialist ideology was important to the folk song revival, but it did not provide composers with all of the answers concerning the creation of a national style of music for England. Part of the reason that composers faced such a stylistic crisis was a result of their musical training, which was based on German models. Many of the noted British composers including Elgar, Parry, Stanford, Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger were trained in German techniques and influenced by their impact. Foreign composers looked frequently to German composers, since they had refined every form of music to date. Their mastery of music, and the international influence they held over composition, made it very difficult for the English composers to “develop indigenous genres.”


⁶³ Ibid., 115.
mastery of music and its unyielding influence on English composers has led some to deduce that “a fully autonomous English style was not possible.”  

Subsequently, Elgar preached to younger composers that they should engage in composition of the “symphony without program.”  

German influence on English compositional techniques proved extremely difficult to break. Russian composers were successful at breaking away from German influence by nurturing young composers without providing exposure to German music and compositional techniques. The “mighty handful,” including Musorgsky, Borodin, and Rimsky Korsakov, were among the five noted Russian composers who were purposely not trained in German compositional practices. These composers established a Russian style of composition based on folk song, enacted by the efforts of Russians to keep German influences away from their training.

Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger were among the younger composers of the English Pastoral school, which was committed to the folk song as the key to creating a non-German style of music. Elgar, Parry and Stanford represent traditional composers who had great difficulty shaking their training in the German style, but Parry and Stanford greatly supported the folk song movement. Elgar, who did not accept the value of the folk song movement, rejected its use for the creation of a national style with his comment, “I am folk music.”

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64 Ibid., 131

65 Ibid., 129.

As with Elgar, the creation of an autonomous English style of composition rooted in folk song was not a goal shared by all British composers. Those composers that did dissent from the Pastoral school often remained committed to the idea of creating a national style for England in some form. Others believed that England should remain committed to the German styles, submitting to the idea that England had no music worthy of being brought to the world stage.

George Bernard Shaw was quite a “thorn in the side” of all the composers who believed in the folk-song revival. He detested the English musical renaissance, and the folk idiom, but also those who represented the classical German “Brahmsian” style. Shaw was critical of Parry and Stanford, although less so of Stanford, his Irish colleague. Shaw’s specific dislike of these idioms was motivated by his strong commitment to the late romantic Wagnerian style of composition. Both the rise of folk music and the subservience of some composers to an earlier German style stood as threats to Irish and Scottish Wagnerites. “A part of [George Bernard Shaw] seems to have relished the ‘land without music’ slur – perhaps the Irish part, convinced of his own island’s [i.e., Ireland’s] superior musicality.”67 If Shaw did see his island as musically superior, his disapproval of folk song served to elevate Irish composers producing literature in the German late romantic style.

The Irish Easter Rebellion of 1916, when Ireland rebelled against British rule, increased the strength of the Pastoral school of English music. This conflict “shattered the notion of the inviolable unity of Britain.”68 While the Victorian era had supported the

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67 Stradling and Hughes, English National Music, 111.

68 Ibid., 75.
idea of all things British and the power of the empire, the twentieth century saw a breakdown of British society into divisions of English, Irish, and Scottish.\(^{69}\) The signing of the Armistice of 1918 created an enormous backlash towards composers who produced music in the Austro-German style of Brahms, Schumann, and Wagner, which further strengthened the Pastoral school. As England faced more world conflicts, more composers were driven to find nationalism in a purely English musical voice.

Even with this new strengthening of the Pastoral school, and with the revival of folk music at its height, there were still many who questioned whether the folk music that existed was worthy to define England as a musical nation.\(^{70}\) There were genuine concerns about whether that music could be manipulated into art forms on the scale of the great works of German composers. An English composer could not simply write in the forms that these folk songs prescribed and call it great English music. This is why some composers, even Holst and Vaughan Williams to a degree, found it difficult to manipulate folk songs into English-sounding works of significance. For similar reasons, composers William Walton and Gerald Hugh Berners found the use of the pastoral idiom in composition “insular and stifling.”\(^{71}\) They did not see the folk idiom as the answer to creating a national music for Britain.

Another dissenting voice was that of critic Ernest Newman, who, like Shaw, was strongly against the pastoral movement, and preferred the style of Elgar. In his article “The War and the Future of Music,” Newman expressed his belief that “the onset of

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 143.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 182.
World War I, and the rejection of things German, will push the pastoral school of thought into popular control of composition, which in turn would be a disaster for the future of English music.”\textsuperscript{72} Indeed, with the government ban on German music, the door was left open for the pastoral school of composers to gain prominence.\textsuperscript{73} Newman dismissed these composers as “the crowd of younger men [among whom] it is impossible to distinguish one who has the least chance of making history.”\textsuperscript{74}

Despite of Newman’s prediction for disaster, composers of the new Pastoral school did make great historical contributions to English music. However, to say that their entire success was due to the use of folk songs would be inaccurate. Folk song alone did not help English composers to create great works of art music on the same level of other nations. It was a combination of using the modal style of melody with thematic material available to them that created identifiably “English” musical character. Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger each utilized folk songs, but they also devised newly composed melodies that used the style of English folk song. Examples of this practice are evident in Holst’s \textit{First Suite in Eb}, and Grainger’s \textit{Children’s March}, both of which utilize modal melodies composed in the style of folk music.

Ironically, some composers from the next generation, for example Hugh Wood, felt hindered by the pastoral style of composition. While Holst and Vaughan Williams were trying to rid themselves of German influences, younger composers felt in a sense

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 69.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 68.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 69.
“cheated” for not being exposed to foreign influences and developments. In this, critic Ernest Newman’s prophecy, concerning the danger of committing to the pastoral school of thought, would seem to have come true. Nevertheless, the segregation from German influence, as best it could be achieved, helped to create compositions that did sound “English,” regardless of their status as great works of art music.

Creating art music with a “national sound” is quite possibly one of the most difficult tasks that a composer can undertake. Some composers and collectors attribute the lack of knowledge of one’s own cultural art to the broader education that people were receiving and the intermingling of different cultures. For example, Sharp stated in 1907:

Our system of education, is at present, too cosmopolitan: it is calculated to produce citizens of the world rather than Englishmen. And it is Englishmen, English citizens, that we want. How can this be remedied? By taking care...that every child born of English parents is, in its earliest years, placed in possession of all those things which are the distinctive product of its race...[Thus] he will know and understand his country and his countrymen, and...will love them the more, realize that he is united to them by the subtle bond of blood and of kinship, and become, in the highest sense of the word a better citizen and a truer patriot.76

Here, Sharp expresses the idea that English people need to be English, and should stop trying to mingle with other nationalities.

Percy Grainger also believed that differences between nationalities needed to be preserved, since the intermingling of them hurt the artistic individuality of cultures. Grainger often expressed the opinion that music created by the Nordic cultures -Scandinavian, British, and North American - was superior to any other. A broader look

75 Ibid., 127.

76 Ibid., 144.
at Grainger’s life suggests that his statements actually represented a defense of the music of these cultures, music that was often considered inferior to Austro-German music. He also felt that when cultures failed to remain separate, the loss of culture was devastating to art. His attitude displayed a desire to defend against the loss of culture. The decline of folk music in areas of rural England caused by advances in education, industrialization, and an increased German influence, were the ultimate examples of the reason for his concern. Quite simply, folk music cannot exist without a certain amount of cultural seclusion.

In the nineteenth century, England possessed the individuality and geographic separation from other nations necessary to foster a rich culture of folk music and dance. But in the twentieth century, did the Pastoral school and the folk-song movement have the ability to save English musical culture and establish a national style? The large number of composers who supported the pastoral style of composition demonstrates that a new national style was indeed created, a style that should receive credit as being unique to England. But whether these movements saved English musical culture is much more difficult to prove, as it may never actually have been in peril, except in the view of some musicologists, historians, and those obsessed with folk song. The folk song revival did not necessarily save English music, but it did awaken the notion of creating an English musical style. This notion was important considering the lack of commitment England had previously displayed towards folk music. Previously England had neither focused its resources on art, nor seen the need for a renewed dedication to the creation and preservation of its music.
In contrast to the view of the folk revival’s success, Ronald Pearsall, in his book *Edwardian Popular Music*, describes the folk music revival as “the revival that failed.”77 His main argument suggests that there was not really a desire among all musicians to save folk music and that it was not a “long felt need.”78 Whether or not there was a “long-felt need” to save folk song, it seems inappropriate to call the folk song revival a failure. Renewed interest by musicians sparked several years of collecting, and a great deal of documentation, serving to prove the folk song revival at least moderately successful.

The folk song revival and pastoral composition, despite their successes and importance to English musical history, tapered off in the 1930s. Nevertheless, they both served to motivate English composers to find a national musical voice. However, one cannot conclude that folk song and the pastoral style etched a space in history as the one “musical voice” of England. For example, Elgar’s was often considered to be the musical voice of Britain, prior to the pastoral movement. Presently, music historians give great respect to Elgar as a creator of British music, despite his avoidance of pastoral composition. When he said, “I am folk music,” he was acting in defense of his life’s work. Although Elgar’s composition did not revolve around pastoral influences, it did nevertheless represent the musical voice of England at the time. Thus, Elgar was justified in defending himself, in that the great push for the revival of folk song and pastoral composition threatened to dilute his contributions to English music. In its day, Elgar’s music was to England what Beethoven’s or Wagner’s was to Germany. Elgar’s was the first music from England, since the time of Purcell and Handel, to attain prominence on


78 Ibid., 180.
an international scale. But, Elgar’s music was not the folk music of England, any more than Beethoven’s music was the folk music of Germany. The folk music of England had previously received no recognition, while Elgar’s work was safely recognized as part of British culture.

Fortunately, the folk song revival in England occurred before its pastoral culture was lost forever. In retrospect, the attack by Oscar Schmitz, offered at the beginning of this chapter, was nothing more than propaganda. However, it was propaganda that proved instrumental in beginning the thrust toward pastoral composition. Schmitz was trying to bring down the renewed spirit of the English in their native music, but in retrospect he served to strengthen it. Whether or not England’s musical heritage was based on art music or folk songs, to call England a “land without music” was grossly incorrect. The work of the Folk Song Society, and the many collectors, dating back to the work of John Broadwood and Sabine Baring-Gould, serves to demonstrate that England was indeed a musical nation through its folk culture as well as its corpus of art music. Austro-German areas, likewise, were extremely rich musically, but their richness was based more around art music than folk song.

With the success of the folk-song revival, a large body of English folk music has been preserved and made its way into popular culture. Cecil Sharp achieved this via his campaigns for the introduction of folk music into school curricula, hoping to teach the young people of England about their culture. However, is it really their culture, or simply the bawdy tunes of rural working-class vagabonds, which were never meant to work their way into popular culture? Regardless of the answer, folk-song revivalists drove the
interjection of these tunes into popular culture, as well as art music, with a remarkable amount of success.

Even if no one ever remembers another tune that was recorded, the other major goal of the movement was to musically deviate from the popular activity of conformity to popular German musical tradition. Whether or not critics consider the resulting English art music to be either monumental or a monumental failure, it is difficult to deny that pastoral composers heroically managed to create a national style of their own.
CHAPTER 3

THE INTERSECTION OF FOLK MUSIC AND BAND COMPOSITION IN ENGLAND

At the beginning of the twentieth century, music in England experienced an intersection that merged the folk music revival with original band music. Compositions for the wind band, based on folk song, stand as testimony to the practice that resulted from this intersection. The three most prominent British composers to combine folk music with wind band composition are Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and the Australian-born Percy Grainger. Their use of folk music in original band composition is a unique phenomenon, considering the social biases that existed against both musical idioms. Even while the folk music revival was at an apex, and band music was extremely popular among the masses in Britain, scholars and serious artists widely viewed both repertoires as merely occasional music. Negligible respect was held for the role that either idiom could play in the transmission of serious art music. This bias was encouraged by German influence, which at the time determined international guidelines and trends for art music.

Despite the biases that many held against what they considered “occasional music,” Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger deviated from compositional and social norms (which encouraged orchestral composition as the highest musical art form) in their commitment to original composition for band. This deviation occurred for many reasons, most prominently the rejection of German influence and the search to find a musical style that was distinctly English. These problems encouraged composers to engage in the use
of folk materials in their compositions. Folk song must have seemed a logical choice for use in compositional practices aimed at creating an English national style. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the folk song revival was thriving and the incorporation of folk materials provided a formidable solution to the problem of German musical dominance over English style. These influences encouraged composers to find compositional materials from the rural areas and to base their works on these ideas.

Many British composers engaged the idea of utilizing folk music to develop a national style, but not all approached it in the same manner. Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger made significant attempts to combine pastoral materials with original compositions for wind band, while other composers primarily utilized these materials in their orchestral works. In contrast to other composers of predominantly orchestra experience, these three composers were exposed to a tradition of band music that positively influenced their attitudes toward this ensemble.

In his book *National Music*, Vaughan Williams states, “A great work of art can only be born under the right surroundings and in the right atmosphere.”¹ Evidence of this claim exists, proving that social backgrounds and environmental factors do influence the compositional choices of composers. As demonstrated in the first chapter, England possessed a significant wind band tradition during these composers’ lives. As children and young adults in England, their exposure to this popular tradition (especially in their towns) led them to develop respect for wind groups. Holst and Grainger actively participated in this tradition by playing wind instruments.

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The second chapter discussed the folk song revival surrounding these composers, with a focus on the rising Socialist movement in early twentieth-century England. Popular Socialist philosophers, such as William Morris, preached their views of change for the common man. All three composers were exposed to Socialism, and Holst was an active member in Morris’s movement. The folk song revival itself was an offshoot of Morris’s Arts and Crafts movement, which encouraged the importance of beauty in everyday materials. Reviving folk song was indeed a way of encouraging the beauty of the natural pastoral musical materials of the country.

To fully understand how social influences and surroundings encouraged these composers, one must investigate the band compositions and the use of folk song by each composer individually. Their motivation for such works stems from many influences, including Socialism, Nationalism, rejection of German musical dominance, association with wind groups, social status, and, most importantly, their personal compositional beliefs. The combination of folk music with wind composition is the result of the intersection of these influences during the lives of these composers.

**Gustav Holst**

Holst was raised in Cheltenham, England, a town with an outstanding music and band tradition. As a boy in Cheltenham, his interest in music and composition led him to study Berlioz’s *Treatise on Instruments*, Irish and Scottish folk music, Morris dancing, and wind bands. Holst primarily studied piano, but also spent time learning the violin.
and trombone.\textsuperscript{2} His father, Adolph, a respected organist, wanted him to be a concert pianist. However, with the onset of neuritis in his right hand, Gustav decided to give up that idea and shifted his focus towards composition and trombone playing. Around 1900, he achieved a professional level of composition and trombone playing through study at the Royal College of Music.\textsuperscript{3}

Holst’s hometown of Cheltenham had its own band, as did most popular British resort towns of the time. “By 1846, the band [in Cheltenham], now consisting of twenty musicians, performed every morning and three evenings per week for the Musical Promenades.”\textsuperscript{4} Band music was indeed a regular part of life in seaside resorts and resort towns during the nineteenth century. Almost every resort engaged bands, specifically those of the military band genre, to perform almost nightly. The repertoire would often include transcriptions of orchestral favorites as well as music for dancing. During his student years and shortly after, Holst played with bands of this sort, most notably the White Viennese Band under the direction of Stanislaus Wurm. As Richard Capell, who provides biographical information on Holst, recounts,

\begin{quote}
[Holst]…played his trombone in seaside bands, and fellow students remember how, at a reunion in the autumn term, for the discussion of holiday experiences, one having been to Bayreuth, another to the Three Choirs, and so on, the most useful contribution was Holst’s own account of the special\
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., 20.

techniques of trombone playing required on the Folkstone Front.\(^5\)

Holst initially enjoyed his work in resort bands (especially the money he made) but later came to despise it. It seems that the popular musical repertoire of these bands was having a poor effect on his ability to compose. In a letter to Vaughan Williams, Holst writes,

\begin{quote}
to begin with, “Worming” is absolutely criminal. One gets wearied out by false art – becomes saturated by it in fact. It is bad enough when I get sick of it but it is even worse when I enter into the spirit of it and enjoy it in a beastly sort of way.\(^6\)
\end{quote}

While Holst developed a respect for the military band through his participation in seaside resort bands, he also despised it for what he saw as its inartistic musical repertoire. With frustration mounting, Holst gave up the trombone in 1903, choosing instead to become a choral director and teacher of music to amateur students. Since his band suites were composed a few years after his time spent “worming,” it appears that Holst held no residual malice or hatred of the military band. Instead, his attitude merely conveyed a momentary frustration with the quality of the repertoire.

Despite this frustration, Holst learned a great deal about wind instruments and their qualities through his experience with the White Viennese Band and conductor Stanislaus Wurm. His experiences served to provide him with a knowledgeable understanding of the wind instruments to which most composers were not exposed. However, it was not at least until 1909, six years after performing with the White Viennese Band, that Holst composed his \textit{First Suite in Eb} for military band.

\(^5\) Richard Capell, “Gustav Holst: Notes for a Biography,” \textit{The Musical Times}, 67, No. 1006 (December 1, 1926), 1074. See also Mitchell, \textit{From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith}, 5.

\(^6\) Mitchell, \textit{From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith}, 10. Worming is what Holst refers to as traveling around with the White Viennese Band under conductor Stanislaus Wurm.
Compositional Motivations

The compositional motivations for his first band suite may have originated in requests for original wind band compositions from friends and colleagues. Jon Mitchell, a Holst scholar, believes that the First Suite in Eb may have actually arisen as a result of a competition in 1909, sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Musicians, which requested “military band compositions molded in the higher forms.” It cannot be determined if Holst entered the competition, but if he did, records indicate that a different composer was the winner.

There is no record of any other request for such a work other than this possible request from a group that performed at Kneller Hall, for which there was not a guaranteed performance in 1909. The first documented performance of his First Suite in Eb occurred over twelve years later at Kneller Hall, in 1921, and arose out of a request by Colonel John A. C. Somerville, the Commandant of the Royal Military School of Music from 1920 to 1925. Somerville’s request encouraged Holst to submit his band suites for their first performances in 1921, more than ten years after the proposed creation of the compositions. Somerville also appealed to musical societies to “use their great influence to induce composers to take the military band seriously” and offered to “perform compositions passed by a committee of selection during the Kneller Hall concert season.”

Shortly after his submission of the First Suite in Eb, Holst submitted his Second Suite in F for performance at Kneller Hall in 1922. However, it actually may have been

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7 Ibid., 16.
8 Ibid., 28.
composed ten years earlier, for the Festival of Empire in 1911. At this time, Cecil Sharp
commissioned Holst to arrange a series of Morris dance tunes for use at the Festival.
While there is no evidence that Second Suite in F received an official performance that
year, it is possible that Holst would have composed it in 1911, in conjunction with his
arrangements of Morris dance tunes for band. Unfortunately, these arrangements of
Morris dance tunes are out of print and extremely difficult to find. It would be
interesting to see if there are any instrumentation similarities between the set of Morris
dance tunes and Second Suite in F. This could provide some insight as to the intended
occasion, thus leading to an understanding of whether the genesis of the work occurred
during the folk song revival period (around 1910) or the post-war period (after the
success of The Planets).

The instrumentation differences are substantial enough that the First Suite in Eb
appears suited for the band at Kneller Hall while the Second Suite in F does not. The
First Suite in Eb requires a larger number of instrumental forces than the more
economical Second Suite in F. The fact that the later work was composed for a smaller
ensemble adds credence to the notion that it was initially intended for the group that
performed with the Morris dancers at the Festival of Empire in 1911. Of course, it is also
understood that additional changes in the instrumentation to Second Suite in F, although
minor, were made between the 1911 version and the 1922 performance version for
Kneller Hall. “On December 21, 1921, a conference was held at Kneller Hall, partially as
an aid to composers, for the purpose of establishing the ‘minimum band’ instrumentation

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9 Ibid., 47.

10 Does not appear in Imogen Holst’s catalogue of Gustav’s works.
and to develop a system for augmenting it.”\textsuperscript{11} In order to conform to these new guidelines, Holst reassigned the B-flat baritone horn part to B-flat tenor saxophone for the 1922 performance.\textsuperscript{12} Military band leaders changed the guidelines that set the standard instrumentation, promoting the tenor saxophone to replace the baritone horn, likely due to the better blend of the tenor saxophone. However, this was only a part assignment change and does not really help to determine the original event for which the Second Suite in F was initially composed.

\textbf{Instrumentation Comparison}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{First Suite in Eb} (1909 urtext) & \textit{Second Suite in F} (1922 urtext) \\
Flute and Piccolo in D Flat & Flute and Piccolo in D Flat  \\
2 Clarinets in E Flat & 2 Clarinets in E Flat \\
2 Oboes & Oboe \\
Solo Clarinet in B Flat & Solo Clarinet in B Flat \\
1\textsuperscript{st} Clarinet in B Flat & 1\textsuperscript{st} Clarinet in B Flat \\
2\textsuperscript{nd} Clarinet in B Flat & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Clarinet in B Flat \\
3\textsuperscript{rd} Clarinet in B Flat & 3\textsuperscript{rd} Clarinet in B Flat \\
Alto Saxophone in E Flat & Alto Saxophone in E Flat \\
Tenor Saxophone in B Flat & Tenor Saxophone in B Flat \\
Bass Clarinet in B Flat &  \\
2 Bassoons & 2 Bassoons \\
1\textsuperscript{st} Cornets in B Flat & 1\textsuperscript{st} Cornet in B Flat \\
2\textsuperscript{nd} Cornets in B Flat & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Cornet in B Flat \\
2 Trumpets in E Flat &  \\
2 Trumpets in B Flat &  \\
2 Horns in F &  \\
2 Horns in E Flat & 4 Horns in E Flat \\
Baritone in B Flat &  \\
2 Tenor Trombones & 2 Tenor Trombones \\
Bass Trombone & Bass Trombone \\
Euphonium & Euphonium \\
Bombardons & Basses \\
String Bass &  \\
Timpani &  \\
Bass Drum & Bass Drum \\
Cymbals & Cymbals \\
Side Drum & Snare Drum \\
Triangle, Tambourine & Triangle, Tambourine, Anvil 
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 65.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 67.
What remains puzzling is the notion that Holst would have used a minimal instrumentation if *Second Suite in F* was initially composed for the 1922 Kneller Hall premiere. Thus, the smaller instrumentation utilized by the *Second Suite in F* does seem to merit more attention in making a determination as to the event for which it was composed. On both occasions, the larger instrumentation, used for *First Suite in Eb*, was available, as the bands that premiered both of the suites each included around one hundred and sixty members.\(^{13}\) It seems possible that Holst intended the smaller instrumentation for the band that played arrangements of Cecil Sharp’s Morris dances at the 1911 Festival of Empire, and decided to retain the original scoring for practical purposes in 1922. Even with the more economical instrumentation, a large band could still perform *Second Suite in F* with a significant amount of doubling, while the same instrumentation remains usable by small bands as well.

The assignment of 1911 as the compositional date of *Second Suite in F* gains additional support when one examines Holst’s experiences in publishing. It should be noted that during the early 1920s, Holst’s popularity as a composer was becoming widespread. After the successful premiere of *The Planets* in 1918, he found it much easier to get publishers to accept his works. In a 1920 interview of Holst, titled “The composer of *The Planets*: Mr. Holst and his work” a journalist reported that, “on asking Mr. Holst what other unheard music he had in store for us, it is found that his new works are largely old ones that publishers and concert givers have not previously permitted us to hear.”\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 31, 69.

\(^{14}\) Short, *Gustav Holst*, 197.
It is highly probable that this was the case with both of his suites for band. They were “old ones” that may not have been given a performance when first composed, but were resubmitted for performance when the public’s acceptance, and the composer’s popularity, allowed for it. When Holst resubmitted works, he rarely made any changes, except to modernize them a bit. He simply did not have the time to make extensive modifications. One example of this is evident in the publication of Holst’s national hymn, *I Vow to Thee My Country*, a tune borrowed from the middle of *Jupiter*, a movement from *The Planets*. With respect to the time allowed for the submission of this work, “[Holst] was relieved to find that the words fitted the *Jupiter* theme, as he had not time to undertake an entirely new composition.”\(^\text{15}\) It is possible that Holst took a similar attitude with the submission of the two band suites, especially *Second Suite*, which was similar to the original score of 1911.

### Folk Song Influence in the *Second Suite in F*

The instrumentation in Holst’s original scores for the band suites points to compositional dates that precede their recorded premieres at Kneller Hall by many years. The folk song materials within these compositions are even more telling. The use of folk song in these works, if composed in 1911, occurs at a time when the folk song revival was at its height and was having the most significant impact on pastoral composers. By the 1920s, folk song still had a solid place in British culture, but not with the same influence and excitement that was present around 1911.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
Before continuing a discussion of folk-song influences, it should be recognized that *First Suite in Eb* does not utilize folk song in any of its movements, while *Second Suite in F* is composed entirely of folk songs. Holst’s decision to use folk music was partly the result of his association with the collectors of the Folk Song Society and the folk-dance movement. Cecil Sharp undoubtedly exerted an influence on the compositional choices Holst made in *Second Suite in F*.

One of the tunes that Holst utilized in the *Second Suite in F*, *Blue Eyed Stranger*, was also part of the collection of Morris dance tunes arranged for Sharp’s use at the 1911 Festival of Empire.\(^{16}\) The *Blue-Eyed Stranger* was, consequently, the fifth tune in his second set of Morris dance tunes arranged for Cecil Sharp that year.\(^{17}\) Holst used this tune as a bridge for the opening Morris dance (*Glory Shears*) stated in the opening of the first movement. Incidentally, the original opening to the first movement of *Second Suite in F* was not a Morris dance, but a folk song tune called *Young Reilly*. Holst later discarded *Young Reilly*, and rewrote the opening movement based on *Glory Shears*, a Morris dance tune.\(^{18}\) The replacement of *Young Reilly* with a Morris dance tune, and the use of *Blue-Eyed Stranger* as a bridge, strengthens the notion that Cecil Sharp, the newly founded Folk Dance Society, and the new popularity of folk music, may have strongly influenced Holst. Since these influences were at their height with Holst around 1911, this date ascends to the top as the more likely compositional date of *Second Suite in F*.

While Holst’s decision to include Morris dance tunes in the *Second Suite in F* is essential to understanding the influence of Cecil Sharp and folk dance, Holst did not alter

\(^{17}\) Mitchell, *From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith*, 62.
the remaining folk songs that are not dance tunes (Claudy Banks, Swansea Town, Song Without Words, Song of the Blacksmith, and Greensleeves). The final tune, which was also unaltered, merges Greensleeves with a Dargason, a Welsh folk dance tune that was not part of the arrangements requested by Cecil Sharp for the Folk Dance Society. Folk songs, similar to Morris dance tunes, held a position of importance with the compositional process of Second Suite in F. This was probably due to Holst’s having used folk songs as a teacher of amateur musicians.

Other works, however, reveal that Holst was not entirely committed to folk song on the level of Vaughan Williams and Grainger. Evidence of this stems from the fact that there are really no folk songs present in his other prominent band works, First Suite in Eb, A Moorside Suite, and most importantly, Hammersmith. Instead, Holst uses the musical characteristics of folk songs in these works, specifically the modal and rhythmic qualities of folk melodies, as compositional techniques. Hammersmith, for example, contains no actual folk music, yet one cannot deny the fact that the melody line used in measure 73 (at the 6/8 time signature) sounds like an English folk song:

1st Flute, Hammersmith

![Musical notation for Hammersmith measures 73 and 77]
Holst’s use of gig-like rhythms and modal melody provide this theme with its English folk dance flavor. Likewise, *First Suite in Eb* and *A Moorside Suite* also display characteristics of folk music in both modal melody and formal structure without actually being folk music.

**Musical content of Second Suite in F**

Holst masterfully divided up his suite into four movements, opening with a traditional march format in a ternary form and a da capo return to opening material. The opening folk tune is a Morris dance titled *Glory Shears*, which Holst altered slightly from the original to make the notes easier for amateur musicians.\(^{19}\) Included in this opening is an eight-measure bridge that utilized material from another popular Morris dance, titled *Blue-Eyed Stranger*. Before the trio section of the *March*, Holst shifts into his second theme utilizing the folk song *Swansea Town*. This folk song is a sailor’s song, sung by a male voice about his hopes to return to Swansea Town in order to see his girl once more.

For the trio section of the *March*, Holst shifted to the Aeolian mode (pure minor) with a folk song titled *Claudy Banks*. This tune is sung from a male perspective as well, but it serves to tell the story of a man who comes into contact with a young maid who is lamenting for the return of her darling boy. In the end, however, it was her boyfriend in disguise who appears to be testing her devotion. He finishes by telling her “we never will part again.”\(^{20}\)

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\(^{19}\) Mitchell, *From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith*, 61.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 51.
In the second movement, *Song Without Words*, Holst used a lamenting tune in a woman’s voice titled *I Love my Love*, collected by G. B. Gardiner.\(^{21}\) This folk song depicts a woman who is upset because her boyfriend has been sent off to sea. Throughout the song, the female voice has great conviction, as she keeps professing her undying love, stating, “I love my Love because I know my Love loves me!”\(^{22}\) In the end of the song, her love returns and they live together in happiness, with the moral of the song being that “All pretty maids with patience wait that have got Loves at sea.”\(^{23}\)

The excitement of *Second Suite in F* grows even more with Holst’s third movement, *Song of the Blacksmith*, also collected by G. B. Gardiner in Hampshire. Holst showed a fondness for this folk tune, as he used it in more settings than just his band suite. In particular, Holst, also arranged this folk tune for four male voices (two tenors and two basses), a surprising choice given that the voice in the text is that of a woman. This arrangement was to be sung a cappella, with piano accompaniment intended for rehearsal only. Set in the aeolian mode (pure minor), this folk tune, with its shifting meter (between three and four beats in a measure) and jagged rhythms, attempts to recreate the sound of a blacksmith working in his shop and swinging his hammer.

In the closing movement, *Fantasia on a Dargason*, Holst utilized two folk tunes, at least one of which is popular in English culture. The English song *Green Sleaves* is one of the oldest tunes possessed by England, and is clearly recognized around the world as an English folk song. Holst likely chose *Green Sleaves* for its ability to repeat and

\(^{21}\) Ibid.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 52.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
vary its eight-bar phrase, which would work well when set against another folk tune, such as a Dargason. The Dargason that Holst used is a Welsh folk tune that has a gigue-like character. Rhythmically, the six-eight meter of the Dargason blends easily with the triple meter of *Green Sleaves*, which creates a hemiola against the Dargason’s meter. Holst only felt the need to change some of the notes and rhythms in *Green Sleaves* in order for it to blend better with the Dargason. Even with the success of this final movement, Imogen Holst indicates “never again did he succeed so brilliantly in this highly dangerous practice.”

**Holst Summary**

As a supporter of amateur musicians, Holst, before receiving attention as a popular composer, wanted to compose music with which common working-class people could easily associate. Using folk songs or folk song properties in composition was one way that he could achieve this goal. Such ideas would have been a result of his beliefs in William Morris’s socialism. Similar to the popular Arts and Crafts movement of Morris, folk songs often were considered the natural works of the land with which common folk associate. These folk songs were likely familiar to the public, especially with the work of the folk song revival. For example, a 1925 program note, of the Grand Massed Military Band concert in Liverpool, England, describes *First Suite in Eb* as “so popular that

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scarcely a night passes in the summer without it being heard in the London parks by one or other of the leading military bands.”

Indeed, it seems that Holst would have been truly pleased with the popularity and reception of his two band suites. He was a person who believed strongly in the importance of the amateur musician, spending a good deal of time working as a music teacher in up to four schools at one time. Such a commitment to music education is inarguably a pillar of Holst’s belief system that is reflected in these band suites. Influences such as these played a large impact on his approach to composition. From William Morris Socialism to growing up around wind bands, from the folk song revival to the search for English musical identity, many life factors had some measure of impact on Holst’s contribution to wind band literature and his use of folk music in the process.

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**

Vaughan Williams’s life experiences did not lead him directly towards the wind band to the extent that Holst’s did. Vaughan Williams’s relatively late contribution to military-band literature is mostly due to his musical training and social background. He was born at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, in 1872, the descendant of a family of lawyers who came from Wales. Arthur Vaughan Williams, Ralph’s father, died in 1875, leaving Margaret, Ralph’s mother, to raise him. Following Arthur’s death, she returned with Ralph to the home of her parents at Leith Hill Place. Ralph Vaughan Williams was exposed to violin and keyboard playing, but comparatively the exposure was less

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than Holst had received from his father in the town of Cheltenham. Nevertheless, Vaughan Williams became a very good violinist at a young age.\textsuperscript{27} He also showed great promise in his organ playing; his mother therefore had an organ installed at Leith Hill.\textsuperscript{28}

In 1890, Vaughan Williams entered the Royal College of Music, where he soon began to study composition with Sir Hubert Parry. The training he received with Parry was heavily weighted toward German principles of composition, and paid homage to the works of Brahms and Wagner. The faculty of the Royal College of Music was highly influenced by the music of the Germans, from whom they received their training, and had little interest in wind-band music. Both Charles Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry were subservient to the style of the great operatic and orchestral works of the German romantic composers. This was a tradition that Vaughan Williams accepted during his schooling at the Royal College of Music, even though he realized that this approach did not seem to fit his compositional soul.

Since German musical practice was the dominant influence of the time, many composers sought schooling in Germany at some point in their musical development. Vaughan Williams, after his time at the Royal College of Music, spent approximately one year in Berlin, studying composition with the ultra-conservative Max Bruch. Germany was to music students what Italy, particularly Rome, was to those who studied architecture. These places both showcase the ultimate achievement of the respective work their citizens in music and architecture.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 7.
The importance of Vaughan Williams’s study in Germany was in the exposure that he received to all German musical art forms, and the role that they played in society. German training focused heavily on the orchestra and the techniques of romantic composition. However, this does not appear to have adversely affected Vaughan Williams’s attitude toward composition for the wind band, since it was only a few years later that he wrote his first works for the genre. It seems evident that his late start into composition for the wind band is primarily a result of his musical background and development.

**Holst’s influence on Vaughan Williams**

In continuing the discussion of influences on Vaughan Williams’s wind composition, it is imperative to understand the collegial friendship that he shared with Holst throughout their lives. They first met each other in 1895, as students at the Royal College of Music. Their interaction as students was friendly, but the greatest period of interaction took place between 1920 and 1925, the time when Vaughan Williams first composed music for the wind band. These were “great years for Vaughan Williams’s and Holst’s friendship…they taught together and shared the pleasure of finding promising pupils.”

It was also during this time period that Vaughan Williams was exposed to Holst’s suites for military band, premiered in 1921 and 1922. Shortly after their premieres, Vaughan Williams submitted his *Folk Song Suite* for military band to the Commandant of Kneller Hall. This was the first of three works submitted over a two-year period. The

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timing of these works, and the collegial interaction between Holst and Vaughan Williams, support the idea that Holst’s suites for military band probably had a strong influence on Vaughan Williams’s motivations to compose for band.

Musically, the band works by both composers share great similarities in compositional style, and illuminate the influence of one upon the other. Vaughan Williams’s *Folk Song Suite* presents its folk songs in a remarkably similar manner to that of Holst’s *Second Suite in F*. Similarities include the use of multiple movements and the fairly literal statement of folk tunes with added harmonization. Since the compositional dates of Holst’s suites precede that of Vaughan Williams’ suite, it is likely that Vaughan Williams assimilated into his folksong suite some compositional techniques used by Holst.

The mere fact that Vaughan Williams composed for the wind band proves even more important than his use of folk song. Vaughan Williams’s work in folk-song collection, at the height of the revival, had occurred fifteen years earlier. It seems that the logical order of events was that Vaughan Williams was exposed to Holst’s suites for band, and wanted to contribute something of a similar nature. Vaughan Williams’s substantial experience with the folk idiom, developed years earlier, made it both logical and easy for him to produce such a composition. If one is composing music for the masses, utilizing familiar tunes is logical, especially if one has substantial experience with the material.

While Vaughan Williams contributed original wind music from 1923 onward, his compositional interest prior to the 1920s lay elsewhere. He was trained by scholars at the Royal College of Music to compose music for orchestra and chorus, and received little
practical exposure to wind bands. If he had experiences with the wind band that were
similar to those of Holst, Vaughan Williams contributions might have come earlier than
1923. But, to assume that Vaughan Williams had little practical knowledge of the
military band prior to the 1920s would be a mistake. It was mentioned in the chapter on
the wind band that for all practical purposes, great composers were aware of the wind
band, whether or not they composed for it. The band movement was extremely popular
among the English working and middle classes, and Vaughan Williams was undoubtedly
exposed to this culture. Subsequently he was encouraged to partake in it through his
association with Holst. One example of his knowledge of wind bands is found in a letter
from Vaughan Williams to Holst as early as 1897, where he states

Walküre does sound fine on a Brass band doesn’t it? I used to
hear a German brass band do it at one of the Earls Court
exhibitions. . . . I am sorry for you stuck up in that God-
forsaken place, can’t you get a bandmaster’s place somewhere?
Wouldn’t that be good – you ought to be able to get one easily
after all your experience. . . . I will give you 2d if you can play
this on the trombone.30

This letter displays that Vaughan Williams is familiar with Holst’s work as a trombone
player in military bands, while making a joke concerning scoring for the trombone. It

30 Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst eds., Heirs and Rebels (New York:
also seems important to note that, in 1897, when he wrote this letter, he thought that Holst’s experiences could land him a job as a military bandmaster. Vaughan Williams obviously viewed Holst as a musician with very strong band experience.

**Vaughan Williams’ Transition to National Music**

Prior to 1923, Vaughan Williams, who came from a wealthier family, was engaged in the composition of all genres of art music - orchestral, operatic, organ, and choral. However, his engagement with the folk song revival calls into question his socially elite status, as he was consumed by the idea that the music of the rural folk represented the future of English art music. Between 1900 and 1925, Vaughan Williams moved from a fundamentally German musical outlook to a pastoral vision of composition that propagated the idea of national music married to the land through its natural musical materials for all English people. Later in his life, he stated,

> We English composers are always saying, “Here are Wagner, Brahms, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, what fine fellows they are, let us try and do something like this at home,” quite forgetting that the result will not sound at all like “this” when transplanted from its natural soil.\(^{31}\)

The beginning of Vaughan Williams’s change toward the appreciation for the pastoral culture was likely a result of his work with Cecil Sharp and the Folk Song Society from about 1903 until 1910. His belief in Morris’s socialism, as well as his involvement in World War One, are both additional factors that acted to strengthen this transition. His appreciation for wind-band composition occurred years later, after the time he spent collecting folk-song material for use in artful compositions in support of

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nationalism. Through the process of collection, he was exposed to the working-class culture of rural England.

The decade of the First World War, 1910 to 1920, continued to foster a change in Vaughan Williams through the role he played in the Royal Army Medical Corps. In his military service, Vaughan Williams was exposed to the ways in which war and the military break down class divisions, and demonstrate that a man is just a man on the field of battle. He was never one to complain or avoid loathsome tasks during his service. In fact, he transferred to gunnery school to become an officer, hoping for more active participation instead of the mundane jobs he was previously assigned. By 1918, after some service in the field as an officer, he was appointed “Director of Music to the First Army of the BEF” and encouraged to “seek out and exploit the musical talents of the soldiers, [and organize] choral societies, orchestras, and music classes.”

By the time he was demobilized, he had organized many ensembles, including a band.

During the war period, Vaughan Williams composed no new works due to the time demands of military service. The First World War brought changes in the attitude of British society, which pushed for a rejection of all things German, including art, music, and musicians. Joining the war effort was very popular. Even Gustav Holst wanted to volunteer, but his health would not permit him to serve. Nevertheless, those who experienced the war first-hand were greatly affected by it. Vaughan Williams continued to express a growing concern and despair about the deaths of his fellow composers in the field. Two such losses were those of F. B. Ellis and George Butterworth in 1916. At that time, Vaughan Williams wrote to Holst,

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I sometimes dread coming back to normal life with so many gaps – especially of course George Butterworth….I sometimes think now that it is wrong to have made friends with people so much younger than oneself – because soon there will be only the middle-aged left - & I have got out of touch with most of my contemporary friends – but then there is always you & thank heaven we have never got out of touch & I don’t see why we ever should.33

Musical content of *Folk Song Suite*

Vaughan Williams borrowed most of the folk tunes utilized in *Folk Song Suite* from collections compiled by Cecil Sharp. The opening movement, titled *March*, begins with the popular English tune *Seventeen Come Sunday*. The voice in this song is that of a male, who sings about a “pretty fair maid” that he overtook.34 This folk song derives its English flavor from its use of the Dorian mode, transposed to F (minor) for practical purposes with accidentals used to create the Dorian scale.

The form of this march is similar to that of the opening march of the Holst’s *Second Suite in F*, utilizing a ternary form with a trio section and a da capo return to the opening material. This was a standard form for European marches of the time, especially with its da capo form. Following the march format, Vaughan Williams shifts into his second theme utilizing the tune *Pretty Caroline*. This second theme contrasts with *Seventeen Come Sunday* with through its relaxed character and its use of the major scale (Ionian mode). The text of this song is similar in character to the opening folk song, as it

33 Ibid., 43.

is sung from the perspective of a man who speaks of how beautiful is his “pretty Caroline.”35 This tune was also from Cecil Sharp’s collection of English Folk Songs.

The third folk song, *Dives and Lazarus*, was collected by A. J. Hipkins compiled by Lucy Broadwood in *English Country Songs*.36 This folk tune required some minor adjustment to rhythm in order to fit Vaughan Williams’s needs. Utilized in the trio, *Dives and Lazarus* is in Dorian mode, and contrasts with the previous *Pretty Caroline* (in Ionian mode). The text comes from the biblical passage of Luke 16: 19-31, highlighting the story of the rich man who will not give any food to the poor man.37

The second movement of this three-movement work is titled *Intermezzo*, and serves as a relaxed contrast to the upbeat style of the first and third movements. The first tune utilized is *My Bonny Boy*, also taken from Lucy Broadwood’s *English Country Songs*. In the Dorian mode, the mood of the folk tune reflects that of the text, the lament of a girl who once loved a boy who was taken by another girl, to whom the lamenting girl wishes the best. Vaughan Williams quickly contrasts this sad folk song with a shift to the second tune of the movement, *Green Bushes*. The source of this tune is most likely *Cecil Sharp’s Collection of English Folksongs, Volume I*.38 *Green Bushes* maintains tonal continuity with *My Bonny Boy* through its use of the Dorian mode, but sets a different

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 33.
38 Ibid., 34.
mood through its upbeat triple meter. The text of *Green Bushes* also is of a lighter mood, sung by a male who becomes interested in a lovely “damsel.”

The third movement of the suite returns to the march format, with the indication “Folk Songs from Somerset.” The first tune Vaughan Williams used is *Blow Away the Morning Dew*, taken from Cecil Sharp’s collection *Folksongs from Somerset*. This tune in a major key (Ionian mode) provides a light-hearted and brisk contrast to the more lamenting *Intermezzo*. The text is in the form of a story that tells of a farmer’s son who goes out to see what he can kill! However, this folk song is not presented for long, as Vaughan Williams suddenly switches to another folk song titled *High Germany* for the second theme of the march. This tune moves to the Dorian mode, although one hardly notices it as Vaughan Williams transposed the tune into G minor, which has the same key signature as the Bb major of *Blow Away the Morning Dew*. He of course retains the Dorian sound of *High Germany* by lowering the sixth scale degree corresponding to this mode. The text of this folk song mentions marching away to the “cruel wars in high Germany,” a sentiment that clearly has a history among the English people.

The final two folk songs used in the trio section of the march were titled *A Tree So High* and *John Barleycorn*. The first one has been difficult to pinpoint, but it is now understood to have been a fairly well-known song in Somerset. The six-eight feel of this folk tune provides a nice contrast to the duple meter of the opening section of the march. Vaughan Williams transposes *A Tree So High* into C minor in order to relate the

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39 Ibid., 35.

40 Taken from page twenty four of the full score published by Boosey & Co. (1924).

key of the trio to the subdominant key of E-flat, the subdominant key of B-flat. The text of this folk song tells of a great love “having been as tall as trees” that has now passed. The minor flavor of its melody suitably characterizes the loss of love.

Vaughan Williams quickly contrasted the darker tone of the minor *A Tree So High* and introduces the heavy-handed *John Barleycorn*. The text of this tune discusses three men looking to kill John Barleycorn, while the music sounds like a bar room drinking song. The closest match to a possible source for this tune is the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society, Volume III*, edited by Lucy Broadwood. Its heavy scoring by Vaughan Williams, utilizing the low brass in unison, provides a wonderfully bombastic ending to the march trio before the da capo return to the opening.

**Vaughan Williams Summary**

There were many influences in Vaughan Williams’s life that led to his composition of wind band music in the 1920s, and the resulting use of folk music in that process. Had he not experienced the war or his friendship with Holst, it is possible that Vaughan Williams would not have engaged in original composition for the wind band. This man came from an upper-class social background, and originally sought to compose in the style of the great German composers. His exposure to the folk song revival, which provided interaction with the common folk, and his experiences in the First World War, served to expand his beliefs about the role of music and virtue of a composer. In the post-war period, these life experiences encouraged Vaughan Williams to use his

42 Ibid., 39.
extraordinary compositional talents and knowledge of the folk idiom to create music for wind band.

Vaughan Williams began his musical career with the goal of being a composer of great art music. While his goal never really changed, his belief system was altered along the way, defined by a heightened sympathy for the lower classes, an embrace of nationalism, and his strong friendship with Holst. These factors, combined with the renewed vision of the band music leaders at Kneller Hall, motivated Vaughan Williams to submit *Folk Song Suite*, as well as *Toccata Marziale*, and *Sea Songs* in order to aid and advance the genre.

**Percy Grainger**

Among the three composers of this study, Percy Grainger was the most committed to the genre of wind-band literature, specifically to music for the military band. The main differences that fostered this dedication to the wind band, in contrast to Holst and Vaughan Williams, stemmed from his association with American military bands, his resentment of German musical influence, and his successful career as a concert pianist. While England played a significant role in fostering his appreciation of British folk music, it was primarily his American experiences that ultimately set his music apart from that of his European contemporaries.

We have seen that the compositional style of Holst and Vaughan Williams was strongly driven by English nationalism; Grainger’s style, however, displayed a greater commitment to the idea of art for art’s sake in music. Along with this desire, he also seemed obsessed with making music that was specifically not German, choosing instead
to glorify the folk idiom of England among other nations. His resentment of German
culture ultimately led to Grainger’s
great distaste for the string orchestra, his belief that the string orchestra was a dying art
form, and his ability to find profit in compositions for the wind band.

Perhaps the most important of these factors is his sincere disregard for the
orchestra. This dislike stemmed from his experiences in Frankfurt as a young music
student, and the mocking treatment he received from Ivan Knorr, his first teacher of
composition. Knorr played a cruel trick on Grainger, explained as follows,

The Australian…heard another cyclist whistling a simple tune. The melody fascinated
Percy and he used it as a set of variations for string quartet that had been requested by
Knorr. When Knorr saw the finished product he brought his sarcasm into play by telling
him that it was a work of considerable importance and he should hear it performed. Knorr
organized the players and an audience by persuading the entire staff of the Conservatorium
to turn up for the feast of musical comedy. The work, of course, was rather juvenile and
Knorr was merely taking unfair advantage of Percy’s painful gullibility. The event became
vividly etched in his mind, for he later recalled that the entire staff did turn up and that
they “simply squirmed with laughter.”

This event was quite possibly the beginning of Grainger’s distaste of German music. He
went on to spend most of his life working with and promoting the folk idiom of Nordic
nations as a way of rejecting German, Italian, and southern European music.

John Blackling, a scholar of Grainger, believes “if the continental foundations of
[Grainger’s] musical education in Frankfurt had not been undermined by English
dilettantism…his ultimate contribution to the world of music would have been much

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greater.\textsuperscript{44} In a sense, the mocking treatment that he received in Frankfurt was at the heart of his rebellion against German music. This went on to affect other aspects of his musical career. In 1918, he was offered a position as conductor of the St. Louis Symphony, but turned it down because “he would be obliged to conduct so many items for the classical German, Austrian, Russian repertoire and he felt that no one would want to listen to the kind of programs he wished to present.”\textsuperscript{45} Grainger biographer John Bird also notes that circa 1918, his army period enabled him to experiment with the wind band in a way which had never presented itself before. Grainger was already \textit{nursing a growing dislike of the inflexibility of the symphony orchestra} as it was then (and is still) constituted for he believed that there was an inherent imbalance between strings and wind instruments with the best tunes almost always given to the violins. For his own musical purpose, it was a musical organization which had outlived its usefulness and he viewed it as a relic of the nineteenth century that had become something of an anachronism. With an almost evangelistic fervor, therefore, his own musical output was increasingly becoming a kind of one-man crusade and a challenge to the domination of the world of composition by the symphony orchestra. Composers of this generation, he felt, were enslaved and therefore doomed to churning out symphonic music simply because the world of the performing arts was dominated by the symphony orchestra…Grainger felt that it was his moral duty at least to try to break this self-perpetuating and self-serving spiral.\textsuperscript{46}

Grainger spent his whole life waging war with German culture. His war was not fought with bullets and violence, but with music. “By the age of sixteen, [Grainger] had

\textsuperscript{44} John Blackling, \textit{‘A Commonsense View of All Music:’ Reflections on Percy Grainger’s contribution to ethnomusicology and music education} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1.

\textsuperscript{45} Bird, \textit{Percy Grainger}, 189.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 190.
committed himself to a battle against Western European traditions and his compositions were to be his weapons."\footnote{Ibid., 64.} While this rejection of German culture may have been a slight deterrent to Grainger’s development as a serious composer of art music, it did serve to provide him with fuel for his desire to compose original wind-band music.

Holst and Vaughan Williams did not possess the same feelings of discontent with the orchestra, although their attitudes towards German musical dominance were similar to those of Grainger. Neither Holst nor Vaughan Williams was prepared to reject the medium that brought fame, respect, and success to the composers of Europe. The way to receive respect on the world stage was to compose for the medium that was internationally accepted as a conveyor of art music. This undoubtedly had an effect on the number of works they composed for wind band, a far smaller number in comparison to Grainger’s extensive output. Subsequently, while Grainger is primarily remembered for his band compositions, Holst and Vaughan Williams are best remembered today for their orchestral music.

**The American Experience**

Grainger’s experience with American wind bands was almost as great an influence on his beliefs as was his resentment of German music. Grainger moved to America in 1915, where he was to live out the rest of his life as a citizen of the United States. It was at this time that he first became involved with the military band. Facing pressure by colleagues to support the war movement, he purchased a soprano saxophone in 1917 and joined a military band in New York at Governor’s Island. However, the
bandmaster, Rocco Resta, had plenty of saxophones, so Grainger was instead trained to play the oboe.\textsuperscript{48} Out of respect for his career as an accomplished musician, Grainger was made an assistant band instructor and was given the opportunity to compose wind music.\textsuperscript{49} This provided him with a great opportunity to experiment with the many colors of the wind band.

With this newfound experience in the United States, the influences upon Grainger were now notably different than the ones experienced by Holst and Vaughan Williams, with their connections to John Somerville, Hector Adkins, and Kneller Hall. Specifically, Grainger was largely influenced by the American system of military bands, as well as the multitude of high school and college band programs that arose after the First World War. Grainger was also drawn to the monetary benefits of publishing works for wind bands, as they existed in far greater numbers than orchestras. For example, in a 1937 letter to Storm Bull, a composition and piano student of Grainger’s, he described the great opportunities that were available to those willing to compose for concert bands. In the letter, Grainger also mentioned the Evanston Festival, which was run by Glenn Cliffe Bainum, the director of bands at Northwestern University.\textsuperscript{50} Such letters reveal Grainger’s strong working knowledge of the wind band.

Despite Grainger’s departure from the British environment of Holst and Vaughan Williams, there is no doubt that he was familiar with their works for band. Exploring the similarities between Grainger’s later works for band and those of Holst and Vaughan Williams, there is no doubt that he was familiar with their works for band. Exploring the similarities between Grainger’s later works for band and those of Holst and Vaughan

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 185.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 188.

Williams reveals the possible influence of the latter two. *Lincolnshire Posey* was composed approximately fifteen years after the premieres of Holst’s band suites and Vaughan Williams’s *Folk Song Suite*. In *Lincolnshire Posey*, Grainger creates a multi-movement work that strives to incorporate folk melodies in a higher form of art music. Grainger may have derived the multi-movement idea from composers such as Holst and Vaughan Williams, but it was also a requirement of the commission for this work. In comparison, Grainger’s earlier works for band, composed earlier than the publication of suites of Holst and Vaughan Williams’s, are single-song arrangements that embellish and develop individual folk melodies (*Irish Tune from County Derry*, *Shepherd’s Hey*, *Country Gardens*, and *Molly on the Shore*). These earlier single folk-song settings depict an earlier Grainger, one who did not have any band influences from which to derive form for his wind compositions. In a sense, this was a Grainger who had not yet delved into composing larger forms for band.

Grainger’s desire to compose the larger *Lincolnshire Posey* arose out of a 1937 commission for two original works for band from the American Band Masters Association for their convention in Milwaukee. The other work submitted was a new arrangement for band of *The Lads of Wamphray*. The initial reception of *Lincolnshire Posey* was not favorable. The irregular meters of the work baffled performers, and the third and fifth movements had to be dropped from the first performance, to Grainger’s dissatisfaction. Eventually, *Lincolnshire Posey* received a highly successful repeat performance by the Goldman Band, which spawned the great popularity of the work in

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51 Bird 250.
52 Ibid.
subsequent years. It remains today among the most performed original works for wind band.

**Musical Content of *Lincolnshire Posey***

In the program notes that accompany *Lincolnshire Posey*, Grainger thoughtfully dedicates this work to “the folksingers who sang so sweetly to me.” Grainger impressively utilized folk songs that he had collected himself several years prior to the work’s conception. *Lincolnshire Posey*, however, differs from many of Grainger’s earlier band works, as well as those of Vaughan Williams and Holst, in that he is not just trying to masterfully arrange folk songs into a multi-movement form consisting of marches and intermezzos. Grainger is literally trying to create an impressionistic work that depicts the folk singers from whom he collected these songs. As he stated in the program notes,

> Indeed, each number is intended to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody – a musical portrait of the singer’s personality no less than of his habits of song.53

Each movement of *Lincolnshire Posey* does more than just provide us with masterful settings of folk songs for band. Each serves as Grainger’s opportunity to provide, through music, a living depiction of the often-shunned folk singers. This is probably why Grainger does not utilize forms, such as the march, within this larger work. Instead, the form of each movement is derived from the quality of the folk song and the most appropriate way to depict its singer.

The first movement, *Lisbon*, represents a Mr. Deane of Hibbaldstowe (in Lincolnshire, England). This folk song originally bore the title *Dublin Bay*, but Grainger

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53 Taken from the 1937 published program notes for *Lincolnshire Posey*
changed this in a 1939 addendum to the program notes. There is little doubt that
Grainger is trying to paint Mr. Deane in a rather heroic light, utilizing a countermelody in
the horn part based on the pompous folk song, *The Duke of Marlborough*. Grainger even
writes the word “heroically” at the entrance of this melodic line. While the original folk
song was sung in the Dorian mode, by Mr. Deane, Grainger adjusted the scale, switching
instead to the Mixolydian mode.54

The opening movement is rather brief, lasting about only one minute and twenty
seconds. Grainger quickly shifts into his second movement, which one could perform
without a pause between the movements. The tune utilized is called *Horkstow Grange*,
sung by Mr. George Gouldthorpe of Goxhill (in North Lincolnshire, England). The text
of this tune has been described as “a tale of brutal violence against an oppressive overseer
by his man who obviously couldn’t take it anymore.”55 While the text of this movement
depicts a “local tragedy,” its musical content is hauntingly beautiful. Grainger maintains
continuity between the first and second movement by maintaining the key signature of
Db, despite the first movement tonicizing both Eb and Ab mixolydian. *Horkstow Grange*
firmly uses the key of Db major, with a short visit to Ab mixolydian in the middle
section. The key of Db works extremely well because of its warmth among wind
instrument tone colors.

The third movement, *Rufford Park Poachers*, provides difficulty of the highest
level for both musicians and the conductor through Grainger’s strict use of irregular
rhythms throughout. This folk song was sung by Joseph Taylor of Saxby-All-Saints

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55 Ibid., 65.
(Lincolnshire, England), and taken down by Grainger in 1906. The meter of this movement often confuses even the most adept musicians; perhaps unsurprisingly, the man who had sung this folk song was an experienced choral singer. Some might think that he was illiterate or backwards, as most folk singers were, but this was not the case. Grainger describe Mr. Taylor as a “master of graceful, birdlike ornament and relied more on purely vocal effects than any folksinger known to me.”56 This folksinger, with Grainger’s skillful scoring, provided band musicians with almost more than they could handle. This movement visits a number of meters, as well as providing the conductor a choice between two different versions of the song to perform. Amazingly, this text of this song conveys the message that poachers should keep their gallant heart when hunting. It seems like an awful mess of a folk song, but I think one must keep in mind that Grainger is trying to paint a musical picture of the folk singer, not necessarily the song.

The fourth movement, *The Brisk Young Sailor*, introduces a more light-hearted atmosphere following the intense rhythm and harmony of the dorian-mode *Rufford Park Poachers*. *The Brisk Young Sailor* maintains a standard triple meter throughout the entire movement and harmonically remains within the context of a Bb major scale. Its metrical and harmonic qualities obviously give the folk song its more pleasing character. Even the text of the folk song is light-hearted, with a happy ending. It tells of a woman who is courted by a young man, but she will not allow herself to be wooed, as she is waiting for the return of a sailor to marry her. In the end, the young man turns out himself to be her sailor indeed, whom she did not recognize. He reveals himself and they are both happy.

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56 Take from program notes of *Lincolnshire Posey* (1937).
The Brisk Young Sailor was sung by Mrs. Thompson, who lived in Barton-on-Humber (Lincolnshire, England).

The fifth movement, Lord Melbourne, returns to an irregular musical character, utilizing multiple meters and even the concept of “free time” in which notes are cued and there is no standard meter. This tune is a “war song,” that shares its text with another folk song, The Duke of Marlborough. The song tells the story of a man that Queen Anne long ago had sent with his troops to such places as Newfoundland and France to fight wars; the man is now preparing to yield to death of old age. It is a rather dramatic setting of a folk song, featuring both lamenting and brash material throughout the movement. Its most striking feature is the continued return of the fanfare-like refrain, which results from Grainger’s use of the original strophic form of the folk song, with multiple repetitions of the verse and refrain. At the end of the movement, the folk song slowly (almost painfully) moves through a few closing chord progressions, but ends on a dominant chord without resolving. Perhaps this represents the death of Lord Melbourne and the suddenness of death. This tune was collected from Mr. George Wray, of Barton-on-Humber (Lincolnshire, England) in 1906.

The closing movement, Lost Lady Found, a dance song, is the only folk song Grainger did not collect himself. It was collected by Lucy Broadwood and sung to her by Mrs. Hill, Lucy’s nurse in Lincolnshire. Grainger here returns to a straight-forward triple meter in the dorian mode. This movement represents a masterpiece of band scoring on Grainger’s past, as he takes each successive repeat of the dance tune and scores it with the different colors of the wind band. Grainger begins in unison, expands to harmonizing the melody, and later adds a countermelody while changing the instrumentation and
articulation of each successive repeat of the strophe. The text tells of a lady who was lost, and whose uncle went searching for her. Each successive strophe, it tells of where he went to look for her, until he finds her at the song’s end. The music is representative of this text in that it is the same music repeated over and over, similar to the way the text presents the different places the uncle has searched for the lost lady. But, while the music is the same, the scoring is different, just like each place the uncle searched. It is an excellent tune for Grainger to end with, utilizing tuned percussion instruments to hammer out the heavy dance rhythms. While this movement has no particular tonal, melodic, or formal connection to the opening of the piece, it still seems to convey a strong closing to the work as a whole through its scoring, continue to build throughout the movement to a tutti climax. It is important to remember that in this work, Grainger was not necessarily concerned with unity across the entire work, something that could be considered German in principle. Instead, he is focused more on the impressionistic side of this music, painting a musical picture of each individual folk singer.

**Grainger Summary**

Many of Grainger’s life experiences affected his compositional choices, which in turn helped to provide the band world with some outstanding original literature. If one returns to Vaughan Williams’s notion of environment affecting a composer, there is little doubt that Grainger was greatly affected by his environment. The two most important environmental factors that contributed to his wind composition were probably his negative experiences as a student in Germany, and his joining an American military band with the onset of the First World War. These two factors led him to create his first
serious compositions for wind band. His later works, such as *Lincolnshire Posey*, show a much more mature Grainger who is moving away from clever arrangements of folk tunes into the development of folk song into larger forms. His later works were also possibly influenced by his exposure to other composers like Holst and Vaughan Williams and their approaches to the task.

As a composer, the combination of Grainger’s love for the wind band with his love of folk music caused a unique musical intersection of the two. His folk song usage represented the practical application of an art form that he loved and spent his early years discovering and learning. By combining the two, he was able to reject German musical practice on many levels, and created unique and artistic music. Grainger will probably never be remembered on the same level as the greatest orchestral composers by musicologists, due to the lack of respect given to him for his dedication to band composition. Instead, he is probably best remembered for his great performances on piano. Nevertheless, he has carved his own place in the history of wind bands as one of the most, if not the most, important composer to the development of wind band literature.

**Conclusion**

It is important to note the remarkable nature of these three composers’ contributions to the intersection of folk music and wind band composition in the early twentieth century. The combination of these musical materials of the land with the ensemble for the masses proved extremely popular with the public. Holst believed that composition and orchestration required meaningful musical materials. He once stated, “I’m not able to dissociate orchestration from the material being orchestrated…the whole
thing goes together, the material indicating the orchestration.”57 Indeed, the folk materials used, combined with the band medium, created a unique situation in which this original music for wind band flourished and also enjoyed resounding public acceptance.

Band music indeed was the music of the people, performed by the ensemble suited for the massed public. Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger’s band music survives as a living historical remnant of the folk song revival in England. These tunes are not just sitting on a shelf in a library; they represent a living window to the musical past of England. Fortunately, the right conditions converged at a point in history that allowed these works to thrive. The results are a substantial number of great works for concert band that are thriving in band repertoire and encouraging new compositions of the same. Together Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger paved the way for a century of wind band composition that served to develop the repertoire into serious art music.

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57 Mitchell, From Kneller Hall to Hammersmith, 3.
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