

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER: A MUSICAL LIFE

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I, Lynn Mutti, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Music was central to Warner's life: she was first a young, aspiring composer, then a musicologist, later a librettist and friend to musicians and composers, and for fifty years a writer whose works regularly engaged with music in richly diverse ways. Unpublished diary entries show her knowledgeable and personal response to music heard in the concert hall, on the radio, via gramophone records or as a participant in a choir. Her ear was tuned to sound, especially sound in nature: water, birds, animals, the sea, the wind, as well as the cacophony of human voices, singing, shouting, joyous or sad. Warner's acute ear tuned into the life around her and articulated it in her written work. A late diary entry just a few months before her death shows her frailty and the continuing importance of music in her daily life. Sound and music are contained in one eloquently descriptive sentence: 'I fell against the tool-shed with a loud clang. Little the worse. Revived by a fine performance of the *Pastoral Symphony*'.¹

My aims in this thesis are to present the fullest narrative yet of Warner's engagement with music, to examine her academic writing on the subject and to recount her musical collaborations and friendships which have not previously been a subject for academic discussion. My research draws both on printed sources and on

¹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994) 17 October 1977, p. 377.

previously unexplored archives to give information about music from Warner's childhood until the end of her life. Music is woven through Warner's creative writing, too, and this is briefly discussed within chapters of the thesis.

The importance of music to Warner has often been noted but never until now researched. This biographical account of music in her life will provide another focus for ongoing academic study and analysis of her literary work.

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Impact Statement

Sylvia Townsend Warner is better known as a novelist and poet than she is as a musicologist. This area of her life, and the effect that music may have had on her writing, has never previously been researched.

I have investigated primary source material in a variety of archives, and gathered a substantial amount of new information about the influence of music in Warner's life. My aim in this thesis is to present a full narrative of Warner's engagement with music, to examine her academic writing on music, and to recount her musical collaborations and friendships which have not previously been a subject for academic discussion.

This biographical account of music in Warner's life will provide another focus for ongoing academic study and analysis of her literary work within academia. It will also provide material that will be part of a wider discussion regarding other novelists, for example, Virginia Woolf, EM Forster and James Joyce, among others, who used musical themes in their writing.

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Last, but not least, love and thanks to my family for having tolerated Warner in their lives for so many years.

Music does not influence research work, but both are nourished by the same sort of longing, and they complement each other in the release they offer.

Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)
Letter to Paul Plant, 23 October 1928

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Preface

Introit

Sylvia Townsend Warner led an extraordinary life. Born to upper middle-class parents, she grew up in Harrow School where her father was a senior master. There she had piano lessons with Percy Buck, the head of music for the school, becoming an accomplished pianist; she also became his secret mistress at the age of 19. The affair lasted for eighteen years. During this time Warner moved to London, learned to be an expert in Tudor music and began writing novels and poetry. She met Valentine Ackland at the home of the novelist Theodore Powys in Dorset and the women became lovers in 1930; for Warner it was a life-long commitment. In 1936 both she and Ackland joined the Communist Party of Great Britain and were active comrades in their home county of Dorset. They went twice to Spain during the Civil War, once as clerical aides in a hospital unit and then as delegates to the 2nd International Congress of Writers in Defence of Culture. Warner remained a committed Communist well into old age. Ackland's frequent ill-health and many affairs, particularly the affair with Elizabeth Wade White which almost broke the liaison with Warner, ensured that Warner's life was sometimes even more turbulent than the river that flowed past her house in Frome Vauchurch, Dorset.

Scholars have written about lesbianism and politics² in Warner's writing but music has not been comprehensively studied although some recent articles have been published.³ In addition, some of her poems have been set to music and performed, as have some of her own compositions.⁴ In this thesis I offer thorough and original archival research into the place of music in Warner's life, from her early aspirations to be a composer, and later her relief at

² *Critical Essays on Sylvia Townsend Warner, English Novelist, 1893-1978*, ed. by G. Davies et al. (Lampeter: Edwin Mellon Press, 2006).
The Gender of Modernism: a Critical Anthology, ed. by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana State University Press, 1990). 'Sylvia Townsend Warner', essay by Jane Marcus, pp. 531-38.
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 Terry Castle, 'Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Counterplot of Lesbian Fiction', in *The Apparational Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 66-91.
 Jane Garrity, 'Encoding Bi-Location: Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Primitive Erotics of Sapphic Dissimulation', in *Stepdaughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 140-87.
 Chris Hopkins, 'Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Marxist Historical Novel', *Literature and History* 4 (1995), 50-63.
 Mary Jacobs, 'Gender, Genre and Politics: The Literary Work of Sylvia Townsend Warner in the 1930s. University of Plymouth, (Electronic publication).
 'The Politics of Disclosure and the Fable', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 6 (2006), 17-35.
 Gay Wachman, 'Lesbian Empire: Radical Cross-writing in the Twenties' (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

³ Gillian Beer, 'Music and the Condition of Being Alive: The Example of Sylvia Townsend Warner', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 14(2014), [51]-75.
 Lynn Mutti, 'The Ambivalent Composer and the Carnegie Competition: From Music to Literature', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 11(2011), [21]-36.
 'That Odd Thing, A Musicologist', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 13(2011), [17]-34.
 'Notes on Warner and Schoenberg', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 17(2017), 31-38.
 Richard Searle, 'Sylvia Townsend Warner and Tudor Church Music', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 11(2011), [69]-88.
 'One Person's Weight: Sylvia Townsend Warner and Herbert Howells', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 14(2014), [31]-49.
 Peter Swaab, *The Sea Change* libretto edited and published with annotations in the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 15 (2015), 14-34, together with his article 'Heavenly Hermaphroditism: A Note on *The Sea-Change*', 35-39.

⁴ John Ireland's settings of Warner's poems 'The Soldier's Return', Hymn for a Child' and 'The Scapegoat' [*Songs Sacred and Profane* [1929]], together with Thomas Hardy's poems 'She at His Funeral' and 'The Subalterns' with music by Warner, were performed at a concert at St. Anne's College Oxford on 3 May 2008. Also performed was Stephen Tomlin's poem 'The Lonely Traveller', with music by Warner [1921]. The latter two works were also part of a concert arranged by the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society on 30 June 2012 in Dorchester, Dorset. A newly-composed setting of Warner's poem 'Azrael' by Jonathan David was also given at this concert.
 Warner's music 'Dum transisset' was performed at the Oxford Concert, as was her poem 'I, so wary of traps'. This was set to music by Paul Nordoff and titled 'Improvisation for Sylvia'.
 Alan Bush's *Freight of Harvest* (1969), a setting of Warner's poems 'Country Thought from a Town', 'The Sailor', 'The Maiden' and 'The Load of Fern' was part of the programme at the 'Tribute to Sylvia Warner' day at the Aldeburgh Festival, 1977.

relinquishing academic musicianship for the writing of fiction and poetry, to her collaborations with other musicians and artists. It was particularly important to uncover how Warner became a musicologist who was expert in searching out and transposing sixteenth-century church music manuscripts. Examining primary source material that gave information on her involvement with music was necessary to narrate for the first time the story of her work in musicology for the Carnegie Trust.

A JStor search led me to much of the archival material for *Tudor Church Music*. An article entitled 'An Affair of Honour: Tudor Church Music, the Ousting of Richard Terry, and a Trust Vindicated' by Richard Turbet,⁵ a music librarian working in Scotland, included important information about the Carnegie project. He had been led to the 'hitherto undocumented and un-researched archive in the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh [National Archives of Scotland]' by a chance conversation. Research in the Carnegie Archive's twenty-three files on *Tudor Church Music* was clearly essential. I scheduled a visit to Edinburgh. However, the material proved frustratingly hard to access. When I received the first file I had requested — the crucial one on the project's instigation — I discovered that it was in no condition to be used. I reported this and then had to wait many months before the file came back from being conserved, entailing another visit to Edinburgh. I spent a week making

⁵ Richard Turbet, 'An Affair of Honour: Tudor Church Music, the Ousting of Richard Terry and a Trust Vindicated', *Music and Letters*, 76 (1995), 593-600.

transcriptions from this archive, as the material was too fragile to be photocopied.

Other archives and libraries I have consulted include The Sylvia Townsend Warner, Valentine Ackland Archive, Dorset County Museum; Harrow School; University of London Library, Senate House, Special Music Collection; The Royal College of Music; The British Library; Oxford University Press Archive; Bach Choir Archive; Medieval & Plainsong Society; Schoenberg Archive and Westminster Cathedral Archive. Some of these have proved fruitless while others have provided information and further leads to other institutions and resources. These are the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Special Collections; Guildhall Library, London; Kings College, University of London, Special Collections; Royal Holloway College, University of London, Special Collections; Senate House, University of London Archives; Worcester College, Oxford Archives; Oriel College, Oxford Archives; Exeter College, Oxford Archives; Kings College, Cambridge Archives and St. George's Chapel Windsor Archives. All leads were followed until no further information was forthcoming, demonstrating that the research has been as comprehensive as possible.

I have occasionally interwoven these research findings with other circumstances in Warner's life and included references to music in her novels, short stories, letters and poetry, as well as her 'guide book' to Somerset. These references are not always in chronological order of publication, but focus on Warner's use of a

particular musical theme across the range of her writing, for example, the playing of musical instruments used by her to describe a character or circumstance in her novels and short stories. Another example is the deliberate placing of my discussion on the Early Music innovation, the *Ars nova*, in the chapter 'Triste Loysir' from her novel *The Corner That Held Them* (1948), to follow an examination of her academic writing on this subject and other aspects of Early Music.

However, this thesis is not intended as a literary critical analysis of music in Warner's writing. Its aim is rather to set out the findings of archival research and to provide an important unique resource for critical explorations of Warner's life and writing.

The thesis begins by outlining the context of Warner's involvement in music in the early twentieth century, detailing the nationwide 'Musical Renaissance' and the Folk Song Revival that had begun in the 1880's. The influence of these developments radically changed English music, moving musical boundaries from the traditions of the Victorian age towards the modern experimental music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. This discussion touches on the work of many of the most important British composers of the twentieth century: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustave Holst, Herbert Howells, Gerald Finzi, John Ireland and Edward Elgar; all but the last were known to Warner.

Chapter 2 focuses on Warner's life at Harrow School, early music lessons and the strong influence of Percy Buck. At this time

she read the work of George Moore and composed piano variations on his story 'The Wild Goose'. Possibly she also read his novels *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa*. Music pervades Moore's writing and *Sister Teresa* is a possible influence on *The Corner That Held Them*.

This second decade of the twentieth century might be called the time of Warner's apprenticeship as a composer. Previous discussions have often affirmed that she was poised to go to Vienna to study composition with Schoenberg in 1914 but was prevented by the First World War. My research shows that this 'fact' has little substance and should not be treated as substantive.

Chapter 3 presents in full newly discovered information about the 'Carnegie Music Publication Scheme' of 1916. Warner had composed a piece and entered it for this competition and the experience may have been the catalyst for her eschewing composition for writing. The following year saw her become an Editor for the Carnegie (UK) Trust's prestigious new project *Tudor Church Music*. Archival research findings describe how the project came about and Warner's inclusion in it. She researched, collated, transcribed and edited Tudor music manuscripts for twelve years and was to become the most knowledgeable member of the Editorial Committee; she became a formidably impressive musicologist.

Whilst working on *Tudor Church Music* Warner wrote articles in journals on aspects of Early Music and also lectured to the Musical Association in London.⁶ In chapter 4 I conjecture from the style and use of simile in the three essays that form the 'Prefatory Matter' of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes that she wrote them. The humour that can be found in Warner's novels and short stories can also be found throughout her scholarly writing on musicology.

The most notable use of her knowledge of Early Music given in her literary writing is, I suggest in chapter 5, the chapter 'Triste Loysir' from her novel *The Corner That Held Them*. This work revolves around the concerns of the occupants of a fourteenth-century nunnery and their daily struggles with managing finances, crumbling buildings and their own identity as a community. Warner describes the *Ars nova*, a new way of composing for choral singing in the fourteenth-century, as an emergent part of this multi-faceted world. Its purpose, I conjecture, is to show that music can alter lives by dispelling fears and assumptions; the acceptance of the singing leper in this chapter signals a breaking down of limiting social structures and the possibility of momentous change.

Major changes also occurred in Warner's personal life in 1930. As middle-age approached she ended her relationship with Buck and began a new life in a lesbian partnership. Musicology was still part of her life in that year but writing had become predominant;

⁶ The Musical Association was established in 1874 by the eminent musician John Stainer and others. It was a forum for musicology and its aim was to encourage and publish information on subjects connected to music. The *Proceedings* of the Association contain the published lectures given to the Society, usually by members. The Musical Association became the Royal Musical Association in 1944.

she had published three novels, two volumes of poetry and a first book of short stories in the years that she was working as a musicologist.

In chapter 6 I gather and briefly discuss examples of Warner writing about music across the spectrum of her creative writing as an outline for future scholars. I also note the importance of Warner's diaries as a guide to her past memories and events that have a musical context. These are revealing as to her likes, dislikes and opinions of music; they also often contain richly characteristic writing.

Regular collaboration with others came late to Warner; her habit in her early years, as shown in the thesis, had been to be self-sufficient. Firmly established as an accomplished writer and poet, Warner in middle-age wrote an opera libretto, a poem of Communist sentiment to be set to music for a female choir and verses whose prime purpose was to facilitate the engraving work of her friend Reynolds Stone. I discuss these collaborations in chapter 7, and in my final chapter I consider her last collaboration and great friendship with the tenor Peter Pears, to whom she introduced the work of the Norfolk fisherman turned artist John Craske. Together they worked on an exhibition of his work at Pears' and Britten's Snape Maltings Arts Centre. The loss of their respective life partners was a deep connection in Warner's friendship with Pears and her support of him, exemplified here in previously unpublished letters by them both, may have contributed to the celebration he contrived in her honour at the Aldeburgh Festival of 1977.

Throughout the thesis I have given previously unknown information and resources about music in Warner's life. I have shown that music was important to her life-long and was woven throughout her literary writing and her life; I believe it was as essential to her wellbeing as breathing.

Chapter 1: The Musical Renaissance in England

Overture

This chapter gives a context for Warner's involvement in music in the early decades of the twentieth century. In addition it discusses the 'Musical Renaissance' and the Folk Song Revival that had begun in the late nineteenth century and whose influence radically changed music in England, its composition and performance, at the time of Warner's move to London from Harrow in 1916.

Shockingly for a musical nation — given that Erasmus said of the English in 1509 that ‘they challenge the prerogative of having the most handsome women, of keeping the best tables, and of being the most accomplished in the skill of music of any people’⁷ — neither English folksong nor church music had been collected, notated or published in any systematic way before the twentieth-century. The fact that the musical revivals of each were happening concurrently was confirmation of the burgeoning of the musical arts in England in the years before and after the First World War. The events surrounding both musical revivals were fundamental in establishing the musical life of London of which Warner became a part in the years that she was working as an editor for the Carnegie (UK) Trust's *Tudor Church Music* project between 1917 and 1929.

Richard Hall clearly describes the new musical renaissance:

Renaissance is not a word to be used indiscriminately, but the nature of the changes in musical life which took place

⁷ Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* (Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1972), p.162.

in late Victorian and Edwardian England entirely justify the use of the term [...] By the early years of this century English soloists and conductors could stand comparison with the finest of their European contemporaries [and] it is this process of rebirth that justifies the use of the word 'renaissance' to describe the new movement.⁸

The changes were momentous and encompassed dynamic improvements in English composition, increased support and mentoring for young musicians and a retreat from the dominance of German music in the concert hall. There was renewed concern with musical scholarship and with developments in orchestral performance. In addition, the growth and popularity of Choral Competition Festivals added to the rich diversity of music available for amateur choirs. The movement in the collection and notation of folk music and songs, along with the growing prestige of English music-making, informed the developing directions in musical innovation. Hall argues that the new energy was already evident in Europe by the mid-1880's as the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick, 'not noted for his generous criticism of music in England, wrote: "In the past few years England's national pride in respect of musical creativeness has experienced a re-awakening"'.⁹

1880 is the generally accepted date for the beginning of this resurgence of English music, and it is a choral work by the eminent Victorian composer Hubert Parry, entitled *Prometheus Unbound*, a setting of the four-act lyrical drama of the same name by the eighteenth century poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, that heralded the

⁸ Richard C. Hall, 'A Survey of New Trends in English Musical Life 1910 – 1914', 2 vols. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Durham, 1981, i. p. 50.

⁹ Hall, citing E. Hanslick, *Musical Criticism*. 1846 - 99. ii. p. 254.

change. It became a clarion call for England's young and aspiring musicians to begin producing more adventurous music. *Prometheus Unbound* was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester in 1880. It is ironic that one of the titans of the Victorian musical 'establishment' should produce a work that was thought to be too modern by many music critics, although his compositions up to this time had been stolidly Victorian.

Parry's *Prometheus Unbound* was influenced by Richard Wagner's extraordinary innovations in opera, and in particular his integration of music with the dramatic action on stage. Parry's influential teacher, Edward Dannreuther, a piano virtuoso and a champion of the music of Wagner, probably nurtured Parry's admiration for the composer. Parry attended the festival of Wagner's music at Bayreuth several times and assisted Dannreuther when Wagner was his guest in London in 1877. He remained a dedicated Wagnerite all of his life, seemingly in tune with the belief that 'although Brahms was still a contemporary composer in the 1890's, it was Wagner who had long since been recognised as the leader of "progressivism" in continental music'.¹⁰

Parry's skill in setting *Prometheus Unbound* was succinctly described by the music critic Eric Blom:

It was remarkable for its excellent literary choice [...] and it showed a striking nobility of musical thinking, a constant regard for quality of texture and above all a very keen understanding of English prosody, of how to handle it in

¹⁰ M. Hughes and R. Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance: Constructing a National Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 53.

composition without damage either to the verbal declamation or to the musical phrase.¹¹

There is also a Shellyan link here between Parry's *Prometheus Unbound* and Warner's libretto for an opera on the death of Shelley, *The Sea-Change*. Warner, collaborating with the American composer Paul Nordoff, centred her libretto on Shelley's last days at Lerici in Italy.¹²

Warner had first-hand experience of Parry's talent for setting English poetry when she joined the Bach Choir on her move to London in 1916. The Choir Committee at that date was made up of well known figures among London's principal musicians and composers, including Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst and J. Fuller-Maitland; Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford were Vice-Presidents. The idea of forming a choir capable of performing J.S. Bach's *B Minor Mass* in Britain for the first time came from an amateur singer, Arthur Coleridge, who had studied music in Leipzig with Stanford; within a few months a choir had been formed. The first musical director, Otto Goldschmidt, had been a pupil of Mendelssohn in Leipzig and had a good knowledge of the music of Bach. Two performances of the *B Minor Mass* were given, one on the 26 April 1876 and the second on 8 May. Goldschmidt stayed on as director until 1885, having established regular performances of the *B Minor Mass*. Stanford was then appointed musical director of the Choir and

¹¹ Eric Blom, *Music in England* (London: Pelican Books, 1942), p. 211.

¹² I discuss this collaboration at length in chapter seven: 'Warner as Librettist and Collaborator'.

enlarged its repertoire with Brahms' *Requiem* and that of Verdi, together with other contemporary works.

The directorship of the Bach Choir became a prestigious appointment and subsequent directors included Hugh Allen and Ralph Vaughan Williams, both of whom served during the years that Warner sang with the Choir. Its repertoire continued to expand, continuing the legacy of individual ideas and choral programming that had been handed down. The Choir is still in existence and still, in twenty-first century idiom, 'combines musical excellence with creativity and innovation'.¹³ Its work with the science fiction film Prometheus in 2012 could be said to have brought the Choir back, not just to the figure of Prometheus but to the innovative work of Parry.

As a member of the Choir it can be assumed that Warner would have had contact with Parry and Stanford, particularly when the Choir performed their own music. This could, for instance, have been Parry's setting of Robert Bridges' naval ode *The Chivalry of the Sea* or Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*, a setting of Henry Newbolt's *Five Nautical Poems*. Warner sang both of these works on the 12 December 1916, the first time that her name appears on a programme as a member of the Choir.¹⁴ Stanford's second song of this work, the 'rollicking *Song of the Sou'Wester*, in which the storm-tossed baritone is buffeted about on the choppiest of

¹³ < www.thebachchoir.org.uk.> [Accessed 7 August 2016].

¹⁴ Bach Choir Archive, Royal College of Music Archives. Performance programmes 1915-21.

accompaniments and submerged by the howling, tearing chorus',¹⁵ is very different from the slow song entitled *The Middle Watch* which 'is beautifully simple, the orchestra playing gently undulating triplets as the chorus provides a rich framework of slow-moving harmonies'.¹⁶ Warner's grounding in music as a young woman, coupled with a good voice (the pitch of which is still unknown) would have been necessary to perform music as diverse as this. She also sang another, more celebrated, work of Parry's, the ode *Blest Pair of Sirens* on 10 May 1921. This work, a setting of John Milton's 'At a Solemn Musick', was written for and dedicated to Stanford and the Bach Choir. The first performance was given on 17 May 1887 as part of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebration. The musicologist Donald Tovey, Reid Professor of Music at the University of Edinburgh from 1914 until his death in 1940, praises the piece highly in his Essays of Musical Analysis:

Parry's setting of Milton's Ode was produced in 1887, and though it is not his first important choral work it marks an epoch in British musical history. It represents classical choral writing at the height of maturity and natural resource [...] The greatness of Parry's life-work is shown here in the fact that his mass of pure eight-part harmony sweeps through the whole verse-paragraph in a perfectly natural flow of melody [...] and it is the exact translation of Milton's notion of 'undiscording voice' and 'perfect diapason'. Parry knew his musical history as Milton knew his classical scholarship.¹⁷

Clearly Parry was at the forefront in composing dynamic new music, composing some thirty works for chorus and orchestra, and in addition he began to teach when George Grove, the first Director of

¹⁵ Hall, ii. p.89.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Donald Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, 6 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1926-53), v. 232-3.

the newly founded Royal College of Music, appointed him Professor of Musical History at the college in 1883. His teaching methods were influenced by his interest in evolutionist thought, as shown by the British philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), and generally known as 'social Darwinism.' Spencer believed that 'the principles of man's evolutionary past, as seen biologically, intellectually and socially, were, according to the natural laws of the universe, reflected in the growth and change in music'.¹⁸

These views were evident in Parry's published writing, in particular *The Art of Music* (1893) which had a significant change of title in later editions, becoming *The Evolution of the Art of Music*. Parry went on to succeed Grove as Director of the Royal College of Music in 1895, a post he retained until his death in 1918. It could be argued that Parry's most lasting legacy to English music was his influence on a young generation of composers that included Vaughan Williams (who later taught Frank Bridge, who in turn taught Benjamin Britten), Herbert Howells and Gerald Finzi; all but Frank Bridge were known to Warner.

Charles Villiers Stanford, a contemporary of Parry, did much to encourage his students to surpass previously accepted compositional norms when he too joined the staff of the Royal College of Music in 1883 as Professor of Composition and as conductor of the orchestra. He was a gifted composer and his versatility contributed to the new musical standards created at this

¹⁸Jeremy Dibble, 'Parry, Sir (Charles) Hubert Hastings', in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* ed. by Stanley Sadie (Oxford: OU P, 2001), pp.152-57 (154). Hereafter NGD.

time. He was innately conservative and disliked some of the new trends in music to the point of abhorrence. Charles Wilson's comment regarding Schoenberg's music around 1910, that 'to contemporaries Schoenberg's emancipation of the dissonance seemed a violent, arbitrary and thoroughly wilful assertion of creative autonomy',¹⁹ might have been written by Stanford himself.²⁰

Stanford did not achieve the eminence of Parry in composition but he was a prolific composer. Composing came easily to him and he produced a large body of musical works of many types: nine operas, seven symphonies, ten concertos, four masses and eight string quartets.

Stanford was very different in temperament from the statesmanlike Parry, being both volatile and forcefully outspoken. He was intolerant of opposing views and had entrenched musical and political prejudices. The difference in teaching styles between the two men can be shown in statements by their pupils. Of Parry, Gustav Holst said, 'At last I had met a man who did not terrify me. He gave us, so it seemed to me, a vision rather than a lecture'.²¹ It would appear that personal charm was part of what made Parry an influential teacher. An assessment of Stanford as a teacher is given by his former pupil George Dyson, who was to become Director of the Royal College of Music between 1937 and 1952; it is not complimentary: 'In a certain sense the very rebellion [Stanford]

¹⁹ Charles Wilson, 'The Twentieth Century', NGD, p.1305.

²⁰ The impact of Schoenberg's music in England in the second decade of the twentieth century and Warner's association with it are discussed in chapter 2: 'Early Life, Music and Composing'.

²¹ [Anon], 'Gustave Holst.' < www.classicalnet.> [Accessed 8 March 2016].

fought was the most obvious fruit of his methods'.²² This opinion is supported by William Henry Bell (1873-1946) who was also a composition pupil of Stanford's: 'Stanford imposed, perhaps too much, his own very strong predilections on his pupils; he gave them models to copy, he insisted on a kind of "historical" progression in his students' work'.²³

One pupil who appeared to be oblivious to Stanford's brusque teaching methods was Ivor Gurney, who had won an Open Scholarship in Composition to the Royal College in 1911 at the age of twenty-one. Stanford despaired of his pupil's lack of discipline but recognised his talent: 'Potentially he is the most gifted man that ever came into my care. But he is *the least teachable*'.²⁴ Gurney's musical talent was largely unrealised as he was mentally unstable even before enlisting for service in the First World War and a mustard gas attack in the trenches further contributed to his fragile mental state. He was committed to an asylum in 1922 and remained there until his death in 1937. As well as composing, Gurney wrote poetry and Warner would have known of him and his poetry and music through her one-time friend, the composer Herbert Howells.²⁵

It could be supposed that other young composers studying composition under Stanford at the Royal College in these years of new musical direction in England, whilst not liking his abrasive

²² George Dyson, *Music and Letters*. 5 (1924). Cited by Stanley Sadie in NGD, p. 280.

²³ William Bell, 'Reminiscences' in Lewis Foreman, *From Parry to Britten: British Music in Letters 1900 – 1945*. (London: Batsford, 1987), p. 4.

²⁴ Herbert Howells and Ralph Vaughan Williams, 'Ivor Gurney: The Musician', *Music and Letters*, 19 (1938), 12-17 (14).

²⁵ See Richard Searle, 'One Person's Weight: Sylvia Townsend Warner and Herbert Howells', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 14 (2014), 31- 49.

criticism, may have found it stimulated their own work, spurred on by the knowledge that there was now a great deal of competition in this field of music. There were more composers working in England in the 1880's than there had been at any time since the seventeenth-century and the most eminent was Edward Elgar. His rise to fame coincided with the 'Musical Renaissance', and, as Hall notes,

Each was sufficiently powerful for considerable mutual influence to be exerted: without Elgar's music the Renaissance would have been altogether more cautious and parochial, but without the Renaissance and all it stood for, Elgar's struggle to fame would have been much more difficult and protracted.²⁶

Elgar's first work to be favourably received by a large audience was *King Olaf* in 1896. Alexander Mackenzie of the Royal Academy of Music wrote of the work in 1927 that 'the publication of *King Olaf* brought Edward Elgar's name into sudden prominence'.²⁷ With his reputation building, *Caractacus* followed in 1898; its performance at the Leeds Festival secured Elgar a nationwide reputation as a gifted composer of choral works. The *Enigma Variations*, first performed in 1899, are 'based on the counter-melody to an unheard theme, which Elgar said was a well-known tune he would not identify – hence the enigma'.²⁸ This work, performed in the prestigious St. James' Hall Piccadilly, and conducted by Hans Richter, brought Elgar popularity with London's concert-going audiences. *The Dream of Gerontius* follows in 1901; it was premiered at the Birmingham Festival. Poor singing spoiled this

²⁶ Hall, i. p. 79.

²⁷ Alexander McKenzie, *A Musician's Narrative* (London: Cassell, 1927), p. 205.

²⁸ < [www.brittanica.com/biography/Edward Elgar](http://www.brittanica.com/biography/Edward_Elgar) > [Accessed 25 August 2016].

performance and as the work was complex, it took some time for both choirs and audiences to truly appreciate it.

Elgar's disappointment over the reception of *Gerontius* was softened in the same year when the first *Pomp and Circumstance March* was performed to wide acclaim. Elgar became the undisputed leader of English music and remained so for the rest of the Edwardian period. A festival of his music was held at Covent Garden and a professorship in music was created for him in Birmingham. But for all of this, and his talent with 'bold tunes, striking colour effects and the mastery of large forms',²⁹ Elgar remained an individual figure outside the circle of England's musical 'establishment'. Although near the age of Parry and Stanford, he chose to remain at a distance from them. He had no friends in the music world and no *alma mater* to help him. Possibly this distancing from other musicians was caused by his lack of formal training; he resented the frequent performances of the works of the 'academic clique' then beginning to foster young musical talent by dynamic changes in musical education. Elgar was an isolated figure at a time of great change in the musical life of England and chose not to be a part of an organised move towards a national music.

Hughes and Stradling contend that Parry was conscious of the 'low status of music within the spectrum of English culture — literature and painting were more highly regarded — [and that] he was under particular pressure as the "figurehead" of English music'³⁰ to improve

²⁹ < [www.brittanica.com/biography/Edward Elgar](http://www.brittanica.com/biography/Edward_Elgar) > [Accessed 25 August 2016].

³⁰ Hughes & Stradling, p. 53.

musical education in England. The lack of a truly competitive musical education system in earlier Victorian times had resulted in English music having little international recognition. Furthermore, the English musical public had come to appreciate European composers and performers such as Mendelssohn, Liszt, Dvorak, Chopin, Berlioz, Grieg, Wagner and the violinist Joseph Joachim, all of whom had worked in England earlier in Victoria's reign, at the expense of English composers and musicians.

But the early twentieth-century transformation in musical education was underway, spear-headed by the Royal College with other institutions becoming involved. The Royal Academy of Music in London was being transformed by George Alexander Macfarren and Alexander Mackenzie 'into a Conservatory of international standing; an effective nursery for budding composers',³¹ and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were also becoming more actively involved in musical education. This too, was largely due to Parry and Stanford. The latter had, whilst a student in 1871, been elected assistant conductor to the Cambridge University Musical Society and he also became organist at Trinity College in 1874. He was appointed Professor of Music to the university in 1887. He used his influence effectively to augment the status of the university's MusB degree by introducing the condition of residency, thereby putting the degree on a more solid foundation that demanded it be taken as seriously as the more usual academic subjects. In 1900, on the resignation of

³¹ John Caldwell, 'Victorian and Edwardian England' in *Oxford Companion to Music* ed. by Alison Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 422. Hereafter OCM.

John Stainer, Parry was appointed Heather Professor of Music at Oxford.

Two major Public Schools, Eton and Harrow, also gave musical education increased prominence and others followed their lead. As Eric Blom noted, it was 'the splendid modern cultivation of music which makes it incumbent nowadays [...] not only on Eton and Harrow, but on Rugby, Wellington, Oundle, Shrewsbury, Clifton, Uppingham and the rest to have their scholarly music master, their choir and their orchestra'.³² Dr. Percy Buck, who was to be influential in Warner's early life in music and later in her personal life, became part of this new emphasis in musical education when he was appointed Head of Music at Harrow School in 1901.

The most significant difference made by these dynamic changes in musical education in England was to remove the perceived need for music students to study abroad, as had been the usual practice. Buck commented on these changes in musical education in 1906. They enabled

Conversations and discussions of a critical nature [that] are the only possible means of creating that 'atmosphere' which is the breath of life to any artistic circle, whether of artists or students. It was largely the lack of this atmosphere in our English schools that made it imperative, until recently, for a student to seek his musical education abroad.³³

England had acquired a new musical confidence; Parry and his teaching contemporaries in both College and Academy had excelled in the difficult task of establishing the methods that would

³² Blom, p. 215.

³³ Percy C. Buck, 'Prolegomena to Musical Criticism', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 32 (1905-06), 155-177 (160).

bring the status of English music to the standard perceived to be 'European', and also of winning an appreciative English audience for English music. As Lewis Foreman notes:

The generation that was emerging was sharply contrasted with the established names at the turn of the century, being trained almost entirely in British institutions, by British teachers of composition (themselves the pioneers of the previous generation). British performing artists played their music, and there was a marked rise in the assimilation of British works into the regular repertoire.³⁴

The major concern for young English composers at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth was the difficulty in having their work performed. Choral competitions and provincial festivals had begun to be staged and they quickly established themselves as a force in the musical life of England. The first was held in Stratford, East London in 1882 and the idea then spread to provincial towns. Their purpose was to give amateur choirs an opportunity for public performance; an example would be the Birmingham Triennial Festival for which Parry wrote *The Three Holy Children* in 1885, and in 1891 *Eden* for chorus and orchestra. Young composers now had the opportunity to compose for these festivals, which became the major patrons of new works. The most important of these choral festivals were held in Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds, Norwich and Sheffield, together with the Three Choirs Festival which then, as now, alternated annually between the cathedrals of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford. The Leith Hill Musical Festival, founded by Vaughan Williams in 1905 in order to bring choirs

³⁴ Foreman, p. 104.

together for competitions and festivals, was also an important event for aspiring young musicians.

The range of music played over several days of one such festival can be shown by the programme of the Leeds Triennial Festival of 1913 which was said to encompass 'New music, a new personnel and a new spirit'.³⁵ The festival opened with Elgar conducting *The Dream of Gerontius*; his symphonic study *Falstaff* was premiered the following day. Orchestral works included symphonies and concertos by Beethoven, Berlioz, Stanford, Butterworth and Wagner, conducted by the celebrated Hungarian conductor Arthur Nikisch. Several major choral works were also included and were conducted by Hugh Allen; these were Verdi's *Requiem*, Bach's *Mass in B minor* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Such a full and varied programme demonstrates that provincial festivals were truly a major force in English music at this time.

However, music festivals were not without problems for young composers seeking to join the musical 'establishment'. Josef Holbrooke complained in a letter of October 1904 to Herbert Thompson, influential music critic of *The Yorkshire Post* newspaper, about the lackadaisical management of the Leeds Festival for a performance of his work, *Queen Mab*, based on the utopian epic poem by Shelley:

Now without being ungrateful to *anyone* in this matter, I must say, that having been *asked* for a work, it is the duty of all concerned to give me the *instruments* I want [...] there is no Dulcimer, Xylophone and two horns short. I

³⁵ *The Musical Times*, 56 (1913), 736. Cited by Hall, i. p. 60.

have to bring Mr Henry Wood's Tenor Drum *myself* to Leeds else I should not have had that. Is this the customary treatment to young composers?³⁶

The situation was less fraught with regard to a scheme for encouraging British musical talent that was instituted by the Royal College of Music in 1903. Parry wrote to his counterpart at the Royal Manchester College of Music and to other musical institutions:

We are going to start a new scheme for the encouragement of native talent, and hope to give an Orchestral Concert of works by young British Composers early next term. Compositions are to be submitted and chosen by experts for performance. Do you happen to know any young composers who would like to submit compositions to be considered by experts? If so please let me know.³⁷

Both of these examples show the growing interest and support for the work of young composers; Warner's entry into the new Carnegie (UK) Trust Music Publication Competition of 1917, detailed in chapter two, demonstrates that the commitment to young British musical talent had not diminished in the intervening years.

Two professors at the Royal Academy of Music were also giving significant support to young British composers in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1905 Frederick Corder (Composition) and Tobias Matthay (Piano) founded the Society of British Composers in order to give them a base from which to establish themselves and to bring a collective force to bear with music publishers. The dilemma that the young composers faced is encapsulated in the introduction of the Society's first Yearbook of 1906/7:

³⁶ Foreman, p. 29.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 24. C. Hubert Parry letter to Adolph Brodsky, 28 September 1903.

The present position of the British composer of high-class music is a very deplorable one. He is encouraged to educate himself well – scholarships are even offered to tempt him to undertake the production of work, which, on the author's entry into the world, is declared on all hands to be a non-saleable article. As a matter of fact, the number of new Symphonies, Concertos, Quartets and Sonatas published in London during the last ten years is quite insignificant. Other countries encourage and protect native work that is not directly remunerative. England alone does not [...]

The immediate aims of the Society are:

1. To facilitate the publication of such high-class works as the ordinary publisher cannot or will not undertake.
2. The protection of the British composer's interest in the matter of publishing agreements.³⁸

The Society was in existence until 1915, by which time many young composers had been conscripted for the First World War and the musical life of England had become disjointed as a consequence.

The years prior to the War witnessed the full flowering of the 'renaissance' begun in 1880. There were many classical concerts by newly formed orchestras – notably the London Symphony Orchestra formed by disaffected members of Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1904 and the Beecham Symphony Orchestra of 1908. The London 'musical season' ran from October to June for the major orchestras and venues; however, Henry Wood staged his Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts out of season from mid-August to late October. In order to attract new audiences to well-performed classical music he ensured that the ticket prices were kept low. Wood was passionate in his programming and was determined to influence the musical taste of the public. The Queen's Hall Orchestra

³⁸ Foreman, p. 3.

played classical music instead of 'light' music and ballads. New and 'avant -garde' music also interested Wood and he encouraged young British composers by introducing two, or sometimes three, new works by British composers every week during the ten week Prom. season. It was Wood's aim to show that English composers had something worthwhile to give, and had the technical ability to do so effectively, and that the most talented British singers, composers and instrumentalists compared favourably with those from the Continent. In addition Wood commissioned works for his orchestra from composers still lauded today: Frank Bridge, Arnold Bax and Vaughan Williams, whose *Fantasia on English Folksong* had its only known performance at the Queen's Hall in September 1910. The manuscript is now lost.

Wood also produced Symphony Concerts, given fortnightly from mid October until April. These were planned for a more knowledgeable audience who, if not satisfied, would readily transfer their custom to another London orchestra's winter season. Concerts then were longer than those of the later twentieth century and would have comprised a symphony, a concerto, a sonata and possibly other shorter orchestral works.

Evenings spent at concerts at the Queen's Hall, often several in a week, were Warner's staple musical entertainment, as shown in her earliest diaries of 1927 to 1930. It is probable that her concert-going began when she arrived in London in 1916, but this cannot be verified.

New orchestras were not the only way that live music was available to a widening audience, particularly in London. As well as the Bach Choir, the city was home to the Royal Albert Hall Choral Society, founded in 1871 as a result of a serendipitous combination of circumstances. The Royal Albert Hall had opened officially in March of that year, providing a first-class venue for major choral performances. The French composer Charles Gounod was a refugee from the Franco-Prussian War living in London and he conducted a choral concert at the Hall in June 1871 to mark the opening of the International Exhibition, whose venue was near-by. The success of the concert led those responsible for the Albert Hall, the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition of 1851, to recognise that a permanent choir would be an advantage and that Gounod might be persuaded to be its conductor. Within a short space of time money was raised to fund the choir and Gounod had accepted the position of conductor. Auditions were held and by October 1871 the Royal Albert Hall Choral Society had one thousand members. The first concert, with Queen Victoria in attendance, was held in May 1872 and the Society quickly became part of the established musical life of London. Verdi conducted the British premiere of his *Requiem* there in 1875 and the annual tradition of performing Handel's *Messiah* was established in 1878. The Society became the Royal Choral Society in 1888. Tried and tested favourite works of Edwardian audiences, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha* for example, ensured the financial viability of the Society. Malcolm Sargent, whom Warner

came to know at social events at the Royal College of Music, was appointed permanent conductor at the Society in 1928, a position he held for many years: 'Sargent was universally acclaimed as the finest British choral conductor of his generation, a born leader of massed amateur singers and an immensely popular figure with audiences who might not otherwise have been attracted to classical music'.³⁹

In 1874 another important organisation was founded. The Musical Association was established by the eminent musicians John Stainer, George Alexander Macfarren and George Grove, among others. It was a forum for musicology and its purpose was 'for the investigation and discussion of subjects connected with the art and science of music.'⁴⁰ Meetings were held at the Beethoven Rooms in Harley Street, London until 1891 and from that date at the Royal College of Music. The format of the meetings for many years was the presentation and subsequent discussion of a single paper offered by the author. In more recent times 'study days' have replaced the individual presentation of papers. The *Proceedings* of the Association were published annually and contained the full text of papers given and the discussion that followed: an invaluable resource then, as now.

It was not only organisations that could help to effect lasting change in the musical world of Britain. One quietly influential man was a champion of British composers and of establishing music as an unassailable part of a liberal education in England in the early

³⁹ <www.royalchoralsociety.co.uk/history.htm> [Accessed 24 August 2016].

⁴⁰ [Anon], 'The Musical Association', OCM, p.1084.

years of the twentieth century. He actively assisted young composers to have their work performed and published and was passionate about winning an appreciative and knowledgeable English audience for English music. (William) Henry Hadow was a contemporary of Parry and Stanford and he was to play a central role in Warner's working life in musicology. He was a long-standing friend of Parry's, as material in the Hadow Archive at Worcester College, Oxford shows; there are letters from Parry to him spanning the years from 1886 until 1916.⁴¹ The two men had much in common as Hadow, although widely known as an educationalist, was a music historian and also composed chamber music. He spent many years at Worcester College, Oxford where he was first a student in 1878 (gaining a First Class Honours degree in Classical Moderations and *literae humaniores* (1880-82), then successively a lecturer (1885), Dean (1889) and finally Honorary Fellow (1909). During this time he also studied music in Darmstadt Germany and took a further degree, the Oxford BMus., in 1890.

Hadow mentored the young Percy Buck at Worcester, as noted in his entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*: 'A significant number of musicians at Worcester College benefited from their contact with Hadow, in particular Percy Buck, who also contributed a great deal to English musical education.'⁴² This connection was later to prove fortuitous for Warner in the years from 1916 when she believed that she would make a career in music.

⁴¹ W.H. Hadow Archive, Worcester College Oxford. Box 4. AR2. 23.

⁴² F.H. Shera and David J. Golby, 'Hadow, Sir (William) Henry (1859-1937)', *Dictionary of National Biography 2009* www.oxforddnb.com. Hereafter ODNB [Accessed 3 December 2012].

Hadow wrote prolifically about music; his most notable works were 'The Viennese Period', volume five of the 1896 edition of the *Oxford History of Music* of which he was the general editor, and articles on music for the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. He also wrote *Studies in Modern Music*, a two-volume work published in 1895. When preparing the biographical material for these volumes Hadow visited both Brahms and Dvorak, thereby creating a strong link between the Victorian musical era and that of the new musical renaissance then gaining strength. Shera and Goldby note in their *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* article 'By setting music against a background of general culture, he made music criticism more accessible and helped to give music its rightful place in a liberal education'.⁴³ The publication of the Henry Sidgwick Lecture for 1925 by Hadow, entitled *The Comparison of Poetry and Music*, is a good instance of this. Hadow had great knowledge of both arts and eloquently made the case for music, which he believed was not then fully represented as an art form:

Music has a reality not less than that of any other art. The style of Bach is as perfect as that of Milton, the structure of Beethoven as that of Shakespeare: bad music is, as Coleridge said, the exact equivalent of nonsense verses. But the significance of music is not related to anything outside itself [...] In all other arts, even in poetry, we can make some sort of abstraction between form and content: in the best music we cannot, they are fused and absorbed into one supreme act of creation.⁴⁴

In 1931 Hadow wrote *English Music*, a short history from the earliest times to the present, possibly following the line of research

⁴³ Shera and Golby, 'Hadow', ODNB online version 2009.

⁴⁴ Sir W. Henry Hadow, *A Comparison of Poetry and Music* (Cambridge: CUP, 1926), pp. 24-5.

required for the report commissioned from him in 1921 by the Carnegie (UK) Trust. This was entitled *British Music: a Report*⁴⁵ and its purpose was to lay before the Trust the true position of music in English life at that time. Hadow writes optimistically that 'at no time since the Elizabethan days have the prospects of our musical art been brighter'.⁴⁶ The report was for Carnegie Trustees' information only and was not widely circulated. The information and opinion contained within it would have formed the basis for future charitable works of a musical nature that the Trust might undertake.⁴⁷

Hadow does not give detailed information in *English Music* about the Folk Song Revival which began around 1890 and reached its peak in the Edwardian and early Georgian years. But he does briefly describe 'Sumer is icumen in', a thirteenth-century 'round' sometimes called the 'Reading Rota' after John of Fornsete, a Reading monk to whom it is attributed:

The melody has all the charm and lilt of folksong, it threads its way through one of the most intricate of musical forms, it employs its contrapuntal skill with astonishing mastery and with an ease which never checks or falters, and it is animated throughout by the very spirit of the English countryside.⁴⁸

This spirit of the English countryside is the essence of what folksong meant to Cecil Sharp, the most knowledgeable collector of folksongs at this time. He was concerned that these songs, and the tunes that they were sung to, were disappearing rapidly and he set

⁴⁵ Sir W. Henry Hadow, *British Music: A Report*, (Dunfirmline: Carnegie UK Trustees, 1921), pp.1-29. Hadow Archive, Worcester College Oxford. This is the only known copy; it is not in the Carnegie Archive.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

⁴⁷ Hadow's instigation of two Carnegie (UK) Trust projects, in both of which Warner was involved, is discussed in the following chapters.

⁴⁸ Sir W. Henry Hadow, *English Music* (London: Longman Green, 1931), p.15.

about the collection, preservation and, no less importantly, the performance of this traditional music of the rural working class. The agricultural workers were largely illiterate and the songs were passed on orally within the community, the reason that the songs and tunes were recorded by the collectors and later transcribed.

Sharp also transformed the antiquarian Folk Song Society into a major concern committed to the twin aims of gathering the maximum number of songs and tunes from individuals and communities and disseminating them as widely as possible. His views were very well expressed by Vaughan Williams:

Sharp believed, and we believe, that there in the fastnesses of rural England, was the well-spring of English music; tunes of classical beauty [...] traceable to no source other than the minds of unlettered country men, who unknown to the squire and the parson were singing their own songs, and as Hubert Parry says 'liked what they made and made what they liked'. Sharp declared in no half-hearted manner that here was something of supreme beauty which had grown up, as part of our life, with our language and our customs. And he set to work both by precept and practice to enable the younger generation to recapture their great heritage of song.⁴⁹

The young generation of composers, including Vaughan Williams himself, Gustave Holst, Percy Grainger, George Butterworth, Frederick Delius and Philip Heseltine (using the name Peter Warlock from November 1916), responded enthusiastically to this folk song revival. Some became collectors, travelling to rural communities and recording the songs sung by those that could still remember them. Heseltine was one of these and writes of a

⁴⁹ Ralph Vaughan Williams, 'Cecil Sharp: an Appreciation', in *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* by Cecil Sharp 4th rev. ed. by Maud Karpels (E.P. Publishing, 1972), pp vii-viii. First published by Simpkin & Co, 1907.

proposed journey to Essex in a letter to his friend and mentor Bernard Van Dieren: 'I shall be returning to Essex tomorrow or Sunday [...] and am then going to a folksong hunt with Moeran and a phonograph'.⁵⁰ The poet Arnold Rattenbury, who was a composition pupil of Vaughan Williams' at the Royal College of Music, comments in his article on the poet and composer Ivor Gurney that 'It was impossible to be at the Royal College and remain any distance from the spirit of collecting which went back to Cecil Sharpe. And of Whitman, who had "taken him [Gurney] at the flood"'.⁵¹

Coming of age in 1914 Warner, as a music student of Percy Buck's and later under the musical influence of Vaughan Williams in his role as director of the Bach Choir, would have been immersed in the immediacy and excitement of this re-discovery of the music of the agricultural working class. The effect of Vaughan Williams' influence is shown in a letter to Ursula Vaughan Williams in 1974. In it she discusses folksong and an instance of compelling curiosity of many years past:

The words & tunes of folksongs are part of the same thing. Long acquaintance has made them so; they fit into each other like the blade and the handle of a scythe swung through many summer hayfields.
Dear Ralph! He'd rise like a fish to a tune. I remember long ago meeting him after a concert at the Queen's Hall, meeting on the staircase crowded with departers, & saying that one of the folksongs which Cecil Sharp found surviving in the Appalachians also survived in Mr Ironsides, the butcher at Wool. 'Which one?' said he, 'Sing

⁵⁰ Foreman, p.128.

⁵¹ Arnold Rattenbury, 'How the Sanity of Poets Can Be Edited Away', *London Review of Books*, 21(20) 14 October 1999,(1999), 15-19 (3).

it.' And standing in that jostle and shuffle of concert-goers,
I sang it obediently.⁵²

But not all of those prominent in the musical 'establishment' in England at the beginning of the twentieth century were convinced that the Revival would help to create truly 'English' music. Parry and Stanford were not especially enthusiastic and Edward Elgar came to be of the opinion that any composer who used folksong influences was simply shirking his musical responsibilities!

It was the composers born in the last decades of the twentieth century who recognised the importance of folksongs, and Vaughan Williams was the most notable composer whose work was profoundly influenced by them. He believed that they should be part of a national musical idiom, so giving English music a distinctive voice. The influence on him was radical: 'we were dazzled, we wanted to preach a new gospel, we wanted to rhapsodize on these tunes [...] we were simply dazzled'.⁵³ He may have taken heart from earlier admirers of folk music, including Beethoven, who said 'I am inclined to think that a hunt for folksongs is better than a manhunt of the heroes who are so highly extolled'.⁵⁴

Vaughan Williams was born in Gloucestershire in 1872. He studied at Trinity College Cambridge, gaining a MusB in 1894, and then at the Royal College of Music in London where he was later to teach. Whilst a student at the College he was a pupil of both Parry and Stanford. For all of this seemingly admirable musical education,

⁵² Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Letters*, ed. by William Maxwell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982), 17 December 1974, p. 276. Hereafter STW-PL.

⁵³ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music* (London: OUP, 1934), p.191.

⁵⁴ *Musical Lovers Quotations*, ed. by Helen Exley (Watford: Exley Publications, 1991).

Vaughan Williams progressed slowly with composition. 'In later years the composer himself remarked on his "amateurish technique", which he said had dogged him all his life'.⁵⁵ He went to study with Max Bruch in Berlin in 1897 and with Ravel in Paris in 1908 in an attempt to complete what could be called his 'long apprenticeship' in composing music. Vaughan Williams came to realise that emulating continental musical models was not going to be the way forward for him, but finding a method of composition that expressed Englishness would. This knowledge led to his exploration of English folksong and Elizabethan music. *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, composed in 1910 and premiered at The Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester Cathedral, shows his interest in the latter and would have made a solid connection in any conversation that he may have had with Warner when she was a member of the Bach Choir; both would have been aware of the parallel of oral transmission between plainchant and folksong. Richard Hall says of Vaughan Williams' interest in Tudor music that 'In matters of effective sonority, contrapuntal skill and verbal accentuation, qualities in which his mature choral music excels, he clearly learned much from his understanding of the methods of Tudor composers'.⁵⁶ The young composer Herbert Howells attended the concert at Gloucester Cathedral with his friend and fellow composer Ivor Gurney; he called

⁵⁵ Hugh Ottaway and Alain Frogley, 'Ralph Vaughan Williams', NGD (Grove Publications, 1997), p. 345.

⁵⁶ Hall, ii. p. 120.

the event a 'revelatory musical experience'.⁵⁷ Henry Hadow encapsulates Vaughan Williams' talent for writing choral music:

He possesses in a high degree the gift of handling great choral masses and piling them layer by layer into a firm architectonic scheme. The stones are none the worse for being sometimes rough-hewn: they are shaped by a hand which has won freedom through mastery and set them in their places with unerring judgment.⁵⁸

But it was folksong that predominated as a wellspring for Vaughan Williams' composing; he said of it that 'it means that several of us found here in the simplest form the musical idiom which we unconsciously were cultivating in ourselves, it gave point to our imagination'.⁵⁹ In 1901 he set William Barnes' 'Linden Lea'; many more arrangements of English folksongs followed, including 'Bushes and Briars', 'The Jolly Ploughboy' and 'Five English Folksongs'. Years later, folksongs and tunes were still influencing him; *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* is based on a traditional folk tune of the same name. This work, composed for harp and string orchestra, was commissioned by the British Council for the 1939 World Fair in New York.

Conversely, in a lecture entitled 'Folk Influences on Composers', Vaughan Williams discusses what methods *cannot* produce English music:

The study of our folksongs may help to show us how we may develop on the lines most congenial to our characters. We cannot, if we wished, create a 'national' style artificially [...] merely to take a handful of English folksongs and dilute them to taste with some patent

⁵⁷ Hall, ii. p.120.

⁵⁸ Hadow, *English Music*, p. 168.

⁵⁹ Vaughan Williams, *National Music*, p. 75.

Strauss mixture or a little Brahms-and-water will not make a national style.⁶⁰

His advice was heeded; from the frenzy of collecting and utilizing rural songs and tunes, particularly with regard to themes and cadences, a distinctly English form of classical music evolved which could be called 'Pastoral'. Unsurprisingly it was Vaughan Williams' music of this nature that confirmed his reputation as a truly accomplished 'English' composer. His work before the First World War, which marks the height of his involvement with English folksong, includes *In the Fen Country* (1904), the *Norfolk Rhapsodies* (1905-6), the opera *Hugh the Drover*, a tribute to the folk singers of England and their rural way of life (1910-14 with later revisions) and *The Lark Ascending* (1914). His *Symphony no.3* – the 'Pastoral' dates from 1921 and *On Wenlock Edge* from 1923. These works are a representative selection of the effects of folksong on his composing during the years that the Revival was at its height.

Warner does not comment on Vaughan Williams' music in her diaries. Others did comment; Alain Frogley encapsulates Vaughan Williams' credo succinctly : 'Vaughan Williams' music deals with the human condition from a variety of angles – in relation to society, nature, romantic love, war, suffering and the infinite'.⁶¹ However, Warner does have an opinion on Vaughan Williams' creativity, and that of his contemporaries and their way of composing: 'so fruitful & hard-working & *practical*. It is the *practical* nature of the creative

⁶⁰ Percy Scholes, *The Mirror of Music, 1844-1944*, 2 vols (Classic Textbooks, 1947), ii. p.784.

⁶¹ Alain Frogley, 'Williams, Ralph Vaughan (1872-1958)', Dictionary of National Biography, 2004. ODNB online version 2009 <www.oxforddnb.com/templates/article> [Accessed 4 March 2017].

artist that in the upshot stands out. They are plain hard-headed men in a scurry of dreamers'.⁶² This analysis does not appear to extend to Gustave Holst, a close friend of Vaughan Williams, on whose music Warner comments sourly in her diaries, for example 'Philharmonic in the evening. Took Ram. Holst's new *Egdon Heath* – all in cold bits, as usual'.⁶³

Holst had met Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music in 1895, two years after being admitted as a composition pupil and during the year in which he was awarded a scholarship in that subject. Primarily a composition student, he also studied the trombone and undertook freelance work with London orchestras to augment his limited funds; this gave him another perspective on the difficulties of performing new and demanding music.

Like Parry, Holst admired and was influenced by Wagner's music – he had heard *Götterdämmerung* conducted by Gustave Mahler at Covent Garden in 1892. He was also drawn to mysticism and Hindu philosophy and in the early years of the twentieth century he took lessons in Sanskrit at University College London. He learned enough to be able to make his own adaptations of Sanskrit texts; the opera *Sita* composed in 1902 using texts from the *Ramayana* and the better-known *Savitri* utilizing the *Mahabharata* writings were the results of this study.

⁶² Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner*, ed. by Claire Harman (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), 2 March 1959, p. 255. Hereafter STW-PD.

⁶³ Sylvia Townsend Warner, unpublished diary 23 February 1928. Sylvia Townsend Warner – Valentine Ackland Archive, Dorchester. Hereafter STW-UD.

Holst was also interested in folksong and was knowledgeable about the Revival, as could be expected of a friend of Vaughan Williams, but he did not use its rhythms in his music. His prominent position in English musical life was largely due to the success of his orchestral work *The Planets*, written in the early years of the First World War. It was first performed in 1918 and following its recognition many of his earlier works were published; he had become part of the drive for new musical expression. He set poetry by Walt Whitman for soprano and orchestra in the *The Mystic Trumpeter* and 'the bitonality of the fanfares near the beginning of the work point to the future [...] Holst seemed to be heading in the direction that has more in common with the Schoenberg of *Verklärte Nacht* than of any British music of the time'.⁶⁴ He may have heard Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces* performed in London in 1912 and been influenced to label his preliminary sketches for *The Planets* 'Seven Orchestral Pieces'.

In 1914 Holst heard Stravinsky's music for the first time and, although it was never a direct influence, this music also became important to him. His later work *Egdon Heath*, based upon Thomas Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native*, expresses a certain modernity in music. Jeremy Dibble says of the work that 'it is elusive and unpredictable [...] a pulseless wandering melody'.⁶⁵ In these later, mature works, Holst could be seen to be bridging the traditional and the new in the first decades of the twentieth century.

⁶⁴ Jeremy Dibble 'Gustav Holst', in NGD, p. 649.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 652.

Another celebrated composer who became a friend of Warner's in the 1920's was John Ireland. He studied at the Royal College at the same time as Vaughan Williams and Holst, and like them he was a pupil of Stanford and his brusque teaching methods. John Ireland was only sixteen, with little practical experience of music, when his studies began in 1895, and he had recently been orphaned.

Ireland was influenced by the music of Ravel and Debussy and had 'a deeply personal reaction to the Frenchman's music [...] the fragmented melodies picked out in isolated notes clearly derive from Debussy's piano style, but the musical raw materials were Ireland's own'⁶⁶ and he was also a harsh critic of his own compositions. There are parallels here with Warner as, like her, he destroyed many of his early works; the sextet for clarinet, horn and strings was spared and published many years after its suppression by Ireland.

Unlike his Royal College contemporaries Vaughan Williams and Holst, Ireland was not drawn to folksong and the Revival was not an influence on his music. He was, however, influenced by English poetry and set A.E. Housman, Thomas Hardy, John Masefield and Rupert Brooke in various ways; these compositions are among the best known of his works. As Hall notes, Ireland was a composer of his time:

Particularly Georgian were his directness of utterance and his highly characteristic blending of sweetness and the

⁶⁶ Hall, ii, p. 234.

most heart-searching melancholy. It was this which made his settings of words by poets bound up in the Georgian movement, Masefield and Brooke especially, so powerful.⁶⁷

In 1926 he set five poems by Thomas Hardy, and at the end of the decade Ireland also set three of Warner's poems in a song cycle for voice and piano which he titled *Songs Sacred and Profane*. The cycle consists of the setting of six poems; W.B Yeats' 'The Salley Gardens', 'The Advent' and 'My Fair' by Alice Meynell, and Warner's 'Hymn for a Child', 'The Soldier's Return' and 'The Scapegoat', the latter two from her first collection of poetry *The Espalier*, published in 1925.

An introverted man, Ireland lived a seemingly uneventful life which combined teaching and composition at the Royal College, where Benjamin Britten, Alan Bush and E.J. Moeran were pupils of his. Essential to this quiet life were his friends, one of whom was Warner's uncle, the Welsh writer and mystic Arthur Machen. He 'is most widely remembered today as the author of the 1914 story "The Bowmen", which gave rise to the legend of the Angels of Mons, of supernatural beings who fought alongside British soldiers in their hour of greatest need.'⁶⁸

Ireland came to know the writing of Arthur Machen in 1906 and, according to Peter Crossley-Holland: 'Machen's preoccupation with magic and power of evocation has throughout Ireland's life had

⁶⁷ Hall, ii, p. 236.

⁶⁸ < www.arthurmachen.org.uk > [Accessed 15 September 1916].

a liberating effect on his creative genius'.⁶⁹ This is reflected in two of his works, *The Forgotten Rite* (1913) and *Legend* (1933) for piano and orchestra. It is not known if Warner met Ireland through the latter's friendship with her uncle or through her contacts at the Royal College of Music during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

When Warner left Harrow to live in Bayswater, London in 1916, public concerts were no longer merely for the elite or those who could afford a subscription to an orchestral series. The Victorian love-affair with foreign composers had given way to a wider interest in and acceptance of 'new music' and British composers were now lauded at home and abroad. It has been shown that, probably through her relationship with Percy Buck, Warner knew many of the composers and performers who were to become household names later in the century; she was at the centre of the musical life of London and all that it could offer culturally and inspirationally for her own early hopes for a career in music.

⁶⁹ *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland, 1927-1961*, compiled by Rachel O'Higgins (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 2.

Chapter 2: Early Life, Music and Composing

Accelerando

The influence on Warner's formative years of two extraordinary men, her father and her music teacher, are crucial to understanding her aspiration to be a composer and later of becoming a successful writer.

Warner's early years were far from ordinary, even by the standards of middle-class Victorian England. She was born and grew up in Harrow Public School where her father, George Townsend Warner, was a history master and Head of the Modern Side. Warner was largely educated by him, although her mother gave her lessons as a very young child and taught her to read.

An evocative memory of her childhood is given in an unpublished typescript in the Warner Archive entitled 'Sylvia Townsend Warner – Notes about her Childhood' which she dictated to Valentine Ackland in 1965:

It was very curious, growing up in two societies, School and Town. My father living by the School rhythm – up by bell at 6.45. I remember the noise of bat and ball from the cricket fields below, on hot summer evenings. And on winter afternoons the very melancholy mooing of the crowd watching a football match. It went with the melancholy of winter evenings.⁷⁰

Her father's formidable intellect and ability as a teacher is given by the writer L.P. Hartley, an ex-pupil: 'George Townsend Warner was a

⁷⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Notes about her Childhood', unpublished typescript, [n.d.]. Originally dictated to Valentine Ackland at Renvyle, Eire in May 1965. Sylvia Townsend Warner – Valentine Ackland Archive, Dorchester. Hereafter STWA.

teacher of the first order and he got more out of his pupils than it seemed in their power to give. He was a genius'.⁷¹

From this it could be concluded that Warner's 'private' education was first-class and probably included learning Latin; knowledge of the language was central to her editorial work in musicology for the Carnegie (UK) Trust's *Tudor Church Music* project. On a less formal level, and one that may have informed Warner's later imaginative writing, her mother's stories of a childhood spent in India also influenced her. Many years later she wrote of the power of Nora Warner's vivid story-telling:

My mother's recollections of her childhood in India were so vivid to her that they became inseparably part of my own childhood, like the arabesques of a wallpaper showing through a coat of distemper [...] She talked as much for her own pleasure as mine, and made no attempts to be instructive or consecutive, I never tired of listening.⁷²

George Townsend Warner's pupils also had opinions regarding his daughter's intellect although they shared no lessons with her. Claire Harman summarises their views: 'she was the cleverest fellow we had' and was known as 'the best boy at Harrow'.⁷³

My application to Harrow School to search the archive there for information on Warner, her father and Percy Buck was declined. The reason given was that the surviving Archive dated only from

⁷¹ L.P. Hartley, 'The Conformer' in *The Old School* by Graham Green (Oxford: OUP, 1984), p. 81.

⁷² Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'My Father, My Mother, the Bentleys, the Poodle, Lord Kitchener, and the Mouse', *Scenes of Childhood* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), pp. 36-7.

⁷³ Claire Harman, *Sylvia Townsend Warner: a Biography* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1989), p.20.

1981.⁷⁴ Harman's biography and Warner's diary entries and recollections in later life are the principle sources of information regarding her childhood and early years in music.

Little is known about the beginning of Warner's musical education, but an undated one-line memory in the 'Notes about her Childhood' states, under the heading of Music, 'Made up a great many tunes'. There is no indication in the 'Notes' as to when this may have been but it possibly refers to her childhood and early introduction to music. Warner gives her experience of learning the piano in another unfinished and unpublished memoir, also in the Warner Archive. It is entitled 'Pianos and Pianolas' and in it she describes her first piano lesson:

My hands were set on the keyboard and coerced into playing scales in unison – a hateful proceeding – and in contrary motion which was enjoyable. I hated the whole thing. I progressed from sheer boredom and exasperation, till the day when my first teacher left and a new one arrived – a lady of very different notions, who took me by the scruff of the neck and dropped [me] into a Haydn Sonata. To this day I can recall every circumstance of the moment when she broke in at a double bar to commend my bravura arpeggio approach to the cadence in the dominant. She stayed long enough to enter me to Bach. Bach at that date was considered dry. I did not find him so. He seemed to sanction my first penchant for scales in contrary motion.⁷⁵

'Contrary motion' is a technical term in music and does not mean disharmony, as the quotation above might imply. In piano playing

⁷⁴ In reply to my letter to the Headmaster of Harrow School, Rita Boswell, Archivist, replied by email, dated 23 April 2010:

'I regret that I am going to have to disappoint you concerning Sylvia Townsend Warner and Dr. Buck. The school archive was not assembled until 1981 by which time many records had been destroyed or gone missing, as a result there is very poor survival of earlier records. The main source of information we have is the school paper, The Harrovian, which is general information and little detail on individuals other than the occasional mention of appointments or obituaries. It is impossible to prove that Dr. Buck taught Sylvia from our records'.

⁷⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Pianos and Pianolas' [n.d.], unpublished typescript. STWA.

'contrary motion' involves a more complex fingering than scales and the challenge of this evidently pleased Warner. 'Contrary motion' in relation to singing is of note here because of Warner's musicological work as an adult: 'In part-writing, simultaneous voice parts moving in opposite directions are said to be in contrary motion'.⁷⁶ Simultaneous voice-parts are integral to polyphony; an example would be Thomas Tallis' *Spem in Alium*, where notes are heard one against another yet are woven together so that the individual notes harmonize. Warner became expert at transposing Tudor polyphony when a young woman and her early comment regarding Bach is congruent with her first and most important work in musicology for the Carnegie (UK) Trust.

There is no indication of Warner's age at the time of her piano lessons, but it evidently marked a point at which she began to take music more seriously. Harman states that at the age of sixteen Warner had begun to study piano, organ, theory of music and composing with Dr. Percy Buck, who was Director of Music at Harrow School and a friend of her father's. Harman goes on to say that 'by 1911 Warner was composing regularly, setting favourite poems to music and writing a set of piano variations'.⁷⁷ An unpublished diary entry from 1928 gives the circumstance for this piano composition:

Earlier in this well-fitted day I wiled away a half hour waiting in a bookshop where I re-read 'The Wild Geese' [sic] from *The Untilled Field*. I read it last at Badworth

⁷⁶ [Anon], 'Contrary Motion', OCM, p. 803.

⁷⁷ Harman, *Biography*, p. 22. A list of Warner's compositions that survive are listed in Appendices, p. 332. The Mss are in the Sylvia Townsend Warner — Valentine Ackland Archive, Dorchester

sixteen years ago. Odd to remember and come on the passages that so moved me then; but it was really that time which caught me. I wrote some piano variations on it, O Lord help me, what a long way ago!⁷⁸

The author of the book was George Moore (1852-1933) and it contained stories of Irish rural life originally written for the *New Ireland Review* in 1902. Moore was interested in the Naturalist movement in literature, dedicated to the realistic portrayal of social conditions and to showing how environment and inherited beliefs could shape individuals. In the story of 'The Wild Goose' religion and the power of the Catholic clergy are central to the story of a marriage. Moore dramatizes a confrontation between radical political and anti-clerical beliefs and a deep-rooted acceptance of 'religious submission in all its bearings,'⁷⁹ and of the folk-lore of Ireland as integral with daily life. The 'radical' husband leaves the marriage like 'the wild goose when it rises from the warm marshes, scenting the harsh north through leagues of air, and goes away on steady wing-beats.'⁸⁰ Like Laura, the central figure in Warner's first novel *Lolly Willowes*, this outsider cannot integrate and take up the place expected of him and moves away to a very different future.

Warner would, perhaps, have enjoyed Moore's use of Bach's music to underline the differences, both cultural and domestic, between man and wife: "He has gone to the piano and will play Bach till midnight, keeping me awake" [...] She undressed, listening to Bach's interminable twiddles, and wept through many preludes and

⁷⁸ STW-UD 10 October 1928.

⁷⁹ George Moore, 'The Wild Goose' in *The Untilled Field* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1931). Reprinted Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990, p.187.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* pp.192-3.

fugues'.⁸¹ However, although the story of the 'Wild Goose' left a deep impression, Warner did not keep the music that it had inspired. This memory is the first recorded account in Warner's own words regarding the composition of music when she was young.

There is little evidence to show the type of material that Warner read as a young woman, but Moore's writing could very possibly have been an influence on her own writing, particularly as Moore's work often has music woven into the story. Moore sought advice about music from Arnold Dolmetsch, a prominent figure in the musical life of London in the late nineteenth century as a maker of early instruments and author of *The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Professor Sarah Ruth Watson says that Dolmetsch

Conceived the bold idea of holding concerts in his own house in Dulwich [...] and to this remote suburb there journeyed the denizens of Bloomsbury and Kensington. These audiences have been aptly portrayed by George Moore in his novel 'Evelyn Innes', wherein Arnold Dolmetsch figures as old Mr Innes.⁸²

In Moore's novel the central figure, Evelyn Innes, is gifted with a beautiful singing voice and dreams of studying opera in Paris and not the music of Palestrina, her father's passion. Against his wishes she goes to Paris with a wealthy admirer in order to have the best operatic training; six years later she returns to England to appear in Wagner's operas. She becomes involved with two men, one of whom she takes as a lover, and, as with the husband in the *Wild Goose*,

⁸¹ George Moore, 'The Wild Goose', p.180.

⁸² Sarah Ruth Watson, 'George Moore and the Dolmetsches', *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, 6 (1963), 65-75.

the influence of the Catholic Church changes her life. It would not be unreasonable to believe that Warner read other works by George Moore; years later she may have used what she had learned from *Sister Teresa* to furnish details for her novel *The Corner That Held Them*.

Warner's diary records vivid memories of learning music in her early years at Harrow, around the time of her first reading of Moore's stories:

And in the evening I heard the *romanze* from the Brahms piano quartet in G – very well played from the Edinburgh Festival, and as lovely as I remember it from my youth. I don't think I have heard it since Harrow, but it had remained exactly in my mind, from having the full score to practise reading C clefs by.⁸³

Warner writes later of having a similarly powerful experience, also whilst listening to the radio:

Listening to Parry's *De Profundis* as I roasted pork, and as if to something unknown, the first solo entry came at once out of the performance and out of my memory. I knew it as well as though I were the singer. I breathed & phrased it. And recalling, I found it was at High St. I knew it: 1913, perhaps. One preserves a time so completely intact – for I hadn't given it a thought since – that one feels like an airtight jar when it comes out again.⁸⁴

Such diary entries, containing powerful recollections of the part that music played in her early years at Harrow, are important and new primary resources about Warner's life in music as a young woman. Warner's emotionally charged memories show a young woman for whom music was important in daily life. Its importance is intimated in a 1937 letter to the American composer Paul Nordoff in which

⁸³ STW-UD 31 August 1952.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 23 July 1960.

Warner comments upon her belief that she had found a purpose in life, a calling for which she had a natural ability: 'when I was young I composed, and was convinced that music was my metier'.⁸⁵

As her music teacher, Buck would have found Warner an apt pupil and he exerted a strong influence on her. Such was their relationship for many years, progressing from formal teaching to intimate friendship, that information about him is particularly important in understanding Warner's musical development and aspirations during her years at Harrow and beyond. Harman encapsulates the important role that Buck played in Warner's life from an early age:

To Sylvia he was both a family friend, known by the nickname 'Teague' on account of his Irish blood, and her personal mentor, one of the few people she could talk to as an equal.⁸⁶

Rupert Gough in an article in the journal *Choir and Organ* summarises the breadth of his scholarship: 'Percy Buck was many things: organist, composer, editor, author, teacher, educationalist, mathematician and Hebrew scholar.'⁸⁷ His career path was impressive. Shortly after studying at the Royal College of Music under Walter Parratt and Sir Hubert Parry, Buck gained an organ scholarship to Worcester College, Oxford and after gaining a BMus degree in 1892 he remained at Worcester as organist for the college until 1894. His doctoral work was completed very rapidly but the degree was not conferred until 1897. In 1896 Buck became organist

⁸⁵ STW-PL p. 48. 5 September 1937.

⁸⁶ Harman, *Biography*, p. 22.

⁸⁷ Rupert Gough, 'Full of Surprises', *Choir and Organ*, (May 2005), pp.18-20.

at Wells Cathedral and three years later he secured the same post at Bristol Cathedral. In 1901 he began his tenure of twenty-six years at Harrow School.

Buck appears indefatigable as he had several part-time posts too. Concurrently with his duties at Harrow, he was appointed to the staff of the Royal College of Music in 1919, by the new Director Hugh Allen, to teach music theory, as well as holding two Chairs of Music. The first was as the non-resident Professor of Music at Trinity College, Dublin from 1910-20, and the second was as King Edward Professor of Music at the University of London from 1925-37. Additionally he had succeeded the late Sir Hubert Parry as President of the Royal College of Organists in 1919 and was an examiner in music where 'He exerted a consistent influence in favour of the more liberal treatment of examinations in music theory'.⁸⁸ He was, says Gough, 'a thoughtful, committed and humorous educator'.⁸⁹ His pragmatism ensured that he was a popular master at Harrow where

He took the line that as very few of his piano pupils were likely to become concert performers, it was more important to turn them into useful musicians: accordingly he taught them to accompany, transpose and to extemporize.⁹⁰

This emphasis on the practical aspects of playing the piano paid dividends for Warner; with Buck's tuition and an easy ability for absorbing music theory she became an excellent pianist.

⁸⁸ H.C. Colles and Malcolm Turner, 'Sir Percy Buck', *Grove Music Online*. < www.oxfordmusiconline.com.> [Accessed December 2012].

⁸⁹ Rupert Gough, 'Full of Surprises', pp. 18-20.

⁹⁰ J. Baker, 'Percy C. Buck', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, ODNB online version 2009 < www.oxforddnb.com > [Accessed December 2012].

An article by Buck entitled 'The Schoolmaster' appeared in the Royal College of Music Magazine in 1916. The opening paragraph shows humour and irony:

I suppose that all young men from the human weakness of building castles in the air, spend a few happy hours casting their own horoscopes and trying to see where their dreams will take them by middle-age.⁹¹

He goes on to explain the disadvantages of life in a Public School where a seven-day working week was normal, usually with an early start before breakfast:

Oh! Those 7.30 chapels when we sing so feelingly 'dark and cheerless is the morn!', and ending at 9.30 in the evening. In addition, all personal work in music has to be minimised or abandoned altogether, and the difficulty of teaching anything which boys class as highbrow requires a cunning almost beyond human attainment'.⁹²

In this regard alone Warner, as an interested and able pupil, would have been a welcome adjunct to Buck's teaching schedule.

Buck's belief in a sound musical education is also shown by his involvement outside of his teaching positions in school and colleges. In 1926, together with Angela Bull, he founded the Junior Department of the Royal College of Music. This was commemorated in a publication by the RCM in 1976, on its fiftieth anniversary, entitled *A History of the Junior Department; a Tribute to its Founders Angela Bull and Sir Percy Buck*. He was also instrumental in the design of the syllabus for graduates of the Royal Schools of Music (GRSM) diploma in the years between 1910 and 1920. Buck finished his career as musical advisor to the Education Committee of the

⁹¹ Percy C. Buck, 'The Schoolmaster', *Royal College of Music Magazine*, (1916), p.15.

⁹² *Ibid.* p.16.

London County Council, where he revised the music curriculum for primary and secondary schools. This was a position he held from 1925 until his retirement in 1937 when he was also awarded a knighthood.

It can be seen that Buck's work from 1901, when he joined Harrow School as Director of Music, until his retirement in 1937 was centred in musical education and not professional musical performance. The positions he attained demonstrate his ability as an excellent communicator and teacher. In the language of the twenty-first century, Buck was a supreme networker and facilitator, and an extremely energetic and resourceful man. Whilst he was not a household name in Britain as a composer or conductor, he was at the centre of the musical life of London which revolved principally around the Royal College of Music; Buck was ideally placed within London's musical world to aid Warner's hopes for a career in music.

As a young man Buck was a composer, and later an author too. In both areas there are known collaborations with Warner which would have begun against the backdrop of the 'enormously rich and prolific period in the history of English music'.⁹³ During the war years Warner wrote the words of two songs for *The Oxford Song Book*, edited and with music by Buck, which was published in 1916. In 1918 she wrote the words for a two-part song called 'The Carol of St. Bridget', together with words for another three-part song 'The Flowering Manger' published in 1919. Buck contributed music to

⁹³ Hall, i.3.

other song books, including that for Harrow School from 1901 when he joined the staff. One such was the setting of George Townsend Warner's poem 'You?'⁹⁴ which came to have the distinction of becoming a 'school song'. The poem speaks of the values of school, family and Nation, of steadfastness, bravery and 'doing one's bit':

You come here where your brothers came,
To the old School years ago,
A young new face and a Harrow name
'Mid a crowd of strangers? No!
You may not fancy yourself alone
You who are Memory's heir,
When even the names in the carven stone
Will greet you with 'Who goes there –
You? -
Pass, Friend – All's well'.

You stand there where your brothers stood,
And pray where your brothers prayed,
Who fought with Death as brave men should
Not boasting and not afraid.
For the blood and the lives that your brothers gave,
For the glory that you share,
The message comes from beyond the grave,
The challenge 'Who goes there –
You? –
Pass, Friend – All's well'.

You go forth where your brothers went,
And the shadows gather round;
With last lights out, and the camp fires spent,
From the veldt dead voices sound,
Voices that ask 'Is it well with the Hill,
Now as in days that were?
Is it well? And phantom sentries still
Challenge you 'Who goes there –
You? –
Pass, Friend – All's well.'⁹⁵

In this poem George Townsend Warner's emotional response to the losses of war shows both his moral sense and 'feel' for history, his

⁹⁴ British Library [catalogue entry for Percy Carter Buck]: 'You', words by G.T. Warner, Novello & Co., [1904]; 'A Carol of St Brigit', Two -part Song [...] words by S.T. Warner. 1918; 'The Flowering Manger', Three parts [...] words by S.T. Warner. 1919.

⁹⁵ *Harrow in Prose and Verse*, ed. by George Townsend Warner (London: Hodder & Stoughton, [1910?]), pp. 207-8.

primary teaching subject. The song was published in 1904, just after the Boer War that it alludes to, by Novello and Company, the most prolific music publishers in England at this time. The company was established in a shop in Soho, London in 1829 primarily to supply inexpensive editions of standard choral works. This supply of music gave much-needed scope to the choral and singing societies which were to develop across England, and which came to underpin the music and choir festivals of the early twentieth century. Novello expanded rapidly and established the octavo format for the music it published and which is continued by music publishers today.

In further work Buck edited *The English Psalter* with Charles Macpherson in 1925 and utilised research undertaken by Warner and others for the *Tudor Church Music* project to produce the Tudor composer Thomas Weelke's

Evening Service for two trebles [...] edited and the missing parts reconstructed for five voices from Mss. at Peterhouse, Durham and Tenbury by E.H.Fellowes. The organ part adapted and arranged from the Batten Mss. Tenbury 791 by P.C. Buck.⁹⁶

Buck composed three substantial organ sonatas, Opus 3, 9 and 12. These were well received and published in Germany between 1896 and 1904. Perhaps surprisingly for an organist he also composed chamber music. This included both a piano quartet and quintet, a violin sonata, a string quintet and an overture, 'Coeur de Lion'. These were not published and may have been destroyed,

⁹⁶ [Thomas Weelkes] *Evening Service*, ed. by Percy C. Buck (London: Stainer & Bell, 1931).

together with Buck's other papers and manuscripts, in an air raid on his London home near Buckingham Palace in 1941.

Buck also wrote books on music and organ-playing. The first was a collaboration with friends and colleagues entitled *Ten Years of University Music: the Oxford University Musical Union During the Years 1884 – 1894* which was published in 1894. He also wrote *Unfigured Harmony* (1911), *Acoustics for Musicians* (1918) and a distillation of the ten Cramb Lectures he gave at the University of Glasgow in 1923 and which were published in 1924 as *The Scope of Music. Psychology for Musicians* followed (1944) and remained in print for thirty years.

Buck's humour is evident in descriptive passages in *A History of Music* (1929) which begins, unusually, from the present time and works backwards in date. Here his thumbnail sketches of contemporary composers, in a book of only ninety pages, could be seen as tempering admiration with irony as he writes of the 'tongued eloquence of Sibelius' and the 'appealing querulousness of Ravel'.⁹⁷ Such complexities of expression are redolent of Warner's use of language in her writing. However, Buck can also write amusingly in circumstances that would normally require formality. Examples can be found in his comments as an Adjudicator for the Carnegie Music Publication Competition of 1927 regarding compositions submitted: 'An essay in a style too-recently dead' and

⁹⁷ Percy C. Buck, *A History of Music*, New ed. (London: Ernest Benn, 1947), p. 27. First published 1929.

'Restless and hurried stuff, trying all the time to force in more yolk than the egg will hold'.⁹⁸

In *A History of Music*, Buck argues that the music produced by Schoenberg and his followers has 'had time to establish itself beyond the range of a few intellectual devotees, and it has, to all appearances, failed'.⁹⁹ Buck wrote this many years after Warner was supposedly going to study with Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna. This possibility is suggested by Claire Harman in her biography of Warner; she states that Warner had 'planned to leave home that year for the Continent, where it is said she was to study composition with Arnold Schoenberg [...] but the opportunity was lost in the course of events of 1914'.¹⁰⁰ The information about studying with Schoenberg is found in a typescript document in the Warner Archive entitled 'Some notes on Sylvia Townsend Warner, with whom I spent this afternoon' by Ben Huebsch, editor and Vice-President of the Viking Press and publisher of the American edition of Warner's novel *Lolly Willowes*.¹⁰¹ It is the only reference to Warner's plan to study with Schoenberg that is currently known. The 'Notes' are undated but mention her next planned novel, *Mr Fortune's Maggot*, which dates the document to 1926-27. A friendship developed from the meeting described and over the following decades Warner wrote ninety-eight letters to Huebsch, some of them professional regarding the publication of her work in the United States, others personal letters

⁹⁸ Carnegie (UK) Trust Archive, GD281/41/29, National Archives of Scotland Edinburgh. Hereafter CUKT, 22 files in 7 boxes, call numbers GD281/41/224 – 246.

⁹⁹ Buck. *History of Music*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Harman. *Biography*, pp. 26-7.

¹⁰¹ These 'Notes' were drawn to the attention of the Editor of the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*. They were published with editorial comment in *Journal 17* (2017), 27-28.

about her life. They met at least twice after 1926-7. Huebsch met Warner's ship when she visited New York in 1929 and showed her around the city, and in 1931 he visited her home in Frome Vauchurch, Dorset. Warner's regard for him is evident in a letter to her friends Joy and Marchette Chute written shortly after his death in 1964: 'I loved him dearly, and still see him in this garden, drinking a vin rosé and completely foxed by the phenomenon of the Parish Magazine'.¹⁰²

I have not found any comment by Warner on Schoenberg or his music in any letter or commonplace book and neither does she mention him retrospectively in her diaries. However, many references to other prominent early twentieth century composers whom she came to know, among them Ralph Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells, John Ireland and Gustav Holst, are to be found there. It would be unusual that a life-changing plan of studying abroad was not mentioned in later diary entries if studying with Schoenberg had been a realistic possibility. This anomaly prompted me to research into Schoenberg and his circle to try to establish his teaching ethos, together with events that may have been influential both for Warner and for the musical life of England in the early twentieth century.¹⁰³

Around 1908 Schoenberg had begun composing in a startlingly innovative way using a chromatic scale of twelve pitches, each a semi-tone above or below the other, and not in the primary

¹⁰² STW-PL p. 214, 4 October 1964.

¹⁰³ Lynn Mutti, 'Notes on Warner and Schoenberg', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society* 17 (2017), 31-38. Pages 61-70 of this thesis are drawn on it.

diatonic scale of eight pitches that was usual. He became one of the most controversial composers in the history of music by breaking with the established musical order to find a new form of musical expression. In the early years of the century Alban Berg and Anton von Webern became his pupils, presumably by personal interview, as implied by this letter to Roberto Gerhard, who became a pupil, sets out:

Dear Sir,

At present I have no time to look into your compositions more closely, but a fleeting glance and your letter give me a very good impression. Frankly, the final decision whether I take someone on as a pupil usually depends on the personal impression I get of him, and that is why I prefer to see people first [...] With kind regards and looking forward with much interest to making your acquaintance.

Arnold Schoenberg ¹⁰⁴

Schoenberg did not make life easy for his followers as he regarded any interest by them in modern music other than his own as a betrayal, which appears a rigid and unforgiving method of teaching. However, both Berg and Webern were devoted to Schoenberg, and Webern in particular did all he could to find patrons for his master and to urge performances of his works. In this regard, both he and Berg conformed to what O.W. Neighbour describes as Schoenberg's ethos of fulfilling 'their promise as composers through acceptance and individual reinterpretation of the successive steps in

¹⁰⁴ *Arnold Schoenberg's Letters*, ed. by Erwin Stein (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p.102.

their master's development, [bringing him] the support of their life-long personal and artistic loyalty'.¹⁰⁵

Oskar Fried was an influential conductor whose musicianship Warner was to approve in later years, as this account of a concert from her diary shows:

The conductor was Fried, very good [...] [he] appears to be a cantankerous fellow, but when the orchestra laughed at his English he said 'Gentlemen, there are millions of people who can speak English but not many who can conduct'; and as he can conduct; I like this well.¹⁰⁶

Webern had visited Fried in Berlin on Schoenberg's behalf in 1911. There he met Fried's pupil, Edward Clark, who had moved to Berlin in 1909 as music correspondent for the English journal the *Musical Times*. Although Clark had no formal musical training and played no instrument, Fried had agreed to give him lessons in conducting. In October 1910 Clark was introduced to Schoenberg by Fried at a rehearsal of the latter's *Peléas und Mélisande* and found the performance 'an overwhelming revelation'.¹⁰⁷ After this performance he was determined to study with Schoenberg and, surprisingly, managed to achieve his aim, becoming 'Schoenberg's only pre-1914 pupil from the English-speaking world'.¹⁰⁸ He studied with Schoenberg from 1911 until 1914, assisting the composer to move from Vienna to Berlin at the end of 1911. Schoenberg did not return to Vienna until late in 1915. Clark obviously had great powers of

¹⁰⁵ O.W. Neighbour, 'Arnold Schoenberg', NGD, p. 579.

¹⁰⁶ STW-UD 4 April 1930.

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Lutyens, *A Goldfish Bowl* (London: Cassell, 1972), p. 95.

¹⁰⁸ Leo Black, translator, marginal note in *Schoenberg: a Critical Biography* by Willi Reich, (London: Longman, 1971), p.162.

persuasion and appears to have been useful in promoting Schoenberg's music.

Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces* was published in 1910 and a copy found its way to Sir Henry Wood, founder of the Promenade Concerts in London. On 3 September 1912 Wood conducted the first public performance of the work anywhere in the world at a Prom. at the Queen's Hall in London. No communication with Schoenberg had occurred; the composer discovered that his work was to be played from an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper on the 31 August.¹⁰⁹

The impact of the first performance was devastating for an audience used to established Western harmony, particularly as its place in the concert programme was between an aria from Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* and a Mendelssohn *Piano Concerto*. The influential music critic Ernest Newman wrote of the performance:

It is not often that an English audience hisses the music it does not like, but a good third of the people at Queen's Hall last Tuesday permitted themselves that luxury after the performance of the five orchestral pieces of Schoenberg. Another third [...] was laughing, and the remaining third seemed too puzzled either to laugh or hiss; on the whole, it does not look as if Schoenberg has made many friends in London.¹¹⁰

However, another critic gave warning about ridiculing the work:

Past generations of critics unhesitatingly condemned the new and strange and unintelligible, and are now held up to pity and ridicule. If we pour scorn on our 'Futurist' school, are we preparing the same fate for ourselves?¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ David Lambourn, 'Henry Wood and Schoenberg', *The Musical Times*, 128 (1987), 422-27 (422).

¹¹⁰ Ernest Newman, 'The Case of Arnold Schoenberg', *The Nation*, 7 September 1912, p. 830.

¹¹¹ [Anon], *Musical Times*, 93 (1912), 647. Schoenberg concert review.

A little over a year later Henry Wood asked Edward Clark to relay an invitation to Schoenberg, offering the composer the opportunity to conduct the second performance of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* with the Queen's Hall Orchestra.¹¹² Schoenberg accepted the invitation and the performance was scheduled for 17 January 1914 and, although better received by an audience who had grown more accustomed to new music in the intervening year, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, and *Petrushka* having been performed in England for the first time in the interim, it was still unfavourably reviewed by the musical press:

Shall we ever get used to Schoenberg's method? That I doubt: for it is quite a new thing in the history of music for a composer to be beyond the comprehension of progressive musicians. We are justified in asking whether it is possible for one man to be so far ahead of the whole musical world, or whether there is not some defect in his thinking as well as ours.¹¹³

For the unnamed reviewer in the *Musical News*, Schoenberg's music

appears to resemble the inconsequent wanderings of a brain that is – shall we say? – abnormal. The question is whether Herr Schoenberg is making some contribution to the evolution of the art, or whether he is producing a more sporadic manifestation of anarchy.¹¹⁴

This comment is surprising in a musical journal as it questions Schoenberg's mental capacity and allies his music to social upheaval and unrest in strong terms.

However, in spite of such reviews, young English composers, Gustave Holst and Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) in particular, were fascinated by Schoenberg's methods and his music, and

¹¹² Lambourn. p. 424.

¹¹³ Newman, *Musical Times*, 55 (1914), 88. Schoenberg concert review.

¹¹⁴ [Anon], *Musical News*, 56 (1914), 73. Schoenberg concert review.

interest in the composer reached its peak in England in the first six months of 1914. Unfortunately for Schoenberg the outbreak of war ended the embryonic acceptance of his music by fellow composers in England, and interest in his work after the war never regained the momentum of the early months of 1914.

In his 'Notes' on the afternoon spent with Warner, Ben Huebsch writes that 'the war brought disappointment to her in that it interfered with her plans to go to Vienna to study composition with Schoenberg'. It is possible that Warner attended one, or both of the Promenade performances of the *Five Orchestral Pieces*, was entranced by the complexity and novelty of the music and became determined to approach the composer as a prospective pupil. She may also have acquired a published copy of the work to study; it should be remembered that at this time Warner believed music to be her metier.¹¹⁵ It would have been possible for Percy Buck, who knew all of the important musicians in London including Henry Wood, to have facilitated a meeting between Warner and Schoenberg in January 1914 when the composer was in London. No such meeting is mentioned retrospectively in later diaries or letters and there are no letters between Warner and Schoenberg, or Buck and Schoenberg, listed in the Schoenberg Archive in Vienna.

The question of how Warner could have become part of this sensational new sphere in music raises several issues. The first issue with Warner's statement as noted by Huebsch, and a major

¹¹⁵ STW-PL p. 48. Letter to Paul Nordoff 5 November 1937.

one, is that Schoenberg was not in Vienna between the last months of 1911 until the end of 1915; he was living in Berlin. He returned to Vienna for military service late in 1915 and undertook brief periods of service in 1916 and 1917 before being discharged on medical grounds. If studying with Schoenberg had been a real aspiration of Warner's at that time, it could be expected that she would know in which country he was living. This lack of knowledge also raises the question of planning and financing the time to be spent abroad, neither of which Warner could have done in this circumstance.

A second issue is one of gender. The letter by Schoenberg to Roberto Gerhard cited above specifically states: 'whether I take someone on as a pupil usually depends on the personal impression I get of *him*'. This letter and Schoenberg's stringent teaching methods make it unlikely that he would have accepted a female pupil at that date. Dika Newlin (1923-2006) and Patricia Carpenter (1923-2000) are the only female pupils of Schoenberg to be found in the biographical records. Both were American citizens. Newlin was a prodigy, graduating from Michigan State University when only sixteen years old. She moved to Los Angeles to be tutored by Schoenberg who was then teaching at the University of California. Newlin went on to have an academic career in music and also wrote about Schoenberg. Carpenter studied with the composer between 1942 and 1949 and also went on to have an academic career in music, becoming Professor of Music at Columbia University. Both of these women studied with Schoenberg almost thirty years after

Warner's supposed plan to do so; by this time the composer, who had emigrated to the US in 1934, was firmly established there.

A further issue is that Warner would have had to have attained a sufficient level of compositional mastery, and a demonstrable kinship with the chromatic scale, for this to have been seriously considered. As construed from the letter to Gerhard, she would also have had to submit several compositions for assessment in order for Schoenberg to be convinced that there could be mutual understanding and benefit from her becoming his pupil.

Berg and Webern progressed to become acknowledged practitioners of twelve-tone composition, perhaps the most innovative movement in twentieth century music, and Warner's musical ability would surely have had to have been exceptional and akin to theirs for her to have been considered as a pupil by Schoenberg. However, there is no evidence that Warner had reached such a level of musicianship in 1914.

She destroyed many of her compositions of this period, as her diary entry of 17 October 1928 notes: 'I had gone through and thrown away a great deal of my own music, 1911–1915'.¹¹⁶ These dates also suggest that Warner may have heard the first Henry Wood rendition of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* and these compositions may have been an attempt to compose atonal music in the Schoenberg style. However, the small amount of Warner's music that survives is not atonal and diary entries of a later date detailing concerts that she

¹¹⁶ STW-UD 17 November 1928.

had attended bear witness to her apparent impatience with music that, whilst rooted in the Romantic vein, had obsessive driving force and dissonance:

The Bruckner I found hard to stomach. It is all mental music, weak and scrappy and forever going up to climaxes and down again like someone industriously practising scales.¹¹⁷

Warner writes a similarly negative comment in her diary for 21st January, 1930:

Went to the Music Society [heard] an affair for octet by D.Szostakovicz opening with a series of sit on the piano cords, then a scherzo full of artless discords and squeaks, but all in four bar phrases saying the identical thing three times.¹¹⁸

The Bruckner piece at this concert was the Eighth Symphony, composed in 1887 and revised in 1890. Warner's response to it is echoed in a review of 2013 describing 'the terrifying abysses of dissonance in the first movement'.¹¹⁹

The octet by Shostakovich is an early work composed in 1925 when he was nineteen years old. At this time he had 'allied himself with the forward-looking principles of the Association for Contemporary Music, which actively promoted the study and performance of contemporary Western music by such composers as Hindemith, Berg and Schoenberg'.¹²⁰

Taken together, these examples show Warner's difficulty with this type of modern music and she was, therefore, not likely to be at home in the Second Viennese School of Schoenberg and his

¹¹⁷ STW-UD 20 November 1929.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 21 January 1930. [Opus 11, Two Pieces for String Octet].

¹¹⁹ <www.theguardian.com> Tom Service, *Symphony Guide: Bruckner's Eighth*. [Accessed 6 June 2017].

¹²⁰ Godfrey Norris and David Nice, 'Shostakovich', OCM, p.1149.

disciples. This is reinforced by Huebsch's comment in his 'Notes' that in their conversation Warner 'holds that the hope of English musical development is not in imitating the Continental moderns but in reviving and applying the historic idiom'.¹²¹ Her admiration for the folksong-inspired music of Vaughan Williams, also noted by Huebsch in the 'Notes', supports this opinion and would also indicate that she would find Schoenberg's music unappealing. It is possible that Huebsch in his talk with Warner misunderstood, and interpreted what had been a discussion between Warner with Buck on a possible way forward regarding studying composition with Schoenberg, as a positive plan for her to study with the composer. It is also possible that the rapport that began at this first meeting between Warner and Huebsch may have a bearing on the mention of Schoenberg during it; the talk of the interrupted plan to study with Schoenberg by Warner may have been a gentle jest. Huebsch appears to have been bemused in the meeting and writes in his 'Notes' about Warner being a witch; 'who that reads Lolly can believe it to be entirely a product of the imagination!'¹²² Warner's subsequent warmth towards Huebsch in their correspondence also lends credence to the possibility of her teasing him. It can be seen, I believe, that the evidence for the proposed pupillage with Schoenberg is thin and perhaps it is time that it is allowed to become doubtful or speculative rather than treated as substantive.

¹²¹ Ben Huebsch, 'Notes': Typed transcription of meeting Warner in London. [1926-7?], STWA.

¹²² Huebsch, 'Notes'.

In September 1916 George Townsend Warner died unexpectedly and Warner's life changed markedly. Her mother proposed to move to Devon to the house that she and George had built for their retirement, and this plan would have disrupted the musical life centred on London that Warner was intent upon. Nora Warner moved from the Harrow School property known as High Street to 162 Grove Hill, also belonging to the school, after George's death. Claire Harman's biography states that she prepared to move to Devon in the autumn of 1917, after her husband's memorial tablet had been erected in the school chapel.¹²³ During the year since her father's death Warner had been living with her mother, but must also have been spending a great deal of time in London. Evidence for this is two-fold. Warner had been introduced by Buck to Dr. Richard Terry, organist and choir-master at Westminster Cathedral, and she was working on musical manuscripts at the British Museum under his direction. She had also joined the Bach Choir, a well-established Society founded in 1876 which was formed of fee-paying members. In the Bach Choir Archives, deposited at the Royal College of Music, the earliest record of performances by the Choir is a bound volume of programmes dated 1915-1921. The Director was Dr Hugh Allen, someone whom Warner came to know well at the Royal College of Music in later years.¹²⁴ 1915-16 was the 40th season of the Choir and 'Miss S. Townsend Warner' is listed as a member in the first programme for its 93rd concert at the Queen's Hall on 12 December

¹²³ Harman, *Biography*, p.39.

¹²⁴ STW-UD 29 February 1928.

1916. The programmes in this first bound volume differ from later volumes, some being for 'private' occasions at the RCM for example. These usually only contain information about the works performed, including the words of the choral pieces and named members of the orchestra on that date. The more substantial programmes – in buff covers – also have a list of singers. A document in the archive about the Choir states that 'practices take place in the Lecture Room at the V&A, but pro tem in the Westminster Cathedral Hall on Thursdays at 6pm during the winter months.'¹²⁵ This may have been another link with Dr Terry, the Cathedral being very much his domain. Warner would have had to attend rehearsals consistently to be listed as a singer, which she was in programmes from December 1916 until the season 1922-23. During the years 1921-23 Warner would have sung under the direction of Ralph Vaughan Williams who became Director of the Choir in 1921 and who had been a Committee Member for several years previously, although he was absent during the war on overseas service.

Sometime during the later part of 1916 Warner composed a piece of music to be entered in the newly created Carnegie (UK) Trust Music Publication Competition. It is possible that Buck urged her to enter the competition. As I have noted elsewhere,¹²⁶ Warner appeared never to promote either her music or her writing, nor to venture willingly into the public domain then or at any time during her early years away from Harrow.

¹²⁵ Bach Choir Archive, (1915) Royal College of Music London, Special Collections.

¹²⁶ Lynn Mutti, 'The Ambivalent Composer and the Carnegie Competition', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 11 (2011), 21-36 (32).

The concept for the competition was proposed by Sir Henry Hadow, who was also to be instrumental in encouraging the Carnegie (UK) Trust to initiate the *Tudor Church Music* project, and it was put before the Trust as early as 1913. The first competition entries were submitted by February 1917 and judged later that year.

The object of the competition was:

To encourage British Composers in the practice of their art. To this end it is proposed to invite them to submit to the Board of Adjudication, constituted by the Trustees, musical compositions possessing the following qualifications: they must be original, unpublished, and must, as to their style, belong to one or other of the classes described [which] may be roughly classified as follows:

Class 1 Concerted Chamber Music for 3 or more instruments.

Class 2 Concerto for 1 or more solo instruments with orchestral accompaniment for large or small orchestra.

Class 3 Choral work with orchestral accompaniment for large or small orchestra.

Class 4 Symphony or other orchestral work.

Class 5 Opera, Musical Drama & Incidental Music to Plays.

The classification indicated above is only a rough one, made without any expert scrutiny of the works.¹²⁷

The awards were to be annual, with as many as six winners who would, in the opinion of the Adjudicators, have entered work that would 'constitute the most valuable contributions to the art of music.'¹²⁸ The Minutes of the Carnegie Music Standing Sub-Committee of 24 February 1917 enlarge on how the innovative new competition had been received in the musical press:

¹²⁷ CUKT GD281/41/24.

¹²⁸ CUKT GD281/41/29.

Considerable interest has been caused in the musical world by the Trustees' announcement of the Scheme for the Publication of Musical Compositions. A number of articles on the subject have been written in the public press, mostly of a favourable and commendatory nature.¹²⁹

This first competition was adjudicated by three figures from the musical 'establishment', two of whom, Sir Henry Hadow and Sir Hugh Allen, Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle upon Tyne and Chreagus of the University of Oxford respectively, would have been known to Warner had their anonymity not been preserved. The third member of the Board of Adjudication was D.F.Tovey, Reid Professor of Music at the University of Edinburgh.

One hundred and thirty-six entries were received and the Adjudicators' Report highlighted three factors which had ensured the success of the first year of the scheme. One was the high level of entry to the competition and the diversity of the work submitted; the second was that the winners' work would stand comparison with the best in Europe, and the third was the high level of competence of most of the entries: 'there are many, even from remote and unknown composers, which show not only considerable talent but a great command of technical equipment and resource.'¹³⁰

Winnowing the competition entries was a complicated business entailing levels of successive re-reading and rejection by the Adjudicators until 'the list had been brought to include those works alone which in addition to their technical equipment

¹²⁹ CUKT GD281/38/46.

¹³⁰ CUKT GD281/41/29.

commended themselves by more marked individuality of theme or some special mastery of treatment.'¹³¹

The composition entered by Warner was entitled '*Folk Tunes for Viola & Orchestra*' and would have had vocal content as it was entered into Class 3 of the competition, 'Choral work with orchestral accompaniment for large or small orchestra'.¹³² The title of this work by Warner shows the influence of the topical subject matter of Cecil Sharp's ongoing folksong revival, and it can be conjectured that Warner's interest in folklore, songs and rural traditions, which she often used ironically and subversively in her later writing, had its roots in this extraordinary time in her life when music predominated.

The outcome of this first Carnegie Music Publication Competition was not the six winners that had been expected, but seven whose work was to be published, together with commendations for a further seven compositions which might have been winners in a less hotly contested year. Ten further works, which 'might also be brought before the notice of musical societies in search of new works,'¹³³ were also cited. Among the winners of the competition were Frank Bridge's symphonic suite *The Sea*; Herbert Howells' *Pianoforte Quartet in A minor*; Charles Villiers Stanford's opera *The Travelling Companion* and Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony*, plus three works by other well-known composers of the day: Edgar Bainton, Granville Bantock and Rutland Boughton.

¹³¹ CUKT GD281/41/29.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

This first competition may have had exceptionally talented entrants but twenty-four, not the six planned, were deemed good enough to be noted and Warner was not amongst them; possibly her work fell amongst those thought to be 'decent respectable exercises which would have been more in place at an academic examination'.¹³⁴ This would reflect her intellectual ability and the highly technical nature of the transcription of Tudor church music that she was being taught by Richard Terry at this time. The Adjudicators' report on Warner's work, together with other administrative paperwork, for example the card records 'kept in the office for reference at later stages',¹³⁵ have not survived in the Carnegie Archive; the reasons why her work was not deemed to be winning material remain unknown and Warner did not keep a copy of the music.

The Carnegie (UK) Trust Music Publication Competition was held each year for another decade. Copies of the scores of the sixty winning works from all of the Music Publication Competitions are held in the Foyle Special Collections Library, part of the Maughan Library, Kings College London where they are on permanent loan from the Carnegie (UK) Trust. Warner never entered the competition again, even though she was said to be a pupil of Vaughan Williams. This assertion is given by Arnold Rattenbury when reviewing books on Gurney's poetry in 1999. Here he is detailing the early years of the twentieth-century:

¹³⁴ CUKT GD281/41/29.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

August 1958 to Paul Nordoff, in which Warner recounts Vaughan Williams' visit to her home in Dorset that day. She states that 'I used to meet him on and off when I lived in London, but never for so long till this happy day'.¹³⁹ It would be surprising if Warner had been Vaughan Williams' pupil and not mentioned it in this letter. Vaughan Williams died two weeks later on the 28 August 1958. Warner recorded her feelings about the visit and his music in a letter to Joy Finzi who had brought him on the visit:

The house keeps his presence. I think it will always keep it. When I go into the dining room he looks up from those scandalously soggy sandwiches, with a look of triumph and satisfaction as though they were a dear little intermezzo in an unrelated key that he was writing entirely to please himself [...] I thought as I sat there, 'I have loved you in your music for fifty years of my life, and now I am talking to you, with all the freedom of long affection'.¹⁴⁰

The *Requiem* spoken of by Rattenbury was music that Warner kept and it is now in the Warner-Ackland Archive. It comprises thirty manuscript pages and is titled in Warner's own hand '*Memorial – Rhapsody for Solo Voice and String Quartet 1918-1920*'.¹⁴¹ Harman says of the music that it is 'dark, brooding and uncertain in key [and] is sensitive to Whitman's words, a hymn to death'.¹⁴²

Nora Warner's move to Devon may have occurred later than autumn 1917 as Warner moved into a flat at 125 Queen's Road, Bayswater, London, W2 at the end of March 1918. A letter dated 23

¹³⁹ STW-PL p.168.

¹⁴⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, unpublished letter to Joy Finzi 29 August 1958. Hereafter STW-UL. Unless otherwise stated, all unpublished letters are in the Warner – Ackland Archive, Dorchester.

¹⁴¹ There is no record of this music ever having been performed. Dr. Richard Hall, Director of the Dorset Rural Music School has examined it and has said that a great deal of re-editing would be necessary to bring it to performance.

¹⁴² Harman, *Biography*, p. 60.

March to the Carnegie Trust ¹⁴³ gives notification of her imminent move. Warner had spent the month of February at the home of Dr. Terry and his family in Belsize Park near Hampstead, presumably moving there from Harrow when her mother left for Devon. ¹⁴⁴

Warner had been learning from Terry to transpose Tudor music for approximately a year and a half by this time, and from the previous July had become a salaried member of the Committee for the Carnegie *Tudor Church Music* project. Terry's opinion of Warner's work in musicology is given below in my discussion of this enterprise; his opinion of her composing is quoted in a memoir of Terry by Hilda Andrews: 'of modern music composed specially for the Cathedral witness the remarkable *Dum Transiisset* [sic] by Miss Townsend Warner'. ¹⁴⁵ This piece was composed by Warner between 1917-18. *Dum transisset Sabbatum*, 'When the Sabbath was past', is a setting of Mark 16 verses 1-2. It is a sacred motet and is sung as the third response in the divine office of Matins on Easter Day. It is possible that Terry encouraged Warner to compose a setting of this motet as he was especially knowledgeable about the music of John Taverner (1490-1545).

Roger Bowers, Emeritus Reader in Music of the University of Cambridge, in his article on Taverner in the *Dictionary of National Biography* states that

Aurally, *Dum transisset* is a work of the greatest refinement, yet within the apparently effortless flow of its

¹⁴³ CUKT GD281/41/225.

¹⁴⁴ CUKT GD281/41/225. Letter to Hetherington, Secretary to the Carnegie Trustees, regarding her move from Grove Hill, Harrow to Belsize Park, London, dated 23 March 1918.

¹⁴⁵ Hilda Andrews, *Westminster Retrospective: A Memoir of R. R. Terry* (London: OUP, 1948), p.134.

polyphony lies embedded and concealed the [mono – rhythmic] cantus firmus. This technique permitted participation by choir chaplains unlearned in polyphonic notation.¹⁴⁶

Taverner used the voices soprano, alto, tenor and two basses; Warner's piece was composed for two sopranos, alto, two tenors and a bass. Only the first verse survives in manuscript music in Warner's hand in the Archive, the Latin words being clearly written on the score:

Dum transisset Sabbatum, Maria Magdalene et Maria Jacobi et Salome emerunt aromata ut venientes ungerent Jesum. Alleluia.

The music for the second verse is presumably lost. However, for Terry to have mentioned that it was specifically composed for the Cathedral it should be assumed that the work was originally complete. Warner's *Dum transisset Sabbatum* was sung by Keble College Choir and mezzo-soprano Nicola Beckley at a concert entitled 'Words and Music of Sylvia Townsend Warner' which was held at St. Anne's College, Oxford on the 3rd May, 2008.

Sacred vocal music was not Warner's only subject matter for composition during these years and she was evidently still striving to produce music that would satisfy her and about which she had no reservation. Warner was an admirer of Thomas Hardy's poetry and in October 1919 she wrote to Hardy requesting permission to set three of his poems; the general title of her composition was to be *Children of Earth*. There is no copy of this letter in the Warner Archive.

¹⁴⁶ Roger Bowers, 'Taverner, John (c1490-1545)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004. [Online version 2009] <www.oxforddnb.com> Accessed December 2014].

Hardy's response to Warner's request is given in a letter of late October 1919 written by his secretary:

Dear Madam,

I write for Mr Hardy to inform you that you have permission to publish the settings to music that you have made of three of his poems entitled 'The Pine Planters', 'She At His Funeral' and 'The Subalterns'.

Yours very truly [unsigned]¹⁴⁷

On the 5 December 1919 Warner wrote to Hardy thanking him for permission to publish her settings of his poems:

I am exceedingly grateful for your permission to publish my settings of your poems. You must allow me to say how greatly I admire your work and to thank you for the thoughts and pleasure it has given me.¹⁴⁸

Like Warner, Hardy had been immersed in music from childhood and was taught to play the fiddle by his father. Music was important to the Hardy family who were well-known locally as musicians; their string band performed regularly at village weddings and other social events. This was rural Dorset, and Hardy would have been steeped in the music of country dances, jigs and folksongs and, when no longer a child-player, he would have been aware that he had helped to keep local musical tradition alive.

Clare Seymour notes Hardy's musicality and its effect on his writing:

Throughout his life, Hardy demonstrated acute sensitivity to, and derived great joy from, the sacred and secular music that he had heard and played during his youth. There are about two hundred 'musical' poems and there is scarcely a story or novel which is not coloured with

¹⁴⁷ *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy: Further Letters 1861-1927*. eds. Michael Millgate and Keith Wilson, 8 vols. (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 8 (176).

¹⁴⁸ Warner, Mss. letter to Thomas Hardy, 5 December 1919. STWA.

musical details or which does not imply the power of music and dance.¹⁴⁹

Warner agrees with this opinion in her written review of Evelyn Hardy's biography of her husband Thomas. The title of her review, 'The True Ear', gives weight to her belief in the musicality of Hardy's writing and Evelyn Hardy's perception of it:

[It] is her recognition of Hardy's sensibility to music and of the way his latent musicianship crops up in his writing, whether as a passion that helps to shape the plot, or as a fineness of ear which catches and defines the minutest sounds of nature, or as a metrical inventiveness which gave such variety to his lyrics.¹⁵⁰

Warner goes on to say that she believes that Hardy had 'a peculiar satisfaction' in displaying his musical knowledge in this way, 'as though, wed-locked to writing, he were keeping clandestine assignations with his first love'.¹⁵¹

Here Warner is showing that she understands how music can be used by a writer in his or her work; she can identify with Hardy in this respect. The last sentence is particularly revealing. For Warner music is a passion that persists and is deeply embedded in her life; like Hardy, music 'crops up' in her writing but is not eclipsed by it.

Warner set 'She at His Funeral', from Hardy's *Wessex Poems and Other Verse* published in 1898, together with 'The Subalterns' from *Poems of the Past and Present* published in 1901. In setting this poem about the trials of junior officers in a marching army, entrapped by military orders and facing death, Warner would have

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Hardy, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Introduction and Notes by Clare Seymour (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994 Reprinted 2004), pp. viii-xi (p. ix).

¹⁵⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'The True Ear'. Review of *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography* by Evelyn Hardy. *Britain Today*, 1954. Cited in *With the Hunted: Selected Writings of Sylvia Townsend Warner*, ed. by Peter Tolhurst, (Norwich: Black Dog Books, 2012), p. 213.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

been referencing the First World War that had ended the previous year. Perhaps more important for her was the portrayal of men excluded from what could be termed 'normal' life; they were on the 'outside', but were unable to escape from their situation. Hardy would have written the poem whilst the Second Boer War, 1899 – 1902, was on-going and the emotional impact of the loss of life was at its height.

Warner was drawn to setting poems that concerned death, separation and sadness at this time, probably in response to the loss of her much-loved father and the World War that had just ended with appalling casualties. The poems that she chose to set to music contain elements of some or all of these themes. In 'The Subalterns' Death speaks of the inexorable momentum of conflict:

'Come hither, Son', I heard Death say;
I did not will a grave
Should end thy pilgrimage to-day,
But I, too, am a slave!

In 'She at His Funeral', the sweetheart of the dead man is outside the accepted norm of family precedence but is one whose grief and sadness is in contrast to the behaviour of family members:

They bear him to his resting place –
In slow procession sweeping by;
I follow at a stranger's space;
His kindred they, his sweetheart I.

Unchanged my gown of garish dye,
Though sable-sad is their attire;
But they stand round with griefless eye,
Whilst my regret consumes like fire!

Both of Warner's settings of these Hardy poems have been performed in concert. Firstly in 2008 in Oxford at the concert cited

above, and then 'She at His Funeral' was sung in Dorchester in 2012 as part of the Warner Symposium held there under the auspices of the University of Exeter and the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society. A setting of Warner's late poem 'Azrael' by the American composer Jonathan David was performed for the first time in England at this concert. It is worth noting here that Warner gained information about Azrael, the angel of death, when she was eight or nine years old, whilst on holiday in Cromer, Norfolk. She recalls in 'Notes about her Childhood' that in the lodging-house was a book called *The Dark River* which contained 'a great deal about Azrael the Angel of Death. [...] 'I expect it helped to form my style'¹⁵² was her comment to Valentine Ackland who was taking the notes.

In her letter to Hardy of October 1919, Warner also requested permission to set his poem 'The Pine Planters'. This poem concerned subjects of interest to her: loss, personal unhappiness and Nature. No copy of this music was found in the Warner Archive.

For Warner composing was evidently a private matter. No mention of her work as a composer is made in correspondence to or from anyone who was part of the London music scene, not even her friend Herbert Howells whose talent for self-promotion, as well as composing, had seen him feted in the musical circles of London in a very short time. Letters between Buck and Warner have not survived and there is no retrospective mention in her later diaries of experiments in composition with which he may have assisted her.

¹⁵² Warner, 'Notes about her Childhood', unpublished typescript. The Rev. Edward Monro was probably the author of *The Dark River* which was published in 1845. It was reprinted in London by Joseph Masters in 1867.

Nor is there an entry for Warner in musical publications of the day such as *A Dictionary of Modern Music & Musicians*, whose preface states that 'the object of this new Dictionary is to supply the musician and the general musical reader with a concise and practical survey of all modern musical activities'.¹⁵³ It would seem that Warner had no status in the musical world of the time and she also appears to have had no contact with other female musicians, despite the success of women composers before the First World War and after it. For example, Dan Godfrey, the conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, had given twenty-four performances of works by eight female composers between 1893 and 1913. He followed this in April 1924 by giving 'the first ever concert of orchestral works by British women composers, including [...] Dora Bright, Dorothy Howell and Ethel Smyth'.¹⁵⁴

Ethel Smyth, born in 1858, was the most prominent English female composer of the early twentieth century. She trained in Leipzig and composed a wide variety of music which included opera, a Mass, instrumental, orchestral and piano pieces as well as chamber music. She refused to conform to expectations that women should play no part in public life (she later became an ardent Suffragette) and that their behaviour should reflect a passive femininity. Her forceful personality ensured that her work was not overlooked but her compositions were seldom evaluated without being compromised by the issue of her gender. This produced a

¹⁵³ *Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians*, ed. by A. Eaglefield - Hull (London: Dent & Sons, 1924).

¹⁵⁴ *Fairest Isle: BBC Radio 3 Book of British Music*, ed. by David Fraser (London: BBC Enterprises, 1995), p. 95.

'double-bind' for Smyth; if she composed delicate melodies she was accused of not being as robust a composer as her male counterparts, and if she produced powerfully rhythmic music she was said to lack feminine charm! She was the first female composer in England to invade the traditionally 'male' territory of concertos, Masses and opera. She wrote several operas, of which *The Wreckers*, a tale of love and smuggling on the Cornish coast premiered in 1906, is perhaps her most well-known. Smyth wrote the libretto for this opera in French, believing that it would be premiered in France, and for her opera *Fantasio*, wrote the libretto in German.

Warner, an 'outsider' by choice, was not a domineering personality like Smyth but it may be supposed that she would have benefited from the musical knowledge of the older composer if she had come to know her, particularly as Smyth was known to Percy Buck. This is shown in a diary entry of Warner's which discusses a contentious issue in a *Tudor Church Music* committee meeting. In this instance Smyth's fearsome personality is shown as equally burdensome:

Fellowes mastered the ceremonies. Afterwards he told us how Nicholson had got 5,000 copies of the Gibbons evening service photographed by Novellos ... apparently a gratuitous gift of our rights by Mitchell, damn him. Ram was highly indignant. Poor Teague sat bearing it as best he could, he had already had Ethel Smyth for lunch.¹⁵⁵

Another female musician, also known to Buck, who could have been a useful contact for Warner when she came to London in 1916 was Marion Scott. She had set up the Society of Women

¹⁵⁵ STW-PD 19 February 1930, p. 55.

Musicians in 1911 and this was well established in London by the time that Warner arrived there. Its guiding principles were 'to promote a sense of cooperation among women in different fields of music, provide performance opportunities and advice'¹⁵⁶ More importantly for Warner's interests, the Society organised at least one conference on composing. This would have been an ideal starting point for Warner's compositions to be discussed, had she wished it, and possibly performed too as the Society organised concerts as well as debates and meetings. Scott's promotional skills – she had many articles published in London newspapers and music journals when she launched the Society – would have ensured a wide and supportive audience.

Sixteen years Warner's senior, Scott was an accomplished and professional violinist who had played in orchestras directed by Stanford, Parry and Gustav Holst. In 1908 she had also formed the Marion Scott Quartet with which she was committed to performing contemporary British music, which the Quartet did in prestigious London venues such as the Aeolian Hall. Like Warner, Scott regularly attended concerts in London and it is difficult to believe that the two women were unknown to each other, particularly as Buck succeeded Scott as editor of the Royal College of Music's Magazine.

Scott was also known to other friends of Warner's, notably Herbert Howells, himself a friend of Ivor Gurney who was a close friend of Scott's: a tight circle, but not one that Warner broke into in

¹⁵⁶ Pamela Blevins, 'Marion Scott, Critic, Champion of Contemporary Music and Women', <www.musicweb-international.com/Scott> [Accessed 27 January 2013].

order to promote her own music. She did not engage with other female composers who, through Buck's offices, could have assisted her in technical and practical ways with her composing and she chose not to be part of any group or society that promoted women's musical talent. It would seem that Warner was diffident about her ability to compose and it could have been her failure to be placed in the Carnegie competition, when so many other entrants had had 'honourable mention,' that caused Warner to think again about music being her metier and about composing as a means of earning a living.

Another factor which the realist in Warner would have experienced in her time in London was the difficulty of being a *female* composer in the male-dominated sphere of music for performance. Her later diary entry for the 5 September 1958 gives a clue to this difficulty:

An invitation to give the Peter le Neve Foster Lecture on *Women as Writers* to the Royal Society of Arts. [...] question of why women aren't composers germane [...] ¹⁵⁷

In the lecture that she delivered this section is telling:

I thought [it] is not so much about how women wrote as about how astonishing it is that they should have managed to write at all [...] Supposing I had been a man, a gentleman novelist, would I have been asked to lecture on Men as Writers? I thought it improbable. ¹⁵⁸

Very evidently this state of affairs would have applied even more strongly to musical composition.

¹⁵⁷ STW-PD 5 September 1958, p. 250.

¹⁵⁸ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Collected Poems*, ed. by Claire Harman (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982), p. 265.

The years to 1921 show Warner still composing but with evidently little thought of publication or performance; the Carnegie rejection having perhaps dealt a sizeable blow to any ambition she might have had of becoming a professional composer. Possibly the final piece that she composed and kept, was a setting of a poem written in 1921 by her friend Stephen 'Tommy' Tomlin, a sculptor who came to know and sculpt members of the Bloomsbury Group. Tomlin's poem 'The Lonely Traveller' relates to the Dorset village of Chaldon Herring where he and Warner visited the writer Theodore Powys:

As I walked by a barn where I was a stranger
I heard a soft lowing, and quiet chain's rattle,
And the air was all sad with the sweet smell of cattle
Breathing great peaceful sighs into their manger.

This music was also performed at the concerts detailed above.

Whatever Warner's reasons for keeping composition a private matter, music in her working life became largely a matter for scholarship after the Carnegie Music Publication Competition, from which point musicological research predominated. Her work with Richard Terry on early music manuscripts at the British Museum became a salaried post and for the next twelve years she became part of the Editorial Committee of the Carnegie (UK) Trust's *Tudor Church Music* project. How this came about, and how Warner, who was then only twenty-four years old, became an Editor in this ground-breaking musicological research is set out in chapter 3.

Chapter 3: The Carnegie (UK) Trust *Tudor Church Music* Project

Allegro

This chapter details the Carnegie project and Warner's involvement with musicological research at the highest academic level, and her work enabling a comprehensive body of Tudor Church Music to be published for the first time. It was an immense effort of musical scholarship; no work on this scale had previously been attempted in England. Warner succinctly states the scope of what she undertook in a later piece of biographical information for her publisher Charles Prentice of Chatto & Windus:

For the last six years I have been romantically engaged in tracing, scoring and collating Masses, Motets and so on by the Henrician and Elizabethan composers, which only exist in contemporary Mss part-books. It is the rediscovery of a lost epoch: for in the XVI cent. England was more celebrated for its music than even for literature [...] and it was completely forgotten.¹⁵⁹

My original research in the Carnegie Archive housed within the National Archives of Scotland has uncovered previously unknown information regarding the project, and Warner's involvement with it; the findings are given below.

Tudor Church Music: Inception 1911 – 1916

It can be seen from chapter one that music in England in the early years of the twentieth century, particularly in what could be called the calm years before the First World War, saw a movement towards a more varied and powerful musical expression: Ralph

¹⁵⁹ STW-PL p. xii.

Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*, *London Symphony* and the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and Elgar's first two symphonies and the *Violin Concerto* for example.¹⁶⁰ An English musical renaissance was underway and, as noted in chapter two, Warner had taken part by entering the newly-founded Carnegie Music Publication Competition in 1917. She had also been studying the intricacies of Tudor music whose publication, when the enormous Carnegie undertaking was complete as far as financial support would allow, would also create new audiences for this largely unknown music.

It was not surprising that the *Tudor Church Music* project came into being at this time as it was in keeping with the new interest in, and revival of, English music of both a secular and religious nature; village green and church choir contributed to the rediscovery of a musical heritage. The reputation of ecclesiastical music had declined following its zenith of popularity in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and much of the music had not been rediscovered, transcribed into a notation that modern musicians could understand, and performed until the last years of the nineteenth century. There were two major reasons for this, the complexity of the notation and the history of religious upheavals in England.

The notation would have been unrecognisable to modern musicians without specialist tuition. (In this instance 'modern' is taken

¹⁶⁰ Hall, i. p. 3.

to mean the late nineteenth century to the present.) There were no bar-lines to regulate the metrical beat of groups of notes and the rudimentary time signature for rhythmic purposes was the breve; eight times the length of the crotchet, the most common unit of measuring the length of a note in the twentieth century; it was truly music of a very different compass. As Anthony Pryer explains:

Mensural music and mensural notation are terms meaning 'measured music' and 'measured notation'. They were used originally to distinguish polyphony and its notation from plainchant which was sung in free rhythm. In mensural notation, two relationships are carefully defined or 'measured': the first is the proportional relationship between a note and the next higher or lower in value. The other measured element is the speed relationship between sections of music in different time signatures.¹⁶¹

Simply expressed, polyphony is the art of creating musical texture, usually with at least three vocal parts, each having an independent melody and sung simultaneously. The thirteenth century repertory of early polyphonic music called organum, from the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, 'contains settings of the liturgical chant in which the choir sings the chant in unison and during the part of the chant normally sung by a soloist, one or more additional voices accompany the original chant'.¹⁶² It is probable that Warner knew of this outstanding collection of early polyphonic liturgical work. As Georgiades states, 'the steadily recurring rhythmic patterns, or so-called rhythmic modes, in the organum mirrored the forms of

¹⁶¹ Anthony Pryer, 'Mensural Music', OCM, p.763.

¹⁶² Thomas Forrest Kelly, *Early Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 22.

poetic meter'.¹⁶³ The number of stressed and unstressed syllables occurring in a line of chant would vary according to which poetic meter was chosen from the five basic rhythms; iambic, trochaic, spondaic, anapaestic and dactylic. The music below is from the 'press-pull' of the Prospectus heralding the publication of the *Tudor Church Music* set of ten volumes, to show how early notation would have looked:

OPENING OF JOHN TAVERNER'S MASS: GLORIA TIBI TRINITAS.

Facsimile from Bodl. MSS. Mus. Sch. a. 376-381. Reproduced in part on opposite page.



The significance of this new notational system was that rhythmically complex music could now be written down with an

¹⁶³ Thasybulous Georgiades, *Music and Language: The Rise of Western Music as Exemplified in the Settings of the Mass* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 24.

exactitude that had not been possible before. Richard Terry, initially the Editor-in-Chief of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes, stated that this was a difficult area of musicology to understand, and even more so to adequately transcribe for twentieth century singers and musicians:

Music was still a craft, and its composers' craftsmen, who followed mediaeval tradition in jealously guarding the mysteries of their craft. Consequently their notation was the province of the initiate, and was not intended to be intelligible to the multitude.¹⁶⁴

By the mid sixteenth century the use of choir-books, where all of the voice parts of a polyphonic composition were inscribed one under the other across the pages of the book, had largely been superseded by part-books. As the name suggests, part-books contained one part for each voice on a single stave, the singer only having sight of his own part of the composition. There could be many part-books copied out for a large cathedral choir. For example Taverner's Mass *Corona Spinea* is written for six voices with often two or more singers per voice part: Triplex (Treble), Medius (Alto), Contratenor (Tenor i), Tenor (Tenor ii), Sextus (Bass i) and Bassus (Bass ii).

These separate part-books were themselves a problem as many were lost, the tenor part in particular, leaving the work imperfect and adding to the problem for modern transcription of the work for performance and publication. Richard Terry comments on

¹⁶⁴ Dr. Richard R. Terry, 'Discoveries of Tudor Music, Part 1', *Sackbut*, 1 (1920), 184-88 (86).

this loss when discussing the major collections of Tudor music in Britain:

Peterhouse has a large and valuable collection, but marred, like some of Christ Church music, by missing Tenor part-books. (It is curious that the part-book frequently missing is the Tenor).¹⁶⁵

A possible reason for tenor part-books not being found when Terry and his editorial team came to collate and then transcribe a Tudor composition could be because this voice range was used as a *cantus firmus*, or fixed melody, that supported and underlay the polyphony. The *cantus firmus* used in church music would have had plain-chant rhythm which traditionally was not written down but learned by rote; hence my supposition that the *cantus firmus* tenor part-books containing a repeating simple melody were little used and therefore more often lost.

Another significant reason for Tudor church music to be lost was religious upheaval during the Tudor monarchies. In 1534 the Act of Supremacy made Henry VIII Supreme Head of the Church of England and he disavowed Papal Authority over the issue of his divorce from Katharine of Aragon. Henry disbanded monasteries, priories and convents and confiscated their assets from 1536 until 1541 and outlawed Roman Catholicism. In 1553 Henry's daughter Mary Tudor came to the throne after the death of her half-brother Edward VI. She rejected Henry's break with the Pope and the establishment of Protestantism by Edward. Parliament repealed the

¹⁶⁵ Dr. Richard R. Terry, 'Discoveries of Tudor Music, Part 1', *Sackbut*, 1 (1920), 184-88 (86).

legislation outlawing Catholicism and the English church became subject to Papal jurisdiction again, with the Mass sung in Latin once more. In 1558 Mary was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth, a Protestant monarch. The dangerous situations that this caused for composers and churchmen at this time – some changing religion to suit patronage whilst some hid their true allegiance – no doubt caused much music to be destroyed or lost.

Difficulties notwithstanding, the desirability of this music becoming accessible and more widely known by being published and performed was being advocated by Dr. (later Sir) W. Henry Hadow and Richard Terry; both men had a passion for early English music, and each had a vision as to how it could be brought before a wider public. Hadow was at the heart of the musical 'establishment' in England in the first decades of the twentieth-century. He firmly believed that sixteenth-century music was comparable to the literature and drama of that age and he was ideally placed to champion its revival.

In 1901 Richard Terry became the organist and choirmaster at the newly built Westminster Cathedral. Prior to this he had been choirmaster at Downside Abbey, and from this appointment in 1896 he had begun to transcribe Tudor church music from manuscripts in the British Museum for the choir to perform. He continued this practice for his new choir at Westminster Cathedral.

Richard Searle encapsulates the complementary endeavours of Hadow and Terry succinctly: 'Terry's purpose was to make the

music accessible through performance; Hadow identified a potential for making the music more widely known through publication'.¹⁶⁶

It is also possible that the national pride of both men had been piqued by comments about the lack of a comprehensive body of published works by English composers, thought to have been given by Professor Dr. Hermann Kretzschmar, the Head of the Prussian Delegation, at the 4th Congress of the International Musical Society held in London in 1911. This Society was formed in Leipzig in 1899 to further musicological research. Members from many nations shared their musical knowledge for the purposes of publication and there was a bi-annual Congress for the exchange of ideas.

Kretzschmar was a composer and writer on music. He had been a teacher in the Leipzig Conservatorium and later became Music Director at the University there. In 1909 he had succeeded Joachim as Head of the Hochschule in Berlin, wrote prolifically on music during his years there and retired in 1920. The published catalogue of the Congress does not include Kretzschmar's presenting a paper at the Congress in London, so it must be supposed that the remarks that Terry refers to were stated less publicly.

However, Kretzschmar's German colleague Professor Dr. Max Seiffert did deliver a paper at the Congress and spoke of the lack of comprehensive published editions of the music of English composers:

¹⁶⁶ Richard Searle, 'Sylvia Townsend Warner and Tudor Church Music', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 11 (2011), 69-88 (70).

Further editing of individual manuscript originals is, from a scientific point of view, neither desirable nor profitable. The need for critical complete editions of the chief masters of English virginal music such as Bull, Gibbons etc. is much more urgent.¹⁶⁷

Several years later Terry discussed the comments by the German delegates, this time publicly and in print, and whilst seemingly irked by them, used the implied 'national disgrace' of the situation to further his desire to see the complete works of the early English composers published:

A German delegate made some forcible remarks to the effect that the general ignorance of early English music being (as it was) due to so little of it having found its way into print, it was highly desirable that something in the way of a definitive collection of it should be attempted [...] the publication of fugitive pieces of Tallis, Byrd and their contemporaries was of no value whatever so far as forming a definitive and critical opinion of English Music was concerned [...] There is an enormous field yet to be covered, but we owe it to ourselves as a nation to see that the reproach is soon removed of having neglected our great national school of music for four hundred years.¹⁶⁸

Kretzschmar's comments, with thought perhaps of his own involvement with the Bach-Gesellschaft, and of the Köchel Catalogue of the works of Mozart published in Leipzig in 1862, may well have been stated at the time of a 'Special Performance at Westminster Cathedral on 2 June 1911' of a concert of Early English Church Music in Latin. This concert was part of the Congress programme of events and the music of Christopher Tye, Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, among others was heard. The Choir of Westminster Cathedral had garnered a large following by this date and Hadow, who would

¹⁶⁷ Prof. Dr. Max Seiffert, *Report of the 4th Congress of the International Musical Society London 1911* (London: Novello, 1912), p.70.

¹⁶⁸ Dr. Richard R. Terry, 'Discoveries of Tudor Music, Part 2', *Sackbut* 1 (1920), 230-34 (230, 234).

have heard the choir, knew and appreciated Terry's skill in transcribing Tudor music for performance.

Hadow's knowledge of Terry's work and of the comments intimating an English lack of reverence for its great composers, may well have been the catalyst for his approaching the Carnegie (UK) Trust for financial assistance for the *Tudor Church Music* project; his name is the first mentioned in connection with it. In a letter dated 13 March 1916 to Charles Canan, Secretary to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press, making reference to Sir William McCormick, Convenor of the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee, Professor Walter Raleigh, English scholar and advisor to the Press, writes:

At lunch at Osler's, today, McCormick who was there, asked if the Press could print music. It seems a complete listing, or rather Corpus, of English music, Elizabethan and Stuart, is in hand with Hadow at the helm. I do hope that you will do this, it is desperately needed.¹⁶⁹

Hadow replies, in two similar letters, to what must have been a letter to him from Canan, a copy of which is not extant. He states his wish in the first letter: 'What has happened is this. For some years past I have been desirous to see a Corpus of our Tudor and Elizabethan music.'¹⁷⁰ He enlarges on his theme in a second letter:

There exists a large amount of extremely fine English church music composed between 1540 and 1623. It is mostly in MS parts; very little of it has ever been printed; a definitive Edition of it would be literally the greatest English musical work ever published. The value of it is not only that of an historical monument but that of a living and permanent art; the best work of our best period. Last winter I met McCormick, put the scheme roughly before [him] and asked if there would be any hope of assistance from the Carnegie Trust. The other day I got a letter to say

¹⁶⁹ Oxford University Press Archive CPIED/001034 'North House' File.13 March 1916.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Hadow letter 18 March 1916.

it was being sympathetically considered. We owe our knowledge of the Church Music very largely to Terry who has been quarrying it out of the British Museum for years.¹⁷¹

Hadow thought highly of Terry and this was shown when Terry was awarded a *honoris causa* degree of Doctor of Music at Durham University. Hadow was then Principal of Armstrong College, affiliated to the University, and spoke of an English musical renaissance and Terry's contribution in the field of sixteenth-century music:

A musician of great learning, of fine scholarship, and of impeccable taste, he has devoted the last fifteen years of his life to discovering and bringing to light these forgotten masterpieces. He has made them once more a part of our common heritage and in so doing has earned the grateful recognition of all who care for the dignity and renown of English Music.¹⁷²

Hadow's recommendation to the Carnegie Trust that Terry would be the ideal candidate to lead a project to revive ecclesiastical music of the Tudor period was not surprising; what is of note is the turbulence this appointment caused in the specialized area of Early Church Music in Britain. Richard Turbet, writing in the journal *Music and Letters*, states that Terry's appointment 'provoked some barbed responses [...] [as] word of the new initiative had penetrated the wartime world of early music, and there was much lobbying for participation in the project'.¹⁷³ This continued for a considerable time and colleagues close to Terry became involved. A letter from Percy

¹⁷¹ Oxford University Press Archive CPIED/001034 'North House' File. Letter of 2 June 1916.

¹⁷² Hilda Andrews. *Westminster Retrospective*, p.108.

¹⁷³ Richard Turbet, 'An Affair of Honour: Tudor Church Music, the Ousting of Richard Terry and a Trust Vindicated', *Music and Letters*, 76 (1995), 593-600 (593-4).

Buck to Hetherington, Secretary to the Carnegie Trustees, shows his involvement with the musical life of London:

It has come to my knowledge that a Mr Royle Shore has been trying hard to stir up opposition to the connection of Dr. Terry with the work. [He] has been written off by his friends and enemies alike as entirely a bore and a charlatan. One of his chief guns is a Mr Collins – a poor little Grub-street man quite without value. Another is Mr Barclay Squire, known to all who have worked at the period as a quack, and rather a shameless one to boot.¹⁷⁴

If, in this letter, Buck is hinting at plagiarism or shoddy workmanship by Barclay Squire, it would have been uncomfortable for him later when he came to accuse Terry of the same misdeed.

It is clear from letters in the Carnegie (UK) Trust Archive that, counter to the perceived wisdom regarding the inception of the project,¹⁷⁵ Terry did not know at this time that they were the potential financiers of the project. A letter to Hadow from Hetherington confirms this: 'If you can get Terry to come to [sic] you will probably have to tell him a little bit more than you have done hitherto and mention the Carnegie UK Trust as the possible Fairy Godmother'.¹⁷⁶

The Carnegie Trust was cautious in its response to Hadow's proposal early in 1916, as is made clear by the correspondence between them. Hetherington was in favour of the project and used his influence by liaising with members of the Music Sub-Committee and persuading them of the merits of the scheme. An example of his

¹⁷⁴ Richard Turbet, 'An Affair of Honour', p. 595.

¹⁷⁵ Harman, *Biography*, p.38.

¹⁷⁶ OUP Archive, CP/ED/001034. Hetherington letter, 4 May 1916. A.L. Hetherington was Secretary to the Carnegie (UK) Trust.

methods is given in a letter to Hadow in which he mentions getting Norval of the Sub-Committee 'on board'.¹⁷⁷

A Paper was circulated to members of the Music Sub-Committee for a response in time for the Executive Committee meeting on the 26 February, 1916. Evidence that the Sub-Committee members were in agreement as to the scheme having merit enough to put before the Executive Committee, is given by a Report entitled '*Publication of Tudor and Elizabethan Music in the British Museum*', with a note appended 'As typed for Circulation to the Executive Committee for Meeting on 30 May 1916'.

Items 1 and 6 of that meeting's agenda encapsulate the essence of the inception of the project and its proposed scope and methodology, and as such are quoted at length.

Item 1:

At the meeting of the Executive Committee on February 26th (see Exec Minute 13, 1916) the Music Sub-Committee put before the Executive Committee the suggestion that steps might be taken to assist in the publication of musical works by composers belonging to the Tudor and Elizabethan period, as these works had never been printed, although they contained music of peculiar value and beauty. No other body is likely to undertake the cost of production, which would directly assist in fostering the appreciation of good music – one of the objects that Mr Carnegie had much at heart.¹⁷⁸

Item 6:

The work of publishing must necessarily be preceded by expert editing of the mss. There is one outstanding figure in England at the present time who could undertake the work. Dr. Terry of Westminster Cathedral is to be regarded as the greatest authority on the subject and would no doubt gladly undertake the work involved.

¹⁷⁷ CUKT GD281/38/46.

¹⁷⁸ CUKT GD281/41/225.

Naturally, most of the words of the music are in Latin and would need translation for the purpose in view, but little difficulty would arise on this head. After the edited mss. had been prepared it would be necessary to place the work in the hands of a publisher. It would probably be desirable that none of the musical publishers should be asked to undertake the work, but the Clarendon Press at Oxford might be guaranteed against loss for a period of, say five years. The music might be produced in two forms. First a complete Library Edition might be printed, which would undoubtedly be purchased by all the Musical Libraries in Europe and the USA and would serve as a classical record of the work in question; and second, some of the outstanding work might be printed in a cheap and readily accessible form.¹⁷⁹

The potential of this hitherto hidden English music in a cheap form especially produced for choirs would widen its appeal as it could be sung at the music competitions and choral festivals which were popular at this time.

This lengthy quote is given to provide a context for the numerous problems that later arose when the project was placed on a much sounder footing than that of the enthusiasm of one individual, however experienced. The difficulties that ensued with Terry as Editor will be discussed later in this chapter.

There were many calls on the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie's Trust for projects in Britain, all concerning, in one form or another, education, research and culture, especially music. He had built the Carnegie Music Hall in New York in the early eighties, a visual statement of his commitment to music, and that the Carnegie (UK) Trustees were considering financing this project was

¹⁷⁹ CUKT GD281/41/225.

indicative of the rising groundswell of interest in English music and the Trust's desire to fulfil the tenets of its Trust Deed.

In April 1916, the estimate arrived at by Hadow and Hetherington for the cost of producing the proposed printed volumes of Tudor music was optimistically low. A figure of £3,000 was thought to be enough to

Do the job pretty well spread over five years. £500 of it would be given to Terry for editing the music for Taverner and including part of Byrd, and the remaining £2,500 might take the form of a £500 yearly guarantee to the Clarendon Press for publishing all that Terry could edit during the five years.¹⁸⁰

Terry's estimate to Hadow, from his work with the manuscripts at the British Museum, had been twenty volumes to be published at the rate of four volumes a year of the complete works of Tudor composers; who was to be included had yet to be decided. Already the project had grown beyond the original conception that the complete works of Byrd and Taverner would be published.

Byrd was thought to be the greatest of the Tudor church music composers by Hadow, who believed that he had been 'very much neglected and a definitive edition of him would be a sort of National monument like the German editions of Bach and Beethoven'.¹⁸¹ In this quotation Hadow is referring to the work of the Bach-Gesellschaft, a society formed in Germany in 1850 for the purpose of publishing the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach without editorial amendments. Publication began in 1850 and was completed in 1900. Unlike that of J S Bach, Beethoven's music was

¹⁸⁰ CUKT GD281/38/46-58 Music Standing Sub-Committee Minutes, April 1916.

¹⁸¹ OUP Archive CP/ED/001034, Hadow letter, 18 March 1916.

published during his lifetime and opus numbers, fashionable in the eighteenth century, were assigned by his publishers, giving cohesion and unity to his compositions.

At the beginning of the twentieth century very little of Byrd's music had been edited and published, although he had, in partnership with his friend and mentor Thomas Tallis, published two volumes of *Cantiones Sacrae*, the first in 1575 and the second in 1588. He was also to publish two volumes of *Gradualia* in 1605 and 1607 respectively.

A performance note in the programme for the Westminster Cathedral concert mentioned above, and probably written by Terry, confirms the small quantity of published works by Byrd:

Byrd was a voluminous writer, and most of his music still remains in manuscript. He published two collections of *Cantiones Sacrae*, three Masses and two volumes of *Gradualia* (ie, the musical settings of the 'Proper' of the Mass) besides much vocal music to English words. The Masses are all now in print, but the second volume of *Cantiones Sacrae* and both volumes of the *Gradualia* exist only in separate part-books, copies of which are in the British Museum and elsewhere.¹⁸²

Hadow's desire to see the works of Byrd published and used is underlined by his remarking that 'They call William Byrd the English Palestrina; I shall not rest until Palestrina is called the Italian Byrd!'¹⁸³

The printing of sixteenth-century music in England was decades behind that of continental Europe at this time, as is shown by entries in the Universal Short Title Catalogue, a collective

¹⁸² [Dr. Richard Terry?], 'Programme Note', *Report of the 4th Congress of the International Musical Society London 1911*, p. 44.

¹⁸³ F.H. Shera, & David J. Golby, '(William) Henry Hadow', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 < www.oxforddnb.com > [Accessed 3 December 2012].

database of all books published in Europe between the invention of printing and the end of the sixteenth century. Only one book on music was published in English, and two in Latin.¹⁸⁴ A similar search for music books published in Italy in either Latin or Italian gives thirty-nine and nineteen publications respectively. Notwithstanding this paucity of music publishing in England, Byrd's Catholicism was the probable reason that his work was not more widely disseminated. It is known that in the late 1550's, when Byrd was still in his teens, he composed the *Sarum Liturgy* for Queen Mary.¹⁸⁵ Shortly afterwards Elizabeth I became Queen and, as Andrew Stewart notes,

Byrd's adherence to the Catholic faith brought him into potential conflict with the Elizabethan state. His house and servants were watched and he and his wife were cited for recusancy, or failure to attend church regularly. Despite the difficulties caused by his religious convictions, Byrd continued to enjoy the protection of the Queen.¹⁸⁶

There was no work of Taverner or John Shepherd published at this time and a very limited amount of Tye, Robert White, Robert Parsons and Richard Farrant had been printed. One hundred of Tallis' compositions were not in print, but fifty works had been imperfectly edited and produced randomly with no thought given as to coherence of interpretation.

It would be wrong to suppose that collections of sixteenth - and seventeenth-century music composed for the Church had not been edited and published prior to the early twentieth century. They had been, and the first was by John Day in 1560 followed in 1641 by

¹⁸⁴ *Universal Short Title Catalogue*, University of St. Andrews, Scotland < www.ustc.ac.uk > [Accessed July 2014].

¹⁸⁵ <www.bbc.co.uk/music/artists> [Accessed February 2013].

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* [Accessed March 2014].

John Barnard, a minor canon at St. Paul's. Boyce's *Cathedral Music* was published in 1761 and then there was a gap of almost a hundred years before the Musical Antiquarian Society began to publish madrigals between 1840 and 1847. However, none of these were what Terry would have named a 'critical' edition; that is, one complete as far as is possible from prolonged and detailed research and comparison of manuscripts and part-books.

It is not out of place here to quote a passage from the 'Editorial Preface' to the first published volume (1923) of *Tudor Church Music* about these first collections of published music:

Our edition owes much to all these, its forerunners. And the very fact that they have only been able to make selections imposes an obligation to publish a collection which shall be as complete as is it now possible to make it.¹⁸⁷

Terry would have a monumental task to perform in finding, collating and editing this large body of Early English music. On the 12 June 1916 a letter was sent by the Carnegie (UK) Trust appointing him Editor and requesting that he visit 'important libraries'¹⁸⁸ in the search for undiscovered Tudor music.

The Third Annual Report of the Carnegie (UK) Trust for 1916 encapsulates the belief of the Executive Committee in the project and in Richard Terry:

The Committee feel singularly fortunate in having secured his [Richard Terry's] valuable services for the task, which requires a profound knowledge of the notation used at that date. Before coming to the decision the Executive

¹⁸⁷ *Tudor Church Music*, edited by Percy C. Buck and others, 10 vols (London: Oxford University Press for the Carnegie (UK) Trust, 1922 - 29), 1 (1923), p.xiv. Volume 2 on William Byrd published first in 1922 in support of the Byrd Tercentenary of that year.

¹⁸⁸ CUKT GD281/41/225.

Committee, as Trustees, had to consider very carefully two questions in particular: first, whether the intrinsic musical value of the work warranted the step, and second, whether its publication would be justified as likely to stimulate the love and appreciation of music among the people of this land. The Committee feel satisfied that the production of this musical wealth is not a mere question of academic interest, but a means of enabling the people of Britain to enjoy a great national heritage.¹⁸⁹

The *Tudor Church Music* project was underway, ostensibly for a period of five years, with one man to accomplish all of the research, collation and transcription of manuscripts and to administer the work through the press to publication. The quotations given above in this chapter show the initial optimism and high hope for the project. However, from research gathered in the archives of the Carnegie (UK) Trust, it can be understood that Hadow's passion to see the music published, Terry's over-optimistic assessment of the work involved together with his inability to stay on task, obscured the true scope of the work required and led to serious problems with the project over time.

Tudor Church Music: The Early Years 1916 – 1920

Terry, as instructed by Carnegie, began visiting 'important libraries' in Scotland. His Interim Report, which the Carnegie Trust had to demand many times before it was finally delivered, states:

I have made preliminary enquiries concerning Aberdeen University and was saved a journey there on receiving [a] report that the library contained nothing bearing on our period. But I was wholly unprepared to find Tudor music of such value as I did at the Euing Library in Glasgow. It is badly catalogued, and appears to be both unknown and unused. But I found some 1st edition of Byrd, together with

¹⁸⁹ CUKT GD281/2/3 Annual Report 1916.

a complete Mss. score of the whole of the first volume of his *Gradualia*, which is not mentioned in the catalogue. When I can again take a holiday from Westminster, the Library will repay a further visit, as a more searching examination may bring other valuable material to light.¹⁹⁰

It is of note here that Terry was dilatory and disorganised with regard to keeping the Trust informed as to his progress, and also in keeping promises relating to the completion of transcription work. This is important because of what later transpired when he was working with a team of editors, Warner among them. The ousting of Terry as Editor-in-Chief will be discussed below and it sheds light on the approach of Warner and Buck in relation to the work undertaken, together with a concern for their reputations in the world of musicology.

As well as his duties at Westminster Cathedral, Terry was an examiner for music and frequently a judge at music competitions and choral festivals. He would appear to have been an extremely busy man professionally, but the prestige of the Carnegie project, being the first to fund the research and publication of a comprehensive collection of English Church Music, outweighed his other musical obligations when the project began.

In a letter to Hetherington of 31 July 1916, Terry writes that he is at Christ Church, Oxford and has visited the library after hours with the Vice-Chancellor to view early music manuscripts. Later he states that between August and December 1916 he had visited Quarr

¹⁹⁰ CUKT GD281/38/46 Music Sub-Committee Minutes, 24 February 1917 - 8 February 1918. Appendix 5.

Abbey on the Isle of Wight, Peterhouse, Caius and St. John's Colleges in Cambridge, and Newcastle and Durham Universities.¹⁹¹

Warner is first mentioned with regard to Tudor music in this first Interim Report:

I have to report another source of help and saving of labour. Miss Townsend Warner (a pupil of Professor Buck and a brilliant musician and composer) has for some months been taking lessons from me on the notation of the Mss. in order to give her spare time to the work [and] out of enthusiasm for the scheme.¹⁹²

There is no documentary evidence to show how Warner came to be learning Tudor notation with Richard Terry at this time.

However, Buck and Terry were friends and both were organists; in addition both knew Henry Hadow well, and, as cited in chapter one, this connection was helpful to Buck. It is possible that through these contacts Buck had learned of Hadow's approach to Carnegie early in 1916 and saw an opportunity for Warner to become involved should the project proceed. As Richard Searle indicates, Warner was 'someone with a first class intellect who could reliably devote herself to learning and assimilating the specialist knowledge needed and with time on her hands to pursue it'.¹⁹³ It says a great deal about Warner's musical ability that a man as busy and notable as Terry was at this time should find her a suitable candidate for instruction.

Terry produced his handwritten Interim Report for June – December 1916 in February 1917. As he had informed Carnegie, during this time Warner was acting as an assistant to him on the

¹⁹¹ CUKT GD281/38/46 Music Sub-Committee Minutes, 24 February 1917 - 8 February 1918. Appendix 5.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Searle, 'Warner and Tudor Church Music', p.71.

project, and was learning the intricacies of Tudor notation and transcription so that it could be understood by modern musicians. Terry had few published reference works with which to help Warner in her studies, as is confirmed in his article in *The Sackbut* journal enlarging on the difficulties facing musicologists with few published reference resources:

Beyond the treatise of Thomas Morley [*A Plaine and easie introduction to practicall musicke* 1597] there is nothing of value on the subject in the English language save Mr J.F.R. Stainer's excellent paper read to the Musical Association twenty years ago. Modern treatises are in German, and the ancient ones are in Latin or Italian.¹⁹⁴

Item 6 of the Proceedings of the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee dated 24 July, 1916 states that 'Dr Terry should obtain any books necessary in connection with the editing work'.¹⁹⁵

Research in the archives of Senate House, University of London, revealed hitherto unknown information from a list setting out the contents of a collection of rare and valuable books on music that had been purchased by the Carnegie Trust, presumably for Terry's use. Now known as the Littleton Collection, it includes incunabula, printed books on music, scores and part-books published between 1480 and 1676. Of particular note is a copy of *Theorica musicae* by Franchinus Gaforius, or Gafurius, printed in Naples in 1480, the earliest printed treatise on music. The list is reproduced below:

¹⁹⁴ Terry, *Sackbut*, 1, p.188. John Stainer, then President of the Musical Association, read a paper entitled 'A Fifteenth Century MS. Book of Vocal Music in the Bodleian Library, Oxford', on 12 November 1895. Published in the *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 22 (1895), 1-22.

¹⁹⁵ CUKT GD281/38/45, Proceedings of the Music Sub-Committee, 24 July 1916.

Senate House Archive 264/118/70

Littleton Collection

COPY

LIST OF ITEMS PURCHASED OF MESSRS. SOTHEBY, WILKINSON & HODGE. - ALSO ELLIS. - ?

Monday, 13th May 1918

✓ Ravenscroft	"The Whole Booke of Psalmes" 1621	12	0	0
✓ Byrd	"Psalmes, Sonets and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie" 1588	51	0	0
✓ Byrd	"Songs of Sundrie Natures" 1589	49	0	0
✓ Merbecke	"Booke of Common Praier" Noted. 1550	57	0	0
✓ Gafurius	^{Thesaurus Musicae} "The oricum Opus Musice Disciplina" 1480	35	0	0
✓ Heyden	"De Arte Canendi" 1540	11	0	0
✓ Lawes	"Choice Psalmes put into Musick" 1648, for three voices.	47	0	0
✓ Niger	"Grammitica Brevis, Editio Princeps" 1480	20	0	0
✓ Praetorius	"Hymmodia Sionia" 1611	8	0	0
✓ Day	"The Whole Psalmes in Foure Partes" 1563	40	0	0
✓ Tallis & Byrd	"Cantiones" 1575	38	0	0
✓ Ward	"The first set of English Madrigals" 1613	41	0	0
✓ Animucia	"Missarum Liber Primus" 1567	17	0	0
✓ Boethius	"Opera varia" 1499	1	18	0
✓ David & Lussy	"Histoire de la Notation" 1822	17	0	0
2 ✓ Gafurius	"Theorica Musice" 1492, 1496	58	0	0
✓ Gafurius	"Musice Utriusque Cantus Practica"	16	0	0
✓ Gafurius	"Musice Utriusque Cantus" 1502	11	0	0
✓ Gafurius	"De Harmonia Musicorum Instrumentorum Opus" 1518	36	0	0
✓ ① Glareanus	"Dodecathordon" 1547	8	15	0
✓ Mace	"Musick's Monument 1676	11	0	0
✓ Morley	"Plaine and Easie Introduction" 1597	16	0	0
✓ Byrd, Bull, Gibbons.	"Parthenia" 1655	12	10	0
✓ Day	"The Whole Booke of Psalmes" 1565	5	15	0
✓ de Sale	"Missarum Solemniorum" 1589	5	10	0
✓ Zacconi	"Prattica di Musica" 1596	2	5	0
✓ Zerlino	"Le Istitutioni Harmoniche" 1588	6	10	0
TOTAL:		£652	16	0

P / Special Collection - Littleton

+ A.A. Wilbye Psc (ms. May 1671

Reproduced courtesy of Senate House Library

Another list, including bibliographical details, is in the Appendices of the thesis

The books had belonged to Alfred Henry Littleton, Chairman of the music publishing house of Novello and Co., and were purchased at an auction at Sotheby's on the 13 May 1918 for £652.16. 0d; this was a year after a formal Editorial Committee to assist Terry had been formed, as is discussed below. It is possible that Hadow was

involved in the transaction and he is reported as saying 'that in his opinion the Carnegie Trust had secured an excellent bargain'.¹⁹⁶

It is probable that Warner used these books for reference as they were in Terry's keeping from their initial purchase in 1918 until his departure from the *Tudor Church Music* project. A letter from Terry to Hadow of 25 May 1918 explains why the books were in his keeping: 'Sir William [McCormick of the Carnegie Trust] said I'd better take charge of the books. In view of air raids I've taken the most valuable of them to the strong room at the Cathedral'.¹⁹⁷ A letter of a much later date from D.N.Lowe, then Secretary to the Carnegie Trustees, to the music librarian at Senate House Library confirms this point:

I have read with considerable interest the story of the Henry Littleton music collection and I see from our records that Sir Richard (then Dr) Terry took possession of it after the sale at Sotheby's and that it remained with him until his severance from the Trust's Tudor Music Committee in 1922.¹⁹⁸

Warner's knowledge of Latin is known from a Report by Terry to the Carnegie Trust: 'The work of providing English words for Latin motets has been speeded up. Miss Townsend Warner is doing volume II of Byrd's *Cantiones*'.¹⁹⁹

It is evident even at this early stage of the project that Terry was beginning to feel the strain of searching out material single-handedly and he made a request for assistance to Carnegie in the Interim Report of February 1917:

¹⁹⁶ Senate House University of London Archives, Minutes of the Library Committee UL1/1/4.

¹⁹⁷ CUKT GD281/41/224.

¹⁹⁸ Senate House Archives, UL4/18/70, CUKT letter, 13 April 1956.

¹⁹⁹ CUKT GD281/38/46.

May I suggest that you ask the Clarendon Press to send a circular letter to each Cathedral Librarian, asking what music – if any – they have by any composers on our list? The saving of time by this process would be of material assistance to me, apart from the fact that it would ensure nothing of importance being left out of our edition.²⁰⁰

On the 27 February 1917 Hetherington wrote to Terry rejecting his request, possibly because of Terry's dilatory way of working, and stating that Carnegie would look into the matter. Nothing of note was accomplished and it is probable that Terry then spoke to Hadow regarding the need for assistance.

Hadow's influence with Carnegie appears to have been considerable and the names of possible 'helpers' with specialist knowledge and a reputation for work in early music were reviewed by Terry, Hadow and Hetherington. These included G.E.P Arkwright, for example, who was an expert in the early church music of Christopher Tye [c1515 – 1573], and John F.R Stainer and his sister Cecie, children of Sir John Stainer the composer, who in 1898 had published *Early Bodleian Music, Dufay and his contemporaries, fifty compositions (ranging from about AD.1400 to 1440) Transcribed from Ms. Canonici misc.213 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*. Dom. Anselm Hughes, who was later to clash with Warner in print about the explanatory essays in the *Tudor Church Music* volumes, was also considered. Other names noted were the Rev. Alexander

²⁰⁰ CUKT GD281/41/225. The Clarendon Press was based at Oxford and originally *Tudor Church Music* was to be published by Clarendon. Humphrey Milford, Publisher to the Press and based in London, took over the supervision of administrative and publication work for *Tudor Church Music*, and all of the volumes of this 10 volume work bear the Oxford University imprint, not that of the Clarendon Press. Martin Maw, Chief Archivist at the Oxford University Press, wrote the biographical entry for Milford in the *Dictionary of National Biography* in 2004. He writes 'Milford's name became a familiar mark on Oxford books, distinguishing London volumes from the Clarendon Press imprint that appeared on works which the Delegates supervised at Oxford'.

Ramsbotham, Precentor of the Charterhouse, who was transcribing the works of Thomas Tomkins [1572 – 1665] in the British Museum, and Dr. Charles Wood, Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music and an expert on early contrapuntal music. Surprisingly, as he must have known that Buck had no expertise in transposing early music, Hadow suggested Buck's inclusion onto the proposed editorial committee. This evidence is found in a letter from Hadow to Hetherington:

As regards Ireland, Dr Grattan Flood, on the RC side has a great deal of knowledge of the Elizabethan period and Dr Buck as the Dublin University Professor of Music would in many ways be a tower of strength.²⁰¹

Initially Hadow appears not to have been in favour of forming an editorial committee, quoting Homer; 'the rule of the many is not good'.²⁰² A little more than a month later he is again writing to Hetherington regarding the proposed committee and he is now in favour of the scheme:

When I was in London last week Terry came to see me bringing with him a proposal which he thinks will put an end to all the difficulties the various people have been trying to put in the way of his appointment. The plan is that he shall gather round himself: (1) Dr. Charles Wood of Cambridge and the R.C.M. [Royal College of Music] who is probably the best authority on Modal counterpoint in England. (2) Arkwright who has made a special study of some of the authors of the period. (3 & 4) Fellowes and Ramsbotham [...] [who] has handed over the whole of his work [on Thomas Tomkins] to Terry and is prepared to do anything that he can to help him. (5) Miss Stainer, daughter of Sir John Stainer, who is a special authority on Medieval musical texts; (6) Miss Warner who is at present acting as Terry's secretary and whom he describes as a genius and (7) Buck whose judgment on matters of taste and form would be invaluable. These he proposes to

²⁰¹ CUKT GD281/41/224, Hadow letter to Hetherington, 28 April 1917.

²⁰² CUKT GD281/41/225, Ibid. 19 April 1917.

collect together periodically at an informal meeting. They are all personal friends, they are all first-rate at their job, they all believe thoroughly in him and are quite ready to leave the direction in his hands. This means that there will be all the advantages of an Editorial Committee combined with all the advantages of a central control. I think very well of this proposal and promised to pass it on to you.²⁰³

This letter is the first document that sets out whom Terry chose to be part of his committee of ‘helpers’, later to be termed editors, for the *Tudor Church Music* project. Warner is amongst them and is lauded by Terry as a ‘genius’ and mentioned as a personal friend of Terry’s by Hadow. The assistance that she is giving Terry with his work and her ‘first class intellect’ in rapidly learning a difficult area of musicology are paying dividends for Warner and establishing her among her peers as a musicologist of distinction.

How Hadow came to have a change of heart regarding an editorial committee of ‘helpers’ for Terry is not recorded, but it could be that the notion of ‘central control’, in the form of Terry as Editor-in-Chief, made a difference to his opinion. In the above letter, Hadow states that the named musicologists are Terry’s choice of ‘helpers’. Warner’s diary entry of a much later date reminisces on the subject and gives a very different, and modest, recollection:

Thinking of my London days [and] Tudor Church Music, *Ave Dei Patris Filia* so tediously Marian [...] and hearing Big Ben tell midnight, the thrill of independence the first time I heard it; and how odd that I should have been chosen, when there was Cissie Stainer, and that Anglican parson etc all with as good or better qualifications – as I thought this, it darted upon me that my real qualification was not scholarly at all, but my ability not to fall out with Terry, — indeed, to get on very well with him till that last regrettable post-committee meeting epoch.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ CUKT GD281/41/225, Hadow letter to Hetherington, 30 May 1917.

²⁰⁴ STW-UD 24 September 1958.

Warner had been working with Terry for approximately a year by the time that he and Hadow were discussing a formal committee of 'helpers'. In these circumstances it would have been strange if Terry had not spoken to her about the proposed committee and his wish that she should be a member, as he was writing to other people at the time to persuade them to commit to the scheme, one of whom was Godfrey Arkwright. In a letter to Arkwright Terry lists the other proposed members of the committee and gives unreserved praise for Warner's talent:

Last but not least, I have Miss Townsend Warner, a most brilliant musician and a pupil of Buck. I only began teaching her the old notation last year, and now she is scoring the stiffest things of the Fayfax period that I can find. She is more than clever, in fact she is nothing short of a genius.²⁰⁵

In two statements by Terry that have been cited above concerning Warner's musical talent, the words 'brilliant' and 'genius' are used. He patently thought highly of her ability and I believe that Warner was not asked onto the Editorial Committee for the *Tudor Church Music* project as a late-comer and junior member, when other, more eminent musicologists were already established as committee members; in a very real sense she was already there, having proved to be an apt pupil and assistant to Terry for a year before the idea of a formal editorial committee was put forward.

Hadow's endorsement of a committee for the *Tudor Church Music* project carried weight with the Carnegie Music Standing Sub-Committee:

²⁰⁵ Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arkwright Mus.C86.117, Terry letter to Arkwright, 10 September 1917.

The Committee considered the question of forming a voluntary Advisory Committee to assist Dr. Terry. Suggestions in this direction had been made by Dr. Terry through Dr. Hadow. As a result it was decided that Dr. Terry should enlist the services of the following ladies and gentlemen on the footing that the work should be voluntary, but that out-of-pocket expenses should be paid; on the other hand, if any definite section of editing work were entrusted to any member an honorarium should be paid at the conclusion of the work on the recommendation of Dr Terry: Dr Charles Wood, Mr Arkwright, Dr Fellowes, Mr Ramsbotham, Miss Stainer, Miss Townsend Warner, Dr Buck.²⁰⁶

By agreeing to further funding on what could be called an ad hoc basis and relying on Terry's decisions regarding the allocation of the research and transposition of scores to individuals, the Carnegie Trust set a precedent that was to lead to disillusionment with the project as the costs, over time, escalated immeasurably beyond those which had originally been envisaged; detailed costing and proper planning were not undertaken before Terry was appointed and decisions appear haphazard thereafter.

Hadow's estimate of £3,000 to 'do the job pretty well' began to be eroded almost immediately and, it will be shown, to Warner's benefit. A further Minute in those mentioned above concerned a talented young composer, Herbert Howells, and Hadow's interest in him. Earlier in 1917, Howells had been one of the winners of the first Carnegie Music Publication Competition with his work entitled *Piano Quintet in A minor, op.21*. Warner had also entered the competition but had not been successful. Hadow had been an anonymous

²⁰⁶ CUKT GD281/38/46, Music Standing Sub-Committee Minutes, 7 June 1917.

Adjudicator for this competition and knew the quality of Howells' musicianship. The Minute stated:

The Committee considered carefully a letter from Dr Hadow (Appendix 1V) in regard to Mr Howells, who is at present, under doctor's orders, forbidden to undertake heavy and continuous work. It was decided to employ Mr Howells at a suitable salary in connection of the editing of the Tudor and Elizabethan music, and that arrangements should be made with Dr. Terry to that end.²⁰⁷

As noted above, Hadow's opinions were taken seriously, and usually endorsed, by the Carnegie Trust. In this letter his impassioned language regarding Howells' musical ability underlines his conviction:

I am very much distressed to hear that Mr H Howells, to whom one of the Carnegie awards was made last month, is very seriously ill, and that the doctor prescribes a period of complete rest as the only hope of recovery. Mr Howells has, I believe, no private means and it seems wholly impossible that he should be able to carry out the doctor's instructions without very material assistance. Now in all my experience I do not think I have ever come across any young English musician of such remarkable promise. If he lives he has a great future. I would urge that Howells' life is a matter of national importance [and] I do most sincerely hope that you will be able to do something for a man on whom so much of the future of British music seems to me to depend.²⁰⁸

Hadow is again expressing his deeply held belief in the importance of National music, and he must have impressed the Carnegie Trustees with the eloquence of this request on behalf of Howells. A salary was offered, not merely expenses and the possibility of an honorarium at the end of several years work as had been proposed for others of the committee of 'helpers'. Even more extraordinary was the fact that Howells had no knowledge of the

²⁰⁷ CUKT GD281/38/46, Music Standing Sub-Committee Minutes, 7 June 1917.

²⁰⁸ CUKT GD281/41/225, Hadow letter to Carnegie Trustees, June 1917.

notation and transcription of Tudor and Elizabethan music and was to be taught by Terry, who welcomed the arrangement. Terry knew Howells' compositional work and admired it; he had performed a setting of the Mass by Howells at Westminster Cathedral in 1912, and thought his 'four anthems BVM quite the finest written by a modern Englishman'.²⁰⁹

Two weeks after the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee had agreed a salary for Howells, Hetherington received a letter from Robert Warner, Sylvia's uncle. The letter set out the nature and complexity of the work on Tudor music that she was undertaking for the Trust. The two men knew each other and the letter was informal:

The reason for writing to you is in connection with the Tudor and Elizabethan Church Music publication undertaken by the Carnegie Trust.

My niece (Miss Sylvia Warner of Grove Hill Harrow) is devoting a great part of her time under Dr. Terry to this work, for which she gets no pay. I understand that what she does is not merely transcription of MSS but also adaptation of notation etc., and that her work requires considerable musical knowledge and is of no little value, and it seems to me not unreasonable that she should be paid something for it. If the labourer is worthy of her hire I am sure the Trust does not want to take her time for nothing.²¹⁰

There is no documentary evidence to show that Warner was party to this plea for remuneration for her work with Carnegie. It has been noted above that Warner never appeared to promote either her music or her writing, and it is therefore unlikely that she spoke to her uncle in such a way as to ensure that he wrote to Carnegie; Buck is the person most likely to have intervened on her behalf. Certainly it

²⁰⁹ Andrews, *Westminster Retrospective*, p.134. BVM is Blessed Virgin Mary.

²¹⁰ CUKT GD281/41/225, Robert Warner letter to Hetherington, 21 June 1917.

was unfair that Howells, without knowledge of the work, should receive payment for learning how to produce what was required, when Warner, deemed 'brilliant' and a 'genius', had been working productively for many months without payment for her time or expertise.

Hetherington's reply to Robert Warner's letter was conciliatory:

I am very glad that you have written to me about Miss Warner. At the outset she undertook the work with Dr. Terry to a large extent in order that she might for her own interest become familiar with the Old Notation and Elizabethan Music. Only the other day, Dr. Terry was telling me what an apt pupil she had proved to be and how valuable to him she was. The position, therefore, has now changed, and Miss Warner has become a valuable help rather than an interested pupil. You may safely assume that this Trust does not expect anybody to do valuable work on their behalf without proper remuneration. I will write to you further after conferring with Dr. Terry.²¹¹

Hetherington had no real need to confer with Terry regarding Warner deserving payment for her work. Terry had written to him the previous week and the final paragraph shows to what extent Warner had mastered the transposition and editing of Tudor notation:

Lastly it is very necessary that someone should now go to the Bodleian and Christ Church again to collate some of my scores, the vocal parts of which I do not possess in rotograph. If you approve, I will send Miss Townsend Warner who has plenty of leisure and who is now so far advanced in her study of the old notation that she is able to tackle any kind of manuscript. The work that is to be done at Oxford she will do as well as I should myself.²¹²

²¹¹ CUKT GD281/41/225, Hetherington letter to Robert Warner, 23 June 1917.

²¹² Ibid. Terry letter to Hetherington, 15 June 1917.

Hetherington's letter in reply is no longer extant, but Terry's reply to the missing letter is once again fulsome in its praise of Warner's musical ability:

Meantime may I say that I am more than delighted at the idea of having Miss Warner's work put on a different footing. My real object in sending her to Oxford was that I might give her the opportunity of collating the manuscripts of which I spoke. This done I should have had specimens of her work in every department to show you, and I meant (when I had them all complete) to suggest that as she had shown herself so eminently competent in every way, she should be given a definite portion of the Edition to do and be remunerated for it.

However, your letter saves me all this trouble and I can only say that I have the utmost confidence in her work. She is more than the merely ordinary clever girl, I consider her ability not far short of genius.²¹³

It is of note, and perhaps corroborates the surmise that Buck was involved in the matter of remuneration for Warner, that Terry was asked to confer with him about her proposed salary. This is set out in further correspondence between Terry and Hetherington, in which the latter writes: 'Before taking any further steps I shall wait to hear from you the result of your discussion with Percy Buck about a suitable salary, but I think £150 would be about the thing'.²¹⁴ This was the same salary that Carnegie had awarded to Herbert Howells.

The Music Sub-Committee Minutes of 3 August 1917 state:

1. In accordance with the decision of the Committee Mr Howells has been appointed as assistant to Dr. Terry at a salary of £150 p.a to commence from the 1 July.
2. Dr. Terry suggests that Miss Townsend Warner, who has been undertaking a considerable amount of work in connection with the T & E editing, has now reached such a stage of proficiency and is proving so valuable to him that her services should be remunerated. It is suggested

²¹³ CUKT GD281/41/225, Terry letter to Hetherington, 4 July 1917.

²¹⁴ Ibid. Hetherington letter to Terry, 6 July 1917.

that Miss Warner who will give practically her whole time to the work for a period, should receive a salary of £150 p.a. Approved.²¹⁵

Warner was notified of her change of status in a letter dated 6 August 1917, and replies to Hetherington at the Carnegie Trust:

Dear Sir,

Dr. Terry has already told me of the proposal to appoint me as his assistant in editing the Tudor and Elizabethan music.

I have much pleasure in accepting the appointment, at the salary [£150 per annum] that you mention. I should be greatly obliged if you would convey to the Trustees my gratitude for the post.

Yours truly,

[Signed]²¹⁶

Warner is now, with Herbert Howells, an acknowledged assistant to Terry. As Paul Andrews says in his essay on Howells' connection with Carnegie, 'Warner's surviving letters are in a lively and informal style and suggest that she was very well disposed towards the personable young composer'.²¹⁷

Four letters to Howells dated between September 1917 and July 1918 survive and contain unique information about how Warner saw her work on the *Tudor Church Music* project at this time, together with some of the methodology involved with it. Importantly, the need for 'thematic indexes, or indices, of all the scattered part-books in the Kingdom,'²¹⁸ is mentioned for the first time. Warner also

²¹⁵ CUKT GD281/38/46.

²¹⁶ CUKT GD281/41/225, Warner letter to Hetherington, 8 August 1917.

²¹⁷ Paul Andrews, 'A Matter of National Importance: Herbert Howells and the Carnegie UK Trust', *Organist's Review*, 81 (1995), 32 -5.

²¹⁸ Royal College of Music London, Special Collections. Herbert Howells Archive, Warner letter to Howells, 25 February 1918, reference7832/386b.

describes how Buck and Terry prevailed upon her to write a paper on the 'Point of Perfection' in Tudor music. She admits to

Feebly yielding to the steam-roller persuasions of Buck and Terry, I've done a dreadful paper for them on the Punctum Perfectionis. It has been the most intolerable bore to do, and will no doubt be as tedious to others as it is to me but I am powerless before my better impulses, and always getting let in for meritorious acts like this.²¹⁹

As will be seen below, this situation was soon changed. By the early 1920's Warner had become very much her own person and appears delighted with new discoveries and experiences which were not dependent upon others.

Buck's influence is apparent in Warner's letters to Howells and he is mentioned often. In the letters, as well as the problems concerning Tudor church music, Warner describes a concert visit and writes about holiday plans, visiting friends and useless remedies for sleeplessness. It is clear from the language used that she wanted to be on good terms with Howells, possibly seeing him as an ally as they were of similar age and the rest of the Editorial Committee were considerably older. This is hinted at in the long letter quoted above:

There is a Committee meeting looming ahead. We [Buck and Warner?] hope Hadow is coming to it. And I hope you are coming too. Your presence mitigates considerably my position of Susanna in a den of Elders.²²⁰

B.S.Brook , OCM, p. 1269, describes what a thematic catalogue includes: 'A catalogue which uses usually the first few notes, or the incipit, sometimes the principal theme or themes, and occasionally (for polyphonic works) the entire texture of the opening, to provide positive identification of a musical work'. OCM, p. 1269. Notation is required for this type of index. A thematic index would have assisted the Editors when unidentified mss. were discovered; they could have compared the nameless mss. against what was in the index as first notes. Brook goes on to explain 'This means of identification finds a multitude of applications, from the table of contents of an edition of music . . . to the scholarly catalogues of composers' works'.

²¹⁹ Herbert Howells Archive, Warner letter to Howells, 25 February 1918, reference7832/386b.

²²⁰ Ibid.

This letter is important because within it Warner ranges seamlessly and entertainingly over several subjects and shows at this early date her talent for correspondence. She writes of Terry's unreliability: 'He never breathed a word about sending you scores. I'm so sorry'; her view on the Tudor composer Nicholas Ludforde whose scores she was working on in the British Museum; 'an odd man, ordinarily rather mellifluous in his part-writing, and then all of a sudden assaulting one with the most arbitrary noises. But quite entertaining on the whole'; her imminent move to Bayswater; 'When I am settled in town I hope you will come and see me. I want to have a long talk with you about Tudors and Elizabethans', and her regret that she cannot accompany Howells to York Minster.

Buck's influence is especially noticeable in Warner's first letter to Howells, which reads as if she has been asked to reply to a letter from Howells to Buck:

Dear Mr Howells,

PCB has told me that you wrote and asked him about doing a mutual Cathedral. He is always fearfully busy in term time, so I'm afraid any such little excursions will have to be shut down till the Christmas holidays. Meanwhile, would you like to go over to St. Albans one day with me? . . . Anyhow, let me know when you are next in town and we could lunch together and have a talk.

as I do – that there's enough in this job to keep one learning all one's life; it's not a bad feeling.

Yours sincerely,
[signed].²²¹

What she thought about working on the Tudor manuscripts is encapsulated in the final sentence of this letter; the intellectual

²²¹ Herbert Howells Archive. Warner letter to Howells, 24 September 1917, reference 7832/386a.

challenge of finding, transposing and editing Tudor church music manuscripts into works that could be performed by modern musicians was obviously one that Warner relished, and she appears to have been looking forward to more complex musicological work; in 1917, and for some years afterwards, music, though not perhaps as she had envisioned it, was Warner's metier.

Surprisingly, Warner did not become a close friend of Herbert Howells, although Buck and Howells became firm friends, possibly because she could not facilitate his advancement. Howells was an extremely ambitious young composer and he cultivated, and was cultivated by, the musical *cognoscenti* of London, as entries in his diaries attest.²²²

An article by Paul Andrews suggests that William McCormick was a useful patron to Howells. Andrews quotes from a letter by a [Mr] R. Francis, presumably a friend of Howells, dated April 1917, which congratulates him on his Carnegie Music Publication Scheme success:

Sir W M [Sir William McCormick of the Carnegie Trust] considers you, I gather, his own special discovery and I hope that it may mean a nice job in London and every facility for going ahead; as I told you he has great influence.²²³

Andrews goes on to substantiate this assumption with reference to letters from McCormick to Howells in the Howells Archive. They concern McCormick's interest in the composer's

²²² Herbert Howells' diary, 17 February 1919: 'I met and lunched with Sir William McCormick [...] at the Saville Club', and 19 February 1919: 'Lunched with Hugh Allen, PCB and others at the RCM. Many good yarns to help down the treacle tart'.

²²³ Paul Andrews, 'A Matter of National Importance' p. 34.

problems with military service exemption and that he 'had used his influence to obtain specialist medical help'²²⁴ for Howells. These, and other entries in Howells' diaries, are a window into a world of influence and patronage.

The lack of sustained friendship between Warner and Howells may also have been because Howells found Warner formidable and overwhelming by both reputation and his own experience of her company. There is a suggestive passage in a letter from Terry to Howells dated 28 September 1917:

As Wednesday is my day off from the Cathedral could you manage to come on Tuesday at 11.15 or 4.30? I shall enjoy putting you through your paces in the matter of the old notation, and when you have 'put the wind up' the ligatures, you can talk to that knowledgeable person Miss Warner, who will no doubt knock sparks off you on the point, as she does with us all.²²⁵

Later Howells visited Warner at her Bayswater home and enjoyed her conversation sufficiently to record the following:

Little – if any – work gets done when I'm in London, tho I suffer from an extreme of business and mobility. So does STW's mind – and so too, (as a consequence) her conversation. I had two hours fun out of it at 125 Queens Road Bayswater this morning.²²⁶

It does not appear from his diary entry that Howells participated fully in a mutual conversation with Warner, even if he had two hours fun and was, perhaps, merely encouraging her to verbal excess, much as her friend Stephen Tomlin was doing at this time: 'making some

²²⁴ Paul Andrews, 'A Matter of National Importance', p.35.

²²⁵ Herbert Howells Archive. Terry letter to Howells, 28 September 1917, reference 8900.

²²⁶ Ibid. Mss. diary 15 February 1919.

carefully placed remark [that] set her off on an imaginary flight of her own'.²²⁷

On a trip to the Essex Marshes with Warner, 'on a grey wintry morning'²²⁸, David Garnett gives a similar account of her remarkable verbal ability: 'Sylvia gave an extraordinary display of verbal fireworks. Ideas, epigrams and paradoxes raced through her mind and poured from her mouth as though she was delirious'.²²⁹

Garnett's response is one of surprise, almost wonder, at the range of Warner's 'fireworks'. He had been equally surprised at their first meeting at his bookshop a few months earlier: 'An alarming lady with a clear and minatory voice, dark, dripping with tassels – like a black and slender Barb caparisoned for war – speaking to me in sentences like scissors; it was you dearest Sylvia'.²³⁰ This was Warner's second visit to the Essex marshes. Of her first visit in August 1922, Claire Harman states that: 'The visit to the marshes marked a change in Sylvia; in 1922 she felt, as she was to say later, that she had become properly her own person, having been till then 'the creature of whoever I was with'.²³¹

From 1917 Warner was immersed in musicology, and during the following years she was writing the all-important prefatory matter, or Prolegomena as Terry termed it, to volume one of the *Tudor Church Music Library Edition*. She was also singing with the Bach

²²⁷ Harman, *Biography*, p. 44.

²²⁸ *Sylvia & David: The Townsend Warner/Garnett Letters*, ed. by Richard Garnett (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), p.5.

²²⁹ Harman, *Biography*, p. 53.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 51.

²³¹ *Ibid.* p. 53.

Choir, had a poem, 'The Happy Day'²³², published in the journal *Music and Letters* and was evidently relishing her independent life in London. The 'fireworks' indicate, perhaps, the advent of a young woman confident of her ability with both the written word and demanding work in musicology, and it is not surprising that Warner began to write much more poetry and possibly to begin work on her first novel, *Lolly Willowes*, during the early years of the nineteen twenties.

In the years leading up to Warner becoming 'her own person,' she was immersed in work for the *Tudor Church Music* project. Within a month of Carnegie agreeing that Terry could have his 'helpers' on an expenses-only basis, those involved were visiting cathedral libraries to ascertain what each library or choir school had in the way of part-books or, much more rarely, complete manuscripts of early music.

The first indication of who went where, after Terry's initial visits to libraries, is given in a letter from Terry to Hetherington. From the language used in this letter it can be understood that the planning at this stage of the project was fluid and likely to change:

For the present Ramsbotham is going carefully through Lincoln and Worcester. Fellowes promises to do the same for Windsor, Winchester, Chichester, Rochester and Canterbury. Buck will do the same for Durham [...] it will do for a start.²³³

²³² *Music and Letters*, vol.1 (iv) (1920), p.284. Published with amendments in *The Espalier*, 1925.

²³³ CUKT GD281/41/225, Terry letter to Hetherington, 28 July 1917.

It was discovered that Lincoln Cathedral had all of William Byrd's *Gradualia*, *Cantiones Sacrae* and *Songs of Sundrie Natures*.

Hetherington would have known from the letter of the 15 June that Terry had sent Warner to the Bodleian Library in Oxford. She subsequently claimed £19.5s.9d in out-of-pocket expenses for an eleven day stay in July 1917,²³⁴ and was to make further visits to the Bodleian and Christ Church in Oxford for the *Tudor Church Music* project.

A letter dated 30 October 1917 from Terry to Hetherington gives more information regarding visits to cathedral libraries. Warner was to cover Canterbury, Manchester, Peterborough, St. Albans and York. However, there is no confirmation in other documents in the Carnegie Archive that she visited these libraries. She did claim expenses totalling £11.17s.6d for the period October 1918 to January 1919 with regard to visits to the cathedrals of Norwich and Salisbury.²³⁵ First-class rail fares appear to have been normal practice and would have added to the 'out of pocket expenses' that Carnegie had agreed to fund. This would have further inflated Hadow's initial low estimate for the extensive work required to find, edit and publish the Tudor church music.

Of particular interest is the report by Warner, dated September 1917, of her visit with Buck to St. Michael's College, Tenbury, Worcestershire. The church and college of St. Michael were built by the Rev. Sir Frederick Ouseley at his own expense and he was vicar there from 1856 until his death. He bequeathed his

²³⁴ CUKT GD281/41/225.

²³⁵ CUKT GD281/41/226.

extensive music library of five thousand volumes, some of which were unique manuscripts, to the Bodleian Library.

It can be ascertained from Warner's report that she brought to light a hidden gem: 'three large part-books, copied from some old MS.'²³⁶; which are part of what are now known as the *Tenbury Manuscripts*. In her report Warner describes manuscript part-books of polyphonic music from approximately 1600 which contained sacred and secular works by both English and continental composers, Byrd and Taverner among them, and her knowledge of Tudor church music is evident:

The copying is done carefully but unintelligently, in such a non-committal scrivener's hand that I cannot even hazard a guess as to the date at which it was done. The books are called respectively: Countertenor, Bass and Tenor. The first contains a treble part and sometimes two. What three-part work I scored sounds as if an Alto part were missing.

The contents of these volumes are Communion Services, prayer, and Offertory Motets, all short movements and rather simple and austere in style. The treatment of the words is mainly syllabic. There is a certain amount of music in triple time, generally of a slightly more florid nature, with simple points of imitation: and short sections are given to different groups of voices, in the manner of Taverner and Fayrfax. The phrase 'Heaven and earth are replenished with thy glory' which is only used in the first prayer-book of Edward VI (1549) occurs in the Sanctus. (Even so this does not quite fit, because in the Prayer-Book it is in the Te Deum that the word 'replenished' is employed.)

The notation makes use of ligatures, both square and oblique; the sign for alteration; the sign for sesquialtera; and the long illuminated finals. Some of the communions are in plainsong notation. C, G, and F clefs are used [...] The copyist has been moved in places to try and copy the illuminated finals and colophons, and he has used both red and black inks. The original MS. seems to have been a clear and beautiful one, and written, as far as one can

²³⁶ CUKT GD281/41/225. Untitled report dated Tenbury, September 1917.

judge from the copy, in the same type of hand as the *Eton Mss.*²³⁷

She also displays wit and humour when describing other works discovered at Tenbury:

A number of operas and oratorios of the classical periwig school, by composers of Grétry, *[and] a large amount of painstaking Mss. copies of standard works like 'William Tell' and 'The last Judgment' which might be judiciously consigned to the dust-cart.²³⁸

Unfortunately this is the only report of a visit to a cathedral by Warner that survives in the Carnegie Archive. It is of real importance in that it shows that Warner had first-hand knowledge of the *Eton Mss.*, one of only three large illuminated choir books containing music for the Latin rite that had survived the Reformation – the other two being the *Lambeth Choir Book* and the *Caius Choir Book*, housed at Lambeth Palace, London, and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge respectively. Research by musicologists has made links between the Lambeth and Caius choir books using concordances and both are largely made up of works by Robert Fayrfax and Nicholas Ludforde, the latter a favourite composer of Warner's.

However, it was the *Eton Mss.* that Warner had first-hand knowledge of, and this is a testament of her expertise in transcribing Tudor music; it would not have been entrusted to anyone but an acknowledged expert. The Mss. was compiled during the late

²³⁷ CUKT GD281/41/225. Report dated Tenbury September 1917. The *Eton Mss.* is sometimes called the *Eton Choirbook*.

²³⁸ CUKT GD281/41/225. Report dated Tenbury September 1917. *André Grétry was an 18th century composer known for his comic operas. Here Warner uses her wide musical knowledge to make a point that this music is the antithesis of Tudor church music. References are usually titled 'The Grétry School'.

fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries for use by the singing Clerks of Eton College. Dom. Anselm Hughes, a noted authority on early polyphony, explains in his paper to the Musical Association in February 1927 that 'The original singing foundation at Eton was for four lay clerks and sixteen boys [...] there was a Medius, Contratenor, Tenor and two Basses'.²³⁹

The physical description of the illuminated manuscript, as given by Dr. M.R. James from his *Catalogue of the Eton Mss. (1895)* and quoted by Hughes in this paper, verifies the fact that the manuscript was written specifically for Eton College: 'Vellum [...] 125 folios [...] in the original boards, covered with stamped leather with Tudor badges [...] the arms of the College are in the first initial.'²⁴⁰ Hughes goes on to explain that 'All four, five and six voices sing from the one copy, separate voice parts being given'.²⁴¹ The size of the manuscript, twenty-three and a half inches by seventeen inches would allow for this.

Originally the *Mss.* contained music by twenty-four composers, John Browne, Richard Davy and Walter Lambe having the most music included. Work by John Dunstable and John Baldwin appears in the index but their music is lost. The *Mss.* 'contains about fifty complete works (a further forty or so are fragmentary or lost

²³⁹ Dom. Anselm Hughes, 'The Eton Manuscript', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 53 (1926), 67-83.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 69.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

altogether), most of them are elaborate antiphons and settings of the Magnificat for four, five and six or more voices'.²⁴²

Indications of the importance of the *Eton Choir Book* in the late twentieth century and, it must be presumed, in the early twentieth century when Warner would have known it, are given on the website of the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (DIAMM). This project represents collaboration between the University of Oxford, Kings College London, the Bodleian Library and other institutions to digitise and make available for study important works of medieval music.

The DIAMM website calls the *Eton Choir Book*:

One of the most iconic of music manuscripts [...] [it] is of unique importance, both in its own right as a cultural artefact and as a source of English choral polyphony composed during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Had it perished, along with so many other, less fortunate, pre-Reformation music manuscripts, our knowledge of a critical moment in the history of English music would have been immensely diminished.²⁴³

There is no evidence to show how Warner came to have known the manuscript, but it was probably through Terry who sometimes had other unique manuscripts, the *Old Hall Mss* for example, in safe-keeping at Westminster Cathedral for rotographing (a form of early photocopying, reproducing documents as reverse positives, i.e. white text on a black background) in order that the task of detailed editing could begin from the facsimile and the Mss. could be returned to its cathedral or college library. Terry mentions in a report to Carnegie that

²⁴² [Anon], 'The Eton Choir Book', OCM, p. 434.

²⁴³ < www.diamm.ac.uk/the-eton-choirbook/ > [Accessed 30 August 2013].

I am making myself responsible for the OLD HALL, ETON and CAIUS MSS. Up to the present I have done little at the Eton MS. beyond an examination of its contents and the scoring of isolated items for reference.²⁴⁴

There is, however, no mention by Terry in correspondence to the Carnegie Trustees of the *Eton Mss.* being rotographed for the *Tudor Church Music* project. Several thousand rotographs made during the project were gifted to Senate House Library by the Carnegie (UK) Trust in the early 1930's. They are organised by the original location of the scores that make up the collection: 'London, British Museum', or 'Oxford, Bodleian Library', for example.

The information given at length here regarding the *Eton Mss.* is important in that it demonstrates that Warner worked with the most iconic and valuable material and also provides a context for the possibility that she could have continued with a career in musicology.

At the end of 1917 Terry prepared a second 'Interim Report' for the Carnegie Trustees. This document sets out what was proposed for future research on Tudor and Elizabethan music, together with details on the progress made since his first report for the period June – December 1916. This is one of three detailed documents by Terry for this stage of the project, all of which are discussed below. It consists of four closely typed pages and a handwritten list of titles of reports on the libraries that had been visited.

Terry's opening paragraph is indicative of the democratic way of working that he appeared to encourage:

²⁴⁴ CUKT GD281/41/225, Richard Terry, 'Tudor and Elizabethan Music, Interim Report to December 1917', p. 2.

Since the date of my last report I have invited my helpers in the work to form themselves into an Unofficial Committee, to hold periodic meetings for the discussion and interchange of opinions and experience, on all points connected with the work of the Edition. Of all these meetings Minutes will be kept for the inspection of the Trustees at any time.²⁴⁵

Unfortunately, the Minutes of these meetings were not found in the Carnegie Archive, nor were they with Terry's papers at Westminster Cathedral, and appear not to have survived. The papers of the Rev. Alex Ramsbotham, who became Secretary to the Committee and may have kept copies of the Minutes, have not been located and are believed to have been lost by his family.²⁴⁶ The Minutes would have given detailed information on which composers were chosen, how the music was edited, what criteria were used and how differences of opinion regarding scores were resolved.

Terry states that at the first meeting of the Unofficial Committee it was agreed that 'an exhaustive examination should be made of all Libraries likely to contain Tudor music'.²⁴⁷ There follows a list of English cathedrals and abbeys annotated with the name of the Committee member who was to visit the library there or had already done so. This list was not strictly adhered to. As noted above, there are expenses claims by Warner in the Carnegie Archive for visits she made to Norwich and Salisbury between October 1918 and January 1919, although these cathedral cities were allocated to Fellowes and

²⁴⁵ CUKT GD281/41/225, Richard Terry 'Interim Report', p.1.

²⁴⁶ Warner mss. letter to Fellowes dated 22 October 1949: 'Do you know if Ram's scores are safely locatable? I was distressed to learn, not long ago, from Anselm Hughes, that when he applied to John Ramsbotham for Ram's scores from the Eton Mss, John Ramsbotham replied that he had no idea of their whereabouts'. Fellowes' Archive Oriel College Oxford.

²⁴⁷ CUKT GD281/41/225, Richard Terry 'Interim Report', p.1.

Howells. It is, therefore, not known which cathedral libraries and choir-schools Warner researched.

In this second Interim Report Terry gives important information regarding the working methods of the Committee:

Meanwhile the work of scoring is going on uninterruptedly. I have found that less delay is involved if, instead of confining the work of scoring to one composer at a time, each member of the Committee is made responsible for one manuscript at a time.²⁴⁸

Of the work undertaken by Warner, and in accord with the 'one manuscript at a time' ethos, Terry reports:

Miss Townsend Warner is responsible for the important *Sadler MS.* of 729 pages – Bodleian MS. Mus E1-5 – containing 43 compositions of which I have scored 21. Miss Warner has now completed it. Besides her work on the above mentioned MS. Miss Warner has also scored a number of other items which will appear with the complete reports of the manuscripts from which they are taken.²⁴⁹

A typed, but undated, list of the works of the *Sadler MS.* scored by Warner was discovered in the archive of Dr Richard Terry at Westminster Cathedral and it comprised:

<i>Inclina Domine</i>	Shepherd	<i>Domine in virtute</i>	Johnson
<i>Domine Jesu Christe</i>	Merbecke	<i>Quem comparabo</i>	Persley
<i>Te Deum laudamus</i>	Aston	<i>Miserere</i>	Whyte
<i>Gaude plurimum</i>	Taverner	<i>Cor mundum</i>	Whyte
<i>Job tonso capite</i>	Trequillon	<i>Exaudiate te dominus</i>	Whyte
<i>Benedictus</i>	Sadler	<i>Domine non est</i>	Whyte
<i>Ave Dei patris</i>	Johnson	<i>Manus tuas</i>	Whyte
<i>Ave Dei patris</i>	Taverner	<i>Domine Dominus noster</i>	Morley
<i>Gaude mater</i>	Aston	<i>Domine non est</i>	Morley
<i>Conserve me Domine</i>	Persley	<i>Justus es</i>	Whyte
<i>Aspice Domine</i>	Byrd ²⁵⁰		

Also listed here are the 'other items' transcribed by Warner:

²⁴⁸ CUKT GD281/41/225, Richard Terry 'Interim Report', p.1.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 2.

²⁵⁰ Richard Terry, 'List of Items Scored by Miss Townsend-Warner for the Carnegie (UK) Trust', Terry Papers, Westminster Cathedral Archive. Works from the Sadler MS. are not duplicated elsewhere.

Bodleian MSS. mus.D.212916

<i>O pray for the peace</i>	Nicholson	<i>When Jesus sat at meat</i>	Nicholson
<i>O give thanks</i>	Anon		

Christ Church 45

<i>Sanctus</i>	Byrd	<i>Traditum militibus</i>	Taverner
<i>Et sanctum nomen</i>	Whyte	<i>Quia fecit</i>	Whyte
<i>Sicut erat</i>	Whyte	<i>Sicut locutus</i>	Whyte

Christ Church 979 - 83

<i>Tota pulchra</i>	Whyte	<i>Ad te levavi</i>	Whyte
<i>Sabbatum</i>	J.Mundie	<i>Media vita</i>	Shepherd
<i>Filii Jerusalem</i>	Shepherd	<i>Quem admodum</i>	Taverner
<i>Ecce mater</i>	Taverner		

Brit. Mus.Roy. App. 45 – 48

<i>Missa Dominica</i>	Ludforde	<i>Missa Secunda</i>	Ludforde
<i>Missa Tertia</i>	Ludforde	<i>Missa Quarta</i>	Ludforde
<i>Missa Quinta</i>	Ludforde	<i>Missa Sexta</i>	Ludforde
<i>Missa de Sabbato</i>	Ludforde		

Brit. Mus. Add. 17802 – 5

<i>Mass for a mene</i>	Applebye	<i>Asperges mei</i>	Anon
<i>Asperges me ii</i>	Anon ²⁵¹		

It cannot be ascertained whether Warner typed this list found in Terry's Archive, but it is interesting that the work-lists for Buck, Fellowes and Ramsbotham which were also found in this archive were not uniform with Warner's, displaying different type-faces and layouts. This could suggest that each committee member typed their own list of the work they had completed. However, Warner's name is hyphenated at the head of this list and it is unlikely that she would have used a hyphen in her surname if she had typed the list herself.

Confusingly, there is another undated, typewritten list of works scored by Warner in the Carnegie Trust Archive. This list, in

²⁵¹ Richard Terry, 'List of Items Scored by Miss Townsend-Warner for the Carnegie (UK) Trust'.

alphabetical order of composer, is annotated by Terry and duplicates all but two works from the first 'Sadler' list. In addition, there are twenty works that were not included in the 'Sadler' list:

<i>Magnificat</i>	Anon	<i>Mass for a mene</i>	Applebye
<i>Te Deum laudamus</i>	Aston	<i>Gaude Mater</i>	Aston
<i>Missa Ut, Re, Mi (Mass)</i>	Burton	<i>Sanctus</i>	Byrd
<i>Audivi vocem</i>	Byrd	<i>Aspice Domine</i>	Byrd
<i>Domine praestolamus</i>	Byrd	<i>Miserere</i>	Byrd
<i>Domine non sum dignus</i>	Byrd	<i>Infelix ego</i>	Byrd
<i>Quid igitur</i>	Byrd	<i>A[d]jite igitur</i>	Byrd
<i>Magnificat</i>	Cornish	<i>Ave Regina</i>	School of Fayrfax
<i>Ave Regina</i>	Hampton	<i>Missa Jesu Christe</i>	Hazar
<i>Ave Dei patris</i>	Johnson	<i>Domine in virtute</i>	Johnson
<i>Missa Dominia</i>	Ludforde	<i>Missa Sabbato</i>	Ludforde
<i>IV Mass</i>	Ludforde	<i>V Mass</i>	Ludforde
<i>Domine Jesu Christ</i>	Merbecke	<i>Domine Dominus noster</i>	Morley
<i>Domine non est</i>	Morley	<i>Sabbatum Maria</i>	Munday, J.
<i>Gaude Sancta Magdalena</i>	Packe	<i>Quem comparabo te</i>	Perslye
<i>Conserva me Domine</i>	Perslye	<i>Benedictus</i>	Perslye
<i>In Nomine</i>	Sadler	<i>Quam pulchra es</i>	Sampson
<i>Inclina Domine</i>	Shepherd	<i>Heirusalem</i>	Shepherd
<i>Media vita</i>	Shepherd	<i>When Jesus went</i>	Tallis
<i>Quem admodem</i>	Taverner	<i>Tristitia militibus</i>	Taverner
<i>Ecce mater</i>	Taverner	<i>In Nomine</i>	Taverner
<i>Ave Dei patris</i>	Taverner	<i>Gaude plurimum</i>	Taverner
<i>Job Tonso capite</i>	Trequillion	<i>Miserere</i>	Whyte
<i>Exaudiat te dominu</i>	Whyte	<i>Domine non est</i>	Whyte
<i>Manus tuas</i>	Whyte	<i>Justus est</i>	Whyte
<i>Magnificat</i>	Whyte ²⁵²		

As both lists are undated it would be reasonable to assume that the list containing more scored works from the Carnegie Archive is of a later date. However, the index of typed and handwritten cards gives evidence of further scoring by Warner and will be discussed below. What is evident is that Warner completed a large and complex amount of work for the *Tudor Church Music* project.

Terry reports that Buck is working on 'Barnard' — the first printed edition (1642) of *English Church Music* — and 'has made an exhaustive examination at Hereford of the only complete copy in

²⁵² CUKT GD281/41/225, 'List of Items Scored for the Carnegie Edition by Miss Townsend Warner'.

existence'.²⁵³ This is the first indication, by its early date, that Buck had very quickly assimilated the difficulties of Tudor church music notation and, as Richard Searle writes,

It perhaps suggests that Warner in a role reversal had become instructor to her erstwhile music teacher. In view of their closeness, it seems unlikely that she would not have assisted him.²⁵⁴

If this surmise is valid, and I believe it is, it might have given Warner satisfaction to be in the position of benefactor instead of that of recipient.

In this report Terry further explains the work undertaken by other members of the Unofficial Committee, and comments favourably on the work of Cecie Stainer:

Miss Stainer has rendered valuable help in scoring a number of individual compositions. She is at present engaged in voluntary work for the British Museum Authorities which takes up most of her time, but she undertakes to do the important LAMBETH MS. containing 7 masses, 4 Magnificats and 11 motets.²⁵⁵

This undertaking was never realised and Cecie Stainer never became an Editor for the *Tudor Church Music* project. It is intriguing to consider this in relation to Warner's comment on Miss Stainer, cited above on page 115.

Terry also details his own work minutely in this report and a close reading shows that his working methods were not consistent; he moves from one composer to another and one manuscript to another and there appears no sense of completeness or continuity in his work. See for example:

²⁵³ CUKT GD281/41/225, 'List of Items Scored for the Carnegie Edition by Miss Townsend Warner'.

²⁵⁴ Searle, 'Warner and Tudor Church Music', p. 77.

²⁵⁵ CUKT GD281/41/225, Richard Terry 'Interim Report', p. 2.

The CAIUS MS. contains 10 masses and 5 Magnificats. Of these 3 masses are now completed; 5 partially completed and 2 untouched as yet. Of the Magnificats 3 are completed. I am also engaged in scoring the contents (from the rotographs supplied) of Brit.Mus. Add1.MSS 17802-5, perhaps the largest and most representative collection of English composers under one cover; containing as it does 1936 pages of script. I have still to make a more exhaustive examination of the BALDWIN MS. (the property of the King). With this exception I have completed the work of John Taverner.²⁵⁶

This lack of thoroughness by Terry is central to the rupture which occurred with his Committee from 1920 onwards and which was to lead to his ousting from the project, his incomplete work on Taverner being germane to the anger felt by his colleagues on the Committee.

In December 1917 Terry's view of his Committee members was favourable and no rift had yet occurred: 'I must pay tribute to the loyalty, industry & keenness of my fellow workers. I appreciate the privilege of working with such exceptionally competent musicians'.²⁵⁷

In January 1918, a month after submitting his Second Interim Report, Terry called a meeting of his Committee of workers. He gave the following: 'A Paper read by R. R. Terry to his (Unofficial) Committee of workers on the edition of Tudor and Elizabethan Music'.²⁵⁸ This Paper, typed and marked Private and Confidential, is the only copy extant in any of the archives searched and was located in the Arkwright Archive at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It consists of nine typed pages in which Terry sets out how he would like the project to proceed:

²⁵⁶ CUKT GD281/41/225, Richard Terry 'Interim Report', p. 3.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 4.

²⁵⁸ Bodleian MS. Arkwright Mus. C86. 117. pp. 123 – 31.

I have hitherto been more anxious to listen to suggestions than to put forward my own views. But I realise that this line cannot be followed indefinitely without creating an impression that my ideas are not clear, or that my plans have not been sufficiently thought out. Hence this paper. It is a statement (as compressed as possible) of:

- (1) The present position of the Edition
- (2) The work remaining to be done
- (3) My ideas as General Editor, under the following heads:
 - (a) Scope
 - (b) Method
 - (c) Form and structure of the Critical and Popular Editions

Points 1 & 2 call for no discussion, but [are] merely a statement of the facts. According to present arrangements the Trustees have undertaken the responsibility of issuing works of the Tudor Composers for a period of five years, at a rate of four volumes a year. In other words a limit of twenty volumes is imposed upon us. How these volumes are to be filled is one of the subjects for discussion today. Regarding point 2 an examination of the sheets now before you will show roughly how much is in score and how much not.²⁵⁹

Unfortunately these sheets were not with Terry's Paper found in the Arkwright Archive at the Bodleian. It is a great loss, as they would have indicated which composers' works were being scored at that time.

However, Terry appears to have made full use of the assistance that his expert team were offering. Having located the music in cathedral libraries and choir schools, it is probable that all available manuscripts by both noted and less well-known Tudor composers which had not previously been scored were now being worked on regardless of whether or not they would eventually be published in the *Tudor Church Music* volumes. An example is the

²⁵⁹ Bodleian MS. Arkwright Mus. C86. 117. p.125.

music of Nicholas Ludforde which Warner was then transcribing from the British Museum's Manuscript Brit. Mus. Roy. App 45-48. Terry comments:

I should much like to include Nicholas Ludforde, whose compositions are now being put into score. Our ultimate decision regarding him can be deferred until I have brought his works to performance in Holy Week. With your permission I should then like the whole question discussed in conjunction with Sir William [Henry] Hadow who has very kindly consented to help us in the process of selection.²⁶⁰

Warner's work in transcribing Ludforde can be seen to directly benefit Terry's work at the Cathedral. However, despite Terry's, and later Warner's, advocacy, for example she writes in her diary on 3 January 1930 'On to a committee at Charterhouse [...] I nearly fell asleep several times and couldn't get my poor Ludforde through',²⁶¹ Ludforde's music was not included in the published volumes of the *Tudor Church Music* project. However, Hadow's interest and enthusiasm for the project appears from Terry's comment to have continued unabated.

In this Paper Terry suggests which other composers should be included and is of the opinion that these 'should be decided rather by the importance of the composer than by his date'.²⁶² He also states that 'the aim of the Edition is rather to bring to light unknown English composers who have been unjustifiably neglected'.²⁶³ The

²⁶⁰ Bodleian MS. Arkwright Mus. C86. 117. p.125.

²⁶¹ STW-UD 3 January 1930.

²⁶² Bodleian MS. Arkwright Mus. C86. 117. P.125.

²⁶³ Ibid.

music of William Byrd was to be prioritised for publication 'since the object of [the] Edition is to make an instant popular appeal'.²⁶⁴

Terry was also 'strongly of the opinion that once we have decided what composers are to be included, they should be made known by their complete works, and not by merely representative ones'.²⁶⁵ As noted above, this comment possibly arose from criticism by German delegates at the 4th Congress of the International Musical Society held in London in 1911 regarding the lack of the complete published works of major English composers. This point is also important as the works of some composers amounted to a very large corpus of manuscripts, as Terry explains:

It seems a pity to scrap such a great man as Peter Phillips and so interesting a composer as Dering, but their works are so numerous that their inclusion would mean the crowding out of much [other] music.²⁶⁶

It can be seen from these examples that Terry's vision for the project was intense but unfocused, and it was necessary that input from Committee members and Hadow was forthcoming in order to balance the opposing aims shown above. How far Warner was involved with the selection of composers for the Carnegie volumes is not known: the Minutes of Committee Meetings which would have detailed the discussions could not be found in any archive.

Terry is on a firmer footing in a section of the Paper entitled 'Literature connected with the Music.' His ideas here are more coherent and he appears anxious to provide as much information as

²⁶⁴ Bodleian MS. Arkwright Mus. C86. 117. p. 124.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p.125.

possible for the user in the proposed volumes. Volume one was to contain an editorial preface, a historical survey of early printed music and a detailed essay on sixteenth century notation: what Terry called 'Prolegomena covering the whole Edition [...] and each volume should contain full notes, both critical and historical, [together with] biographies of the composers'.²⁶⁷

Terry states that the supplying of missing parts was important and a footnote was to be given saying who was responsible for the work and 'all authentic printed matter such as Byrd's Prefaces to his *Cantiones* and *Gradualia* should be included.'²⁶⁸ These opinions are followed by equally firm ideas as to how the Tudor music was to be prepared for publication. In separate sections concerning clefs, barring, under-laying of the text, time-signatures, ligatures, points of perfection and phrase marks among others, Terry gives his team a framework to employ when transposing the music. All of his requirements are concerned with making the 'old music' accessible to twentieth century musicians and singers: 'I have come to the conclusion that anything (however desirable) which would prove an obstacle to the immediate recognition of this old music should be scrapped'.²⁶⁹ Terry is also mindful of modern techniques that assist in the understanding of Tudor music:

However much modern barring stands in the way of performance of early music, I fear conventional barring must be adopted, as no one at the present moment

²⁶⁷ Bodleian MS. Arkrwright Mus. C86.117, p. 126. It will be shown in chapter 4 how far Warner was involved with the writing of much of the Prolegomena and other text in the *Tudor Church Music* volumes.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p.127.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

seems ready with any substitute which would make the music intelligible to a generation that has lost the 16th century tradition. Nor can I forget that conventional barring is the only modern means we seem to possess as a guide to the student of mensurable music.²⁷⁰

The 'Octavo', or Popular, Edition is given attention too, with Terry stating, among other instructions, that modern clefs should be used, that music must be transposed into the most singable pitch, and in the case of music with Latin words, both those and an English translation should be given. Regarding directions in the music, these too must be in English. Terry notes dryly:

This will not always be easy, but I trust that the combined intelligence of this Committee will not be found unequal to providing English equivalents even for such words as 'Maestoso'.²⁷¹

So ends Terry's long disquisition on how the *Tudor Church Music* project should proceed. No list was discovered detailing who was present at this meeting, although it is reasonable to surmise that those mentioned in the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee Minutes of the 7 June, 1917 in the early stage of the project were there, together with Herbert Howells. The meeting was probably held in Terry's room at Westminster Cathedral. A diary entry by Herbert Howells records a Committee Meeting held there on 13 February, 1919:

At 10.30am there assembled at Westminster Cathedral in Solemn Conclave, Dr. Terry, Miss S. Townsend Warner, Rev. Dr. E.H.Fellowes, Prof. Percy Buck, Rev. Ramsbotham and my little self [...] in committee on the Tudor Mss. T'was [sic] a very protracted business.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Bodleian MS. Arkwright Mus. C86. 117. p. 128.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Herbert Howells Archive. Mss. Diary 1919, reference 8900.a.

It is plausible that the Cathedral was the usual venue for Committee meetings while Terry was involved with the project.

Although this document was found in the Arkwright Archive, this is the only meeting that Arkwright appears to have attended. Interestingly, he had not produced work on the composer Christopher Tye as had been proposed, and Tye's music is not included in the *Tudor Church Music* volumes. In a letter to Hadow of 25 May 1918 in which Terry responds to a request regarding the merits and expertise of his Committee members, Terry says of Arkwright:

I don't like to press Arkwright for a list of the Tye items he has completed, but I think we may take it that there is very little of Tye now un-scored, and that all he wants is time for revision.²⁷³

Arkwright is not mentioned again and it must be presumed that he decided not to be part of the *Tudor Church Music* project.

It is noteworthy that Warner and Howells were the only members of the Unofficial Committee who were not employed elsewhere. While both were composing at this time, and possibly Warner was also writing, it can be surmised that she gave a great deal of time to working on manuscripts for the *Tudor Church Music* project. This could be borne out by a comment of Terry's in the letter cited above to Hadow with regard to lists of work accomplished by Committee members. He notes that 'the items scored by Miss Warner since the list was made up' are not included, indicating that Warner had continued to complete work at speed.

²⁷³ CUKT GD281/41/224, Terry letter to Hadow, 25 May 1918.

The letter from Hadow to Terry concerning the work done by individual members of the Unofficial Committee was not found in any archive. However, the reason why Hadow needed to know the merits of Committee members can be found in the Minutes of the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee for 30 April 1918, Item 5 Tudor & Elizabethan Music Scheme (Paper IV):

At that date it was contemplated that suitable honoraria would be given at the conclusion of the work, but the extent of the labour involved and the time devoted to it proved greater than had been anticipated, and the question was raised whether interim honoraria might not be paid on account, leaving the final settlement to be further reviewed when the work was completed. The Committee considered, in view of the fact that the work would not be completed until 1920 that the suggestion was a reasonable one, and that Sir Henry Hadow, after consultation with Dr. Terry, could make suitable suggestions to this end.²⁷⁴

This Minute is further evidence that the initial financial arrangement for the *Tudor Church Music* project was being exceeded and that there was no firm financial plan for it in the future. Terry's response to Hadow's request is lengthy and contains important information regarding Warner's standing within the Unofficial Committee:

With regard to the relative values of the work done by my coadjutors about whom you asked:

Fellowes and Ramsbotham are both most painstaking and accurate, but both will need a lot of 'editing' as they have only worked on very late music which presents no difficulties to the educated musician, points are always cropping up where they need to be set right in the light of the rules of Mensurable music. Of this neither of them have much knowledge.

Buck is very rapidly becoming acquainted with this, and consequently can now score music which the other two would find impossible.

²⁷⁴ CUKT GD281/38/47, Minutes of the Music Standing Sub-Committee, 30 April 1918.

Miss Warner can now score the earliest kind of music; Miss Stainer is a 'past master' in Mensurable music theory, but she hasn't Miss Warner's contrapuntal knowledge. So it amounts to this, that only the Misses Warner and Stainer are up to the same kind of highly technical work that I'm employed with, and the word 'expert' in this case means a great deal more than in the case of Fellowes and Ramsbotham.

Charles Wood hasn't done anything yet. As Buck has shown such a genius for the idiom of the period in the missing Tenors he has 'supplied', that [sic] I'm giving him first pick of that sort of work.

All my helpers are admirable in their respective spheres, but as regards knowledge of the old technique their respective values (in descending order) are:

- I Miss Stainer
- II Miss Warner
- III Buck (who will soon know as much as anyone)
- IV Fellowes
- V Ramsbotham²⁷⁵

Her position in Terry's list shows that Warner had excelled as a student of mensurable music, having reached this stage of proficiency in less than two years whereas Cecie Stainer [1867-1937] had been working with this music for decades. This was the second indication that Terry had given regarding Warner's expertise equalling his own.

Nothing of note was found in archives for the year following this letter of May 1918 until April 1919 when Terry again reported to the Carnegie Trust. This report gives a valuable insight into what appears to be Terry's increasingly egotistical behaviour. In the report, Terry announces the *Tenbury Manuscripts* as a recent discovery; Warner is not acknowledged as the person who had discovered them the previous year:

²⁷⁵ CUKT GD281/41/224, Terry letter to Hadow, 25 May 1918.

A valuable discovery has been made at St. Michael's Tenbury. In a disused cupboard were found MS part books of the Tudor period [...] they contain much anonymous music, but I have identified already much of it as Italian (Palestrina, Vittoria etc.) and a considerable portion as English (Tallis, Byrd, Phillips etc.)²⁷⁶

In the light of a later, and very public and acrimonious dispute between Terry and Dr. Edmund Fellowes,²⁷⁷ another member of the *Tudor Church Music* Committee, regarding the discovery of Byrd's 'Great Service', it would seem that Terry was not above 'blurring the facts' in instances such as this. This dispute erupted in the mid 1920's, some years after Terry had left the Committee. Fellowes' diary entry recorded the find:

On Tuesday June 17 1919 I went to Durham. Next morning I went to Hughes' [Cathedral Librarian] house to copy text of Gibbons anthems found only in these Durham Ms books. This was the occasion of my discovering the Byrd Great Service of which I had never before heard.²⁷⁸

Further notes from Fellowes' wife Lilian's diaries for the 3rd and 5th of July 1919 state that Fellowes 'went through Byrd's Great Service with Sylvia Warner . . . left the score with Sylvia Warner'.²⁷⁹

Terry had told Peter Warlock the composer (real name Philip Heseltine. Warlock used from late 1916) that he had been the first to discover the momentous work by Byrd at Durham Cathedral on an initial visit there. Fellowes asserted his position and the controversy

²⁷⁶ CUKT GD281/38/47, Agenda, Music Standing Sub-Committee, Appendix II *Tudor and Elizabethan Music*, p.10, 28 April 1919.

²⁷⁷ Edmund Fellowes Papers, Oriel College Oxford Archive, for Mss letters concerning the dispute, particularly item MPP/F2/1/54, a statement by Buck, Warner, Ramsbotham and Fellowes dated 10 July 1925.

²⁷⁸ Edmund Fellowes Papers, Oriel College Oxford Archive.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. Fellowes' transcription of entries from his wife's diaries regarding journeys to Durham for musicological research.

was soon the talk of the musical world in London. Buck wrote to Terry on behalf of the Committee:

All four of the Committee remember perfectly your asking Fellowes to go to Durham, and all four are absolutely certain not a word was said about any Great Service. I think you must see that, as things stand now, not only Fellowes but the whole Committee are labelled liars and the only possible solution is a clear statement from you.
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Terry did not reply to this letter and it was some months before Humphrey Milford, Publisher of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes at the Oxford University Press, authorised an official statement in musical journals stating that Fellowes had discovered the Byrd *Great Service* at Durham;²⁸¹ Terry's reputation was in ruins.

In his report to Carnegie in April 1919, Terry mentions the value to the Committee in creating a thematic index to the newly discovered music: 'I have found that the general sixteenth century practice of omitting the names of composers can only be adequately dealt with by indexing thematically the content of each MS. examined'.²⁸² This type of index was not undertaken by the Editors, but a general index without notation 'of all we propose to include in *Tudor Church Music*, as far as at present known' was discovered in Music Special Collections, Senate House Library. It was given by the Carnegie Trust in 1932, together with approximately twenty thousand rotographs of Tudor music, at the behest of Percy Buck, then a

²⁸⁰ Edmund Fellowes Papers, Oriel College Oxford Archive. Fellowes' transcription of entries from his wife's diaries regarding journeys to Durham for musicological research. Letter dated 1 May 1925.

²⁸¹ Letter dated 10 August 1925 to Percy Buck from Humphrey Milford of the OUP, Amen Corner, London, with a list appended of musical journals which were to carry a disclaimer regarding Terry's claim and to support Fellowes as discovering Byrd's 'Great Service'.

²⁸² CUKT GD281/38/47, Agenda, Music Standing Sub-Committee, Appendix II *Tudor and Elizabethan Music*, 28 April 1919, p.10. [See reference 218, p 129 for a description of thematic indices].

member of the Senate House Library Committee. Documents in the Senate House Archive confirm this provenance.²⁸³

The index consists of hand-written cards each containing the name of the identified composer, the type of work, its title, voice-parts and their provenance. It is evidence of thorough and meticulous research detailing the compilation of the discovered part-music into complete Masses and motets, followed by the scoring undertaken by the Editors. The initials of the primary editor of the music are given on the cards, followed by those of the person who subsequently checked the work. Warner's handwriting can be found on many of these cards, often for work that she was not involved with. Her initials appear in red ink as primary editor of the following music that has not been previously mentioned:

Hugh Aston:

Ave Maria ancilla (Peterhouse), Ave Maria divine matins Animae, Missa: Te Deum, Missa: Videle manus meas, O Baptista.

John Fairfax [Fayrfax]:

Missa: O ... Jesu, Missa: Regali

John Merbecke:

Mass: Per arma institiae (Bodleian), A virgin and mother (Baldwin Mss)

John Shepherd:

Media vita (Ch.Ch. 979-83), Filli Jerusalem (Ch.Ch. 979-83)

Thomas Tallis:

Alleluia, Gaude gloriosa, Missa, Sancte Deus

Robert White [Whyte]:

*Christe qui lax, Deus misereatur*²⁸⁴

²⁸³ SHA UL4/18/70, Letter from A.L. Lowe, Carnegie (UK) Trust to A.P Feldberg, Music Library, Senate House, 13 April 1956.

Warner's 'checker' was usually Alex Ramsbotham whom she appears to have been very fond of. She worked with him after the publication of the last *Tudor Church Music* volume in 1929, transcribing Tudor music collected but not used in the published volumes. There are several boxes of transcribed music kept with the rotograph collection. A letter from Dom. Anselm Hughes to the Librarian of Senate House Library discusses this unpublished material:

I have now gone through all the Tudor Church Music transcripts. The collection is of unique value and represents years of skilled work, almost entirely by Alexander Ramsbotham; a very few are in the hands of Miss Sylvia Townsend Warner and Percy Buck.²⁸⁵

Further research is required regarding the index to understand fully whether (a) it contains details of all of the rotographed music and (b) whether this was all edited, (c) whether a proportion was unedited and (d) whether some of the cards relate to the later work of Ramsbotham, or (e) a mixture of these possibilities. Cross-checking the index cards with rotographs, the contents of the boxes of music scored by Ramsbotham, Warner and Buck and the published volumes will take a great deal of time and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The final items of interest from this long report concern the fact that 'two complete volumes have been sent to the Clarendon

²⁸⁴ Senate House University of London Library, Music Special Collections, *Tudor Church Music*. These are handwritten cards filed in a drawer and kept in the office of the Music Librarian. Tallis' *Spem in alium* was scored from the Royal Library Mss. but no editorial attribution was marked on the card.

²⁸⁵ Senate House Archives, UL4/18/70, Anselm Hughes letter to Senate House Librarian, 4 June 1956.

Press: a) Taverner's works, b) Byrd's *Gradualia*, volume 1, in order that an estimate might be given of the cost of printing them'.²⁸⁶

Terry was of the opinion that the time was right to publish pieces for the 'Octavo', or Popular, edition of specially edited anthems and motets for choirs and choral societies. It was anticipated by Hadow and the Editors that the popularity of this edition would enable it to pay for itself, with the possibility of also off-setting any losses incurred by the scholarly volumes. A total of fifty pieces were published between 1921 and 1926²⁸⁷ under the auspices of the Carnegie (UK) Trust and Warner was the editor of eight of them, namely:

No. 13 *Nolo Mortem Peccatoris*. Anthem for Four Voices by Thomas Morley.

No. 16 *Christe Qui Lux Es Et Dies* (O Christ who Art the Light and Day). Compline hymn for Five Voices by Robert Whyte. Edited with English Text.

No. 18 *O Jesu Look*. Anthem by George Kirby.

No. 26 *Miserere Mei* (Look on me in mercy). Motet for Five Voices by William Byrd. Edited with an English Text.

No. 27 *Cantate Domino* (With voice of melody). Motet for Six Voices by William Byrd. Edited with an English Text.

No.31 *Rorate Coeli* (Sing, Heaven Imperial). Motet for Five Voices by William Byrd. Edited with an English Text.

No. 45 *Alleluia*. Anthem for Five Voices by Thomas Weelkes.

No. 48 *When Jesus Sat at Meat*. Anthem for Five Voices by Richard Nicolson.

²⁸⁶ CUKT GD281/38/47, Agenda, Music Standing Sub-Committee, Appendix II *Tudor and Elizabethan Music*, 28 April 1919, p.10.

²⁸⁷ 30 pieces were published by December 1922. It is not known which works made up the 10 pieces sung, but probably Byrd's work was highlighted. CUKT GD281/38/50, Appendix III. Not all of the Octavo scripts are dated on the publication itself and it is not known from the OUP archive files the dates of individual publication. It is possible that they were produced in numbered batches. They were to be completed in 1926 as this item from the Carnegie Annual Report for 1925 states: 'The Octavo Edition, except for the last (no.50 due in early 1926), is now complete'. CUKT GD281/2/12 Annual Report 1925.

Warner's final piece was no. 48.
See page 159, reference 287.

The printing of the first 'Octavo' pieces was agreed to by Carnegie, as evidenced in a letter from the Trust Secretary Hetherington to Chapman, Secretary to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press:

The Music Committee of the Trust considered yesterday estimates for publication of the Tudor and Elizabethan Music, and they decided, as a first step, that immediate action might be taken in regard to six selected pieces for the popular edition. Dr. Terry gave the Committee to understand that six pieces were ready and that he would immediately let you have them.²⁸⁸

However, Terry was dilatory in supplying this music to the Press and Chapman became increasingly frustrated with the situation and set about undermining Terry's position as Editor-in-Chief. A letter to Humphrey Milford, Publisher to the Press, states: 'Fellowes came to report that (acting on my information and instigation) he has organised a coup d'état. Terry, though still titular editor is really deposed (he was quite hopeless).²⁸⁹ This statement is premature as Terry did not leave the project until 1921.

It is of note that Warner is the only one of the Editors for whom there is no record of comments or action on the changing situation regarding Terry as Editor-in-Chief; Fellowes had carried out the coup d'état, Ramsbotham was liaising between all concerned parties on behalf of the Editors and Hadow reported to Sir William McCormick of Carnegie that 'I think I told you that at a recent meeting we decided to put the business part of the work in the hands of Buck and Fellowes, leaving Terry's hands free for the editorial

²⁸⁸ OUP Archive CP/ED/001034, Hetherington letter to Chapman, 30 April 1919. [R.W. Chapman was Secretary to the Oxford University Press]. See also footnote 302, page 167 of thesis.

²⁸⁹ OUP Archive CP/ED/001034, Chapman letter to Humphrey Milford, 20 November 1919.

work'.²⁹⁰ Terry, however, was ordered by his doctor to take a month's rest – which became many months – and Ramsbotham wrote to Mitchell, who had succeeded Hetherington as Secretary to the Carnegie (UK) Trust:

In view of your communication to Drs Buck and Fellowes as well as myself, we shall take an early opportunity of meeting together with Miss Warner, who completes our number, to draw up a written report giving full details of the work already done and an estimate of the amount still to be completed.²⁹¹

Evidently Mitchell did not include Warner in the communication that Ramsbotham refers to and which was not found in the archive. Perhaps this was because she was female and the most junior member of the Committee; Mitchell would have had little knowledge of her musicological expertise which would have been unusual, Cecie Stainer being the only other female musicologist working with Early Music at this time. It is more likely that Warner was primarily concerned with the music and not the internal politics of the Committee. Her distance and lack of involvement with this contentious issue can be viewed in the same way as her approach to the promotion of both her own music and writing; she 'disappears'. She probably knew that Buck would take a leading position on the issue which he did by talking sternly to Terry sometime in 1920, but it was 1921 before he wrote on behalf of all of the Editors demanding Terry's resignation; his letter will be discussed below.

²⁹⁰ CUKT GD281/41/226, Hadow letter to McCormick, 10 December 1919.

²⁹¹ CUKT GD281/38/47, Minutes of the Music Standing Sub-Committee, Ramsbotham letter to Mitchell 16 December 1919.

Before the Editors submitted their report to Carnegie, Fellowes wrote to Chapman of the Oxford University Press; the letter clearly shows the lack of organisation and financial disarray of the *Tudor Church Music* project:

I have been considering our discussion yesterday, and it seems to me I shall have to see McCormick as soon as possible so as to have a clear understanding as to the business basics upon which estimates may be framed. The main thing at the moment is to get a rough idea of what the Carnegie people will be called upon to spend in carrying out their scheme; at the moment no one seems to have any idea.²⁹²

The Editors submitted their written report to the Music Standing Sub Committee on the 25 February 1920; both Fellowes and Ramsbotham were present at this meeting in Dunfermline:

The amount of work so far done is indicated on schedules appended [not in file]. It will be enough here to say that the work of eight composers has been completely edited. These are: John Taverner, William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Tomkins, Hugh Aston, Robert White, Ludforde and Parcely.²⁹³

It has been shown from the lists previously cited that Warner worked on the music of all of these composers except Tomkins, which Ramsbotham had completed before the start of the Carnegie project. The music spans more than one hundred and fifty years, from the early sixteenth century until the mid seventeenth century and Warner would have had to have mastered the varying styles and complexities that this time span presented.

At this meeting the first indication that the Carnegie Trustees were becoming disillusioned with the project is evident, as the Music

²⁹² OUP Archive CP/ED/001034, Fellowes letter to Chapman, 17 January 1920.

²⁹³ CUKT GD281/38/48, Minutes of the Music Standing Sub Committee, 25 February 1920.

Standing Sub Committee 'declined to commit themselves to recommending more than ten volumes in five years',²⁹⁴ and a little later:

The Trustees are in the somewhat difficult position of having acceded to a request to assist in the publication of a work (the size of which was not foreseen by them and which has grown to alarming proportions), in response to a request from scholars who, in spite of their enthusiasm for the work upon which they were voluntarily engaged, could see no prospect of publication. They are therefore at this stage bound to set a limit to their immediate liability.²⁹⁵

Time, as well as money, was extending well beyond what had originally been intended. The estimates for the five years to 1925 were discussed at this meeting and the Carnegie Trustees agreed to sanction salaries, not honoraria, totalling £1,000 a year together with £5,000 over five years for the publication of the volumes. The total cost of the quinquennium would, therefore, be £10,000 from this date: more than three times the amount originally proposed by Hadow in 1916. Warner's share was £1,200 from 1917-25,²⁹⁶ less than Terry's £1,650 but considerably more than the other members of the Committee, including Buck. This notwithstanding, Buck wrote to Mitchell of Carnegie regarding Warner's remuneration:

Do you think that you could manage a little more for Miss Warner? I would gladly take a reduced share if you could put it onto her portion. She knows more of this period than, in my opinion, anyone in Europe, and far more than she knew when the Trustees originally engaged her at the same fee and she has little or nothing else to live on. She is a brilliant person who could earn an easy living in literature or several other ways, but her devotion to the old

²⁹⁴ CUKT GD281/38/48, Minutes of the Music Standing Sub Committee, 25 February 1920.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. Unsigned draft letter, probably Mitchell to Ramsbotham as Editorial Committee Secretary, 15 May 1920.

²⁹⁶ CUKT GD281/41/228, Copy on file from 'Minutes of the Tudor Church Music Sub Committee', 12 July 1920.

music is enabling the project to get, for next to nothing, a scholar who would be irreplaceable. Of course she has no idea I'm writing to you.²⁹⁷

Nothing came of this request, but it is another example of Buck writing to give an unasked-for opinion. Here the language is conciliatory, perhaps cajoling, but the power of a forceful personality is evident. It is the only document discovered that gives Buck's opinion of Warner's musical knowledge and perhaps indicates their closeness at this time. This letter also supports the supposition that Buck had been instrumental, through his friendships with Terry and Hadow, in positioning Warner for eventual inclusion in the *Tudor Church Music* project.

Paper VII of the Carnegie Music Standing Sub-Committee gives a succinct account of how the Editorial Committee would proceed in the light of the Trustees' decisions regarding the finance for ten and not twenty volumes:

On the proposal of Henry Hadow, it is unanimously recommended that the ten volumes should comprise not the whole of one or two authors [...] but rather selected volumes such as most adequately represent the significance of the edition.²⁹⁸

Hadow is realistic here, eschewing the goal of completeness in order to represent the best work of the best Tudor musicians, but it represents a radical change in focus and aspiration none the less. A firm proposal as to which composers were to be represented in the volumes was to be given to Carnegie as soon as possible, together with the proposed prefaces to the Edition, and an indication of other

²⁹⁷ CUKT GD281/38/48, Buck letter to Mitchell, 6 May 1920.

²⁹⁸ CUKT GD281/38/48. Minutes of the Music Standing Sub Committee, Paper VII, 5 – 6 May 1920.

prefatory writing. On publication, each volume was also to have printed within it a comprehensive and scholarly conspectus of the individual voice parts together with the location in which they had been found. In each volume the words of each work, in either Latin or English, was also to be given.

For the first time a *Prospectus* to encourage subscription to the volumes was discussed and deemed a good idea, and the Editors were instructed to prioritise the task of compiling it. Between August and October 1920 a rough draft of the first page of the *Prospectus* was prepared, together with a draft Agreement between Carnegie and the Oxford University Press regarding the publication of the scholarly volumes and the individual pieces of music that made up the 'Octavo' edition; at last something concrete was emerging from years of research and negotiation. Warner's response to the draft *Prospectus* was to comment: 'I said at the united Committee that I wished to appear as S. Townsend Warner, minus the Miss, and I repeat it now. Otherwise, I think it [the *Prospectus*] is all as it should be'.²⁹⁹ An amusing riposte from Mitchell of Carnegie to Ramsbotham regarding Warner's comment states 'Since Miss Warner has "dis-missed" herself there is, I think, no objection to her assuming her rightful place in the alphabetical order'.³⁰⁰

Proofs of the *Prospectus* were discovered by chance at the Oxford University Press Archive³⁰¹ as they had been misfiled. No perfect copy, as distributed, has been located and the Press Archive,

²⁹⁹ CUKT GD281/41/229.

³⁰⁰ CUKT GD281/41/235, Mitchell letter to Ramsbotham, 15 January 1921.

³⁰¹ OUP Archive, CUKT. They are now in the 'Tudor Church Music' files.

not having the whole history of the project, did not know of the importance or rarity of this document.

The *Prospectus*, illustrated in part below, outlines the object of the *Tudor Church Music* project, lists the institutions where documents were located and states what the volumes will contain; the composers named here vary from those whose music was ultimately published:

TUDOR CHURCH MUSIC

TEN VOLUMES, IN ROYAL QUARTO SIZE
TO BE PUBLISHED FOR THE
CARNEGIE UNITED KINGDOM TRUST

BY THE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Editorial Committee:

P. C. BUCK, M.A., D.Mus. A. RAMSBOTHAM, M.A.
E. H. FELLOWES, M.A., Mus.D. R. R. TERRY, Mus.D.
S. TOWNSEND WARNER.

A GREAT PERIOD OF BRITISH MUSIC

The English Composers who flourished during the Tudor period reached a level of achievement second to that of no other nation, and comparable in its own field with that of contemporary poets and dramatists. Yet for over three hundred years this wealth of genius and skill and invention has been suffered to fall into neglect. For this, no doubt, historical reasons can be given—the fact that so much of it was not printed in the composers' lifetime, the changes in idiom and notation which appeared during the seventeenth century, the influence of fashion, the over-readiness of our eighteenth-century ancestors to import their music from abroad. It remains true that up to the present time the vast bulk of this work has been left on the shelves of our libraries, unprinted, unscored, and known only to a small number of scholars and antiquaries.

Our own generation has witnessed some notable attempts at salvage. In 1894–99 Mr. Barclay Squire and Mr. Fuller Maitland rescued the Fitzwilliam Virginal book from oblivion. In 1891 Mr. Godfrey Arkwright began to issue his scholarly 'Old English Edition' of unpublished masterpieces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but was obliged a few years later to discontinue it for lack of public support. In 1912 Dr. E. H. Fellowes began his edition of the *English Madrigal School*, which is approaching completion. Besides these there have been occasional issues of isolated numbers. But there has been no systematic attempt to present to the British public in readily accessible form a *corpus* of our Church Music at its noblest period—a collection which should serve at once as a monument of past glories and a storehouse for the use of generations to come.

THE PRESENT EDITION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

For the preparation of such a *corpus* a great deal of pioneer work has been done by Sir Richard Terry, who has given to many of these compositions a full opportunity of performance (from MS.) at Westminster Cathedral. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, therefore, decided to give to him and to his Editorial Colleagues such financial assistance as may enable them to produce, in the first instance, ten volumes of a Library Edition of Tudor Church Music, and a Popular Edition at cheap prices of such selected numbers as may be most immediately useful to Choirs, Choral Societies, and Competition Festivals. The Library Edition will be furnished with introductions, critical apparatus and notes, and will be published in Royal Quarto Volumes, each complete in itself. The Popular Edition will be provided with expression marks and rendered practicable for performance; in it English works will appear with the original text, Latin works with English translation in addition to the original.

In the summer of this year (1922) Sir Richard Terry was unhappily compelled, owing to pressure of other work and continued ill health, to withdraw from the work, which is being continued by his colleagues. The Trustees deeply regret his retirement, and desire to place on record their appreciation of his pioneer work in the rediscovery of this forgotten music and of his services to the present edition.

The Trustees, in introducing this work to the public, feel that they cannot emphasize the importance of the publication better than by quoting from a letter on the subject, addressed to them by Sir Henry Hadow, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, and Editor of the *Oxford History of Music*:—

'I do not know whether it is quite realized that this is not a question of a mere Library Edition of a classic; it is the most important musical discovery ever made—far more important than Grove's discovery of the Schubert MSS. at Vienna. If you could imagine that the Elizabethan drama had been lost and now re-discovered, it would not be an extravagant parallel.'

Stylistically the *Prospectus* seems not to have been written by Warner. Hadow's language and lofty aspirations are quoted specifically and can be found throughout the piece:

I do not know whether it is quite realized that this is not a question of a mere Library Edition of a classic; it is the most important musical discovery ever made – far more important than Grove's discovery of the Schubert Mss. at Vienna.

If you could imagine that the Elizabethan drama had been lost and now re-discovered, it would not be an extravagant parallel.³⁰²

Tudor Church Music: The Later Years 1921 – 1930

During the last quarter of 1920, while the editing of manuscripts was ongoing, work had been intensified concerning technical issues for the published volumes, the design of punches for a new music font for example. Henry Budgen, Printer to the Press, writes to Secretary Chapman:

Lowe and Brydon [the punch cutters] raise several Queries about the notes etc. Mr Ramsbotham has gone over them, with the result that the following alterations have to be made before the punch caster can be started. Stems are to be made the length of three spaces [...] the stem of the quaver should be made a true tangent as in the crotchet. Mr Ramsbotham also writes 'We think the whole fount, when the finer signs have been made heavier, should be very slightly enlarged.'³⁰³

There is a great deal of written communication in the Oxford University Press Archive between various members of the Press, generated by correspondence from members of the Editorial Committee who were overseeing the design of the font and had input into other issues. Another matter for the Committee was the printing of the words with the music, including the division of Latin words, about which Ramsbotham had a decided opinion:

I have your letter [...] with copy of the rules suggested by the O.U.P. Oxford. I would submit that these are based

³⁰² Press-pull of the Prospectus advertising the *Tudor Church Music* volumes, p. 1. OUP Archive, CUKT 'Tudor Church Music' files.

³⁰³ OUP Archive CP/ED/001034, Memorandum, Budgen [Printer to the Press] to Chapman, 18 October 1920.

entirely on pronunciation taking no account of etymology, and therefore offend a man with an Oxford training.³⁰⁴

In these areas concerning administrative matters there is again no direct written comment or opinion by Warner, although it must be assumed that she was party to the decisions that were made; all the administrative and liaison work of the Editorial Committee appears to have been undertaken by Fellowes and Ramsbotham.

It could be conjectured that Warner, who was also writing prolifically during the 1920's, had neither the time nor, from past evidence, the inclination to engage with the mundane necessities of administration and liaison that were required to ensure publication of the Carnegie volumes. Although Warner wrote prolifically during the 1920s, there is no evidence that she was writing either poetry or prose with a view to earning a living by it, as she was then with her work in musicology. In 1920 the short poem, 'The Happy Day', by 'Elsie' Townsend Warner was published in the first volume of the journal *Music and Letters*.³⁰⁵ The name was possibly a corruption engendered by Warner's signature in the manuscript. This is the first poem of Warner's to be published and was later amended and included in the volume of verse entitled *The Espalier* published in 1925. The poem references music; the result of the 'happy day' of wandering green meadows is 'The song in my head', an altered ending to the version published in 1925. It is significant that this poem first appeared in a musical journal where it was sure to be read

³⁰⁴ OUP Archive CP/ED/001035, Memorandum from Budgen (Printer to the OUP) to Chapman quoting Ramsbotham, 15 September 1923.

³⁰⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Music and Letters*, 1(iv) (1920), p.284.

by Warner's peers in the music world. Unlike her musical compositions, Warner seems content to publish her poem. It is very different from, and more personal than her articles on technical aspects of music notation that were published in *Music and Letters* and other books and journals from 1919 onwards, which will be discussed in chapter four.

For all that writing may then have been increasingly occupying more of Warner's interest and creativity, this was also a time when she was evidently working hard at both disciplines; work on the *Tudor Church Music* volumes continued until 1929, and Warner continued to work on unpublished material independently of Carnegie until 1930.

In December 1921 the Carnegie Trustees organised 'an illustrative performance by the English Singers'.³⁰⁶ This event took place at the College of Preceptors in Bedford Square, London and was to have been a private performance for the Trustees of music from the first ten pieces of the newly-published 'Octavo' edition.³⁰⁷ However, the Trustees, learning of keen interest in the *Tudor Church Music* project, made the occasion one of invitation, and it may be assumed that musicians from the Royal College of Music, where Buck and Hadow had a presence, together with others from the wide circle of 'musical London' were invited. No list of those invited has been discovered but doubtless Warner and her colleagues attended. The performance was well received, as noted in the Carnegie Annual

³⁰⁶ OUP Archive CP/ED/001034, Copy of the invitation from Mitchell, 10 December 1921.

³⁰⁷ See page 159, reference 287.

Report for 1921: 'It was generally agreed that the works amply justified the high claims which have been advanced by Sir. W.H. Hadow and Dr.Terry'.³⁰⁸

For more than a year the Committee had rarely seen Terry, during which time he, together with Buck, Fellowes, Ramsbotham and Warner had formally become the Editorial Committee. Buck writes frankly to him:

Just a year ago I tried to save a strained situation by telling you that we thought your un-businesslike ways were letting us all down. I wrote you a letter saying plainly that your reputation was near zero, that you were hazarding that of your colleagues, and that you *must* pull yourself together. When we met, and again at the next Committee, you said [...] that you had a whole year for your Taverner volume and you would show by that how you could 'nail a lie to a door.'

After a year you hand in to the Committee a bunch of MS as your Final Text of the Taverner volume [which] is not to be 'criticized' and is to go out as your volume. I must point out a few things about the MS: It is incomplete. This you admitted [...] you even admitted that some had not yet been scored. A considerable part is not even copied by you. It is in someone else's transcript, full of errors, of another copy which in turn was so inaccurate as to be quite out of court as the basis of a critical edition. Lack of words to sections, no words to Creeds in two Masses [and] so many errors in copying that in *one movement* of a Mass there had to be over 70 corrections.

You have spoken incessantly of your reputation, and you must realise now that other people's reputations are of some importance. You know, and you know that we know, that from the beginning you have been no Editor in the true sense at all. You can resign, and the work will be completed for the Trustees, with far less labour and unpleasantness, by those who are now doing it all in your name. It puzzles me past all comprehension how you can allow yourself to fall so low in the estimation of those who have been trying hard for years to save your reputation in spite of yourself.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ CUKT GD281/2/8, Annual Report 1921.

³⁰⁹ CUKT GD281/41/236, Buck letter to Terry, 2 June 1921. Herbert Howells learned Tudor notation from Terry using Taverner MS., so it is possible that these were his uncorrected mistakes.

As Richard Turbet comments, the letter 'is explicitly eloquent concerning Terry's editorial method, or lack of it, but, read in conjunction with Buck's letter about Shore, it is implicitly eloquent about Buck himself.'³¹⁰

Warner's opinion on Terry's editorship appeared in a review that she wrote of the published memoirs of Dr Edmund Fellowes and it was, perhaps with hindsight, more measured:

Terry was dilatory, opinionated and irascible; a man can have such failings and yet be a capable editor. His great merit was one that he had in common with Cannon Fellowes: he loved his music and was at home in it. But a quality essentially required in an editor is an un-distracted mind, and Terry's mind was increasingly distracted by difficulties in his post [...] Earlier he had been given a great deal of rope. The rope was shortened [and this] coincided with the early days of the Tudor Church Music Committee. Harassed, pin-pricked and frustrated, it was not surprising that his sense of injury followed him from the choir to the committee table, and that he saw conspiracies and antagonism in the ordinary dissensions of editorial discussion.³¹¹

Later, in a diary entry of September 1954, Warner is moved, whilst listening to the wireless, to comment favourably about Terry's Westminster Cathedral performances of Taverner's *Corona Spinea* of long ago and her part in its editing:

I listened to Corona Spinea . . . It was lovely to hear a finished production of Corona – though I dare say those scrambled performances under Terry were nearer the original truth. This would have satisfied and interested Taverner – both. The brilliance of the counter-tenors, the grouping of low basses, the bagpipe opening of the Sanctus, and the majestic slow climb from the lowest to

³¹⁰ Turbet, 'An Affair of Honour'. pp. 596-7. Buck appears to have been at the forefront of any contentious issues regarding music; his letter to Carnegie about Royale Shore and Barclay Squire on page 104 of the thesis is an example. Other examples appear, unquoted in this thesis, in the Fellowes Archive at Oriel College Oxford, where it can be seen in letters to Fellowes that he was pursuing both Terry and Warlock by letter in connection with the Byrd *Great Service* controversy. It would appear that Buck gave unasked opinion on matters unconnected to himself.

³¹¹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, Review of Edmund Fellowes' 'Memoirs of an Amateur Musician', *Music and Letters* 28 (1947) 80-81.

the highest in the 3rd Agnus. It was very strange to think, as I listened, that I had had a hand in its resurrection: and sad, in a way, that there is never on the BBC a flicker of acknowledgement to TCM.³¹²

Terry's resignation is recorded in the Carnegie Music Sub Committee Minutes of 15th July, 1921,³¹³ there having been a hiatus of many months due to his illness and a farcical situation regarding a withheld letter of dismissal. Terry leaving the Committee created a remarkable situation and one that Warner could not have foreseen. Because of her expertise with early notation she became the pre-eminent authority on Tudor polyphony for the Carnegie project; the other Editors would have turned to her for advice and clarification when difficulties in editing were encountered. The work of re-editing the Taverner manuscripts, so poorly done by Terry, would be an example.

In 1922 a music festival commemorating the tercentenary of William Byrd's death was being planned by Henry Hadow, who had formed a committee to oversee the event. Among its members were the *Tudor Church Music* Editors, Sir Hugh Allen of the Royal College of Music, Barclay Squire whom Buck had previously dismissed as a quack, and Godfrey Arkwright who had declined to become an Editor and to contribute his work on Christopher Tye to the Carnegie project. The Carnegie Trust was asked to head the list of guarantors and Hadow also requested that the Trustees 'concentrate the Editors' energies in producing as much Byrd (in both editions) as

³¹² STW-PD 26 September 1954, p.210.

³¹³ Terry's dismissal is also listed on the Agenda of the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee for 13 July 1922, CUKT GD281/38/50. It is possible that documents were misdated and that Terry left the Committee in 1922. Richard Turbet, 'Affair of Honour' p. 598.

possible'.³¹⁴ The tercentenary resulted in Volume Two of *Tudor Church Music*, Byrd's *English Church Music Part 1*, being published before Volume One, the first volume of Taverner. Ramsbotham writes to Mitchell of Carnegie:

On the general subject of publishing as much Byrd as possible this year, I hear from Miss Warner that [Hugh] Allen has persuaded the Competitions Festival Board to pay special attention to Byrd's music for the competitions next spring, and it is up to us to meet the demand.³¹⁵

This must have been something of a coup for Warner, and a testimony to her powers of persuasion, as Allen was known to be a formidable character, particularly since becoming Director of the Royal College of Music. In conjunction with Allen's request regarding Byrd's music for Competition Festivals, Warner wrote a short article about Byrd and urged choirs to celebrate his music:

This is the first time any attempt has been made to organise a wide hearing for the works of the most representative musician of our greatest musical epoch A period of three hundred years has had to elapse before fashion and fortune have allowed the English-speaking peoples to offer more than lip-service to one of their greatest names.³¹⁶

Hadow's interest in Byrd is emphasised during 1923 as he lectured and wrote extensively on Byrd at this time in articles in the *Musical Times*, *Proceedings of the British Academy* and the *New Music Review*.

³¹⁴ CUKT GD281/38/50, Music Sub-Committee Minutes, 2 March 1922.

³¹⁵ CUKT GD281/41/236, Ramsbotham, letter to Mitchell, 22 March 1922.

³¹⁶ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Byrd Tercentenary Festival July 1923', *The British Music Society Bulletin*, 4 (1922) 153-4.

With the publication of the first volumes, copyright became an issue between the Trust and the Editors. How this was resolved is shown in a written statement from Warner to Carnegie:

I, Sylvia Townsend Warner, in consideration of the sum of £150 for five years paid to me by the Carnegie Trust for Editorial work in connection with *Tudor Church Music* of which reproductions in two editions are now being published for the Carnegie Trust, hereby assign the copyright and all my rights under all and every of the provisions of the Copyright Act 1911, in the said *Tudor Church Music*. [Signed]³¹⁷

The progress of the work of the next five years can be shown in this example from the Minutes of the Carnegie Music Sub-Committee for October 1923:

Item 3. Tudor Music. Milford's information reported:

Vol.1 [Taverner] will be published in November and Vol. III [Taverner 2] by February [1924]. The IV volume [Gibbons] should be out next summer if the editors do not take unduly long over the proofs.

Ramsbotham's information reported:

Vol. IV Musical text passing through the press and 120 pages of proofs have come in. Prefatory matter has yet to be completed.

Vol.V Music text is in score and we are at work on the critical part, collating Mss. and making notes.

Vol.VI The greater part is now in score, but there still remains much collation to be done. There are many texts of Tallis.

Vol. VII The scoring of the music of Byrd's *Gradualia* has been done afresh by Fellowes who tells me that he hopes to complete it this week. No collation will be required for this volume.

Vol. VIII Is in score.

Vol. IX Is in score.

³¹⁷ CUKT GD281/41/239, 26 March 1923.

Vol. X Is in score with the exception of a Mass of Merbecke.
³¹⁸

However, such a list does not show the laborious effort undertaken in scoring the music; neither does it indicate the time taken to finalise each manuscript to the satisfaction of all the Editors, full consensus being the *modus operandi* of the Committee.

From 1924 onwards there is less concerning the *Tudor Church Music* project in the Music Sub-Committee Minutes, although some information is contained in Annual Reports. For example, the Report for 1924 states that:

Performances of Byrd's Great Service – the most ambitious of the works in this collection – at St. Margaret's, Westminster and York Minster, have brought the collection into prominence, and it is clear that the recovery and publication of these lost works is coming to be generally regarded as a landmark in the history of British Music.³¹⁹

By 1925 the detailed research work for the *Tudor Church Music* volumes had been finalised, some completed manuscripts were at the Press and three volumes had been published. However, the Trustees were alarmed at the slow progress of the project and sought agreement with the Editors, the Oxford University Press and the engravers to organise the work on volumes concurrently instead of one at a time. This created much more work for the Editors who had many more proofs to correct in a short time. Warner's work, and that of the other members of the Committee, had become detailed and time-consuming; her diaries describe tedious editorial meetings, long hours of transcription for the volumes yet to be completed and a

³¹⁸ CUKT GD281/38/51, Music Sub-Committee Minutes, 12 October 1923.

³¹⁹ CUKT GD281/2/11, Annual Report 1924.

great deal of proof-reading and revision work. It is possible that the Carnegie Trustees did not understand the complexity of the work. Disputes, contentions and delays between the Trustees, the Press and the Editors occurred until 1928 when the Annual Report states that: 'The Tudor Music Quarto Edition has been completed as far as the Editors are concerned; eight volumes have appeared, and the last two are to be published by the end of March 1929'.³²⁰

By this time, working on Tudor music had lost its allure for Warner. Her perception of it had changed from 1917 when all was new, particularly her personal and financial independence. It appears that Warner had been disillusioned with the project for some considerable time, as a diary entry at the end of 1927 makes plain:

A letter of ten thousand pages from Fox-Strangways, all about proslambanomenos, and perfect time, and hexacords, and tetrachords [...] and the Lord knows what else. It makes me so thankful I have shut up that shop; but how am I to answer it, politely implying that I never cared a damn for such things, and now don't even pretend to. Well, it's a judgement on me for pretending.³²¹

This was no passing phase; Warner is giving notice of having lost her love of working as a researcher and transcriber of Tudor manuscripts. A month later, dining with Charles Prentice, her friend and publisher, Warner writes in her diary of renouncing her ambitions as a composer: 'he began to ask about my music and I felt curiously as though I had this secret past which I was rather proud of being so inalienably mine by renunciation'.³²² Strong statements such as these show categorically that Warner no longer considered music,

³²⁰ CUKT GD281/2/15, Annual Report 1928.

³²¹ STW-PD 29 December 1927, p. 9.

³²² STW-PD 20 January 1928, p.12.

either composing or work in musicology, to be her metier. Her sentiments are very different from her suggestion to Herbert Howells of almost a decade previously that musicology had enough in it 'to keep one learning all one's life'.³²³ For Warner it was, perhaps, an unsatisfactory conclusion to what had begun as a marvellous opportunity. She made a final attempt at composing, returning to Tudor church music for inspiration: 'In the evening I sourly strove to make a piano score to the White *Lamentations*'.³²⁴ The tone of the comment gives Warner's view of the success of the attempt.

A meeting with Howells at a concert in October 1929 could be said to bring her composing life full-circle: 'he asked what I was working on now music or t'other thing. Perhaps you will be composing again when you are eighty five?' I said that 'at 85 I should be taking up monumental sculpture'.³²⁵ Evidently a working life in music was at an end for Warner. Years later, in a letter to William Maxwell, she explained why writing came to predominate over music in her life. Warner writes about a visit to her home in Dorset by Ralph Vaughan Williams:

He had asked me, a little sternly, why I had left off composing, and I explained that I had come to the conclusion that I didn't do it authentically enough, whereas when I turned to writing I never had a doubt as to what I meant to say.³²⁶

³²³ See note 216, p.123.

³²⁴ STW-UD 29 September 1929. Robert White's setting of the verses from 'The Lamentations of Jeremiah' from the Old Testament Bible. Which of the verses used by White that Warner attempted to compose the piano score to are not known as she did not keep the music. This choice of verse to use, Lamentation expresses grief, may have been chosen by Warner because she believed her composing ability was ending.

³²⁵ STW-PD 23 October 1929, p. 46.

³²⁶ STW-PL 4 September 1958, p.168.

In October 1929 Warner noted in her diary: 'In the afternoon there was the final meeting with Carnegie. It was very short, and they made no foolish pretences of not being delighted to wash their hands of us'.³²⁷ So her career as a fully employed musicologist, working on the most prestigious musicological research of the age in England, ended quietly and without ceremony; it was very much in keeping with her low profile methods throughout the twelve years that it had taken to bring the *Carnegie Tudor Church Music* project to completion.

However, Warner mitigates the sense of irritation and impatience that is evident in her diary entry regarding Strangeways, with an evocative memory of the early years of the project. It was written towards the end of her life in a letter to William Maxwell, and demonstrates her emotional involvement in the work. In this context it could be said to bring the ambitious project to a gentler and happier conclusion:

There we sat round a table, saying But if; or with a gleam of hope, But why not? And the tugs on the river hooted, clearer & clearer, as the traffic quieted, till the Almoner's house in the Charterhouse (where we sat) became almost as hushed as when it was part of the real Charterhouse, in the clayey Moorish fields.³²⁸

³²⁷ STW-UD 9 October 1929.

³²⁸ STW-PL 25 January 1976, p. xii.

Chapter 4: Warner Writing on Early Music 1919-1930

Andante

Warner was a music lover for all of her long life; she was also a published writer for a great deal of it. This chapter will examine how Warner's comprehensive knowledge of music is displayed in her published musicological writing. Her facility with language, choice of words and syntax and the rhythm she uses is fundamental to what can be called the 'musicality' of her writing, as Gillian Beer indicates:

Her training as a transcriber of music and her gifts as a musician move into the pacing and timbre of her writing: she has a particularly acute ear for the nuanced hesitations of dialogue: the narrative presence of her work relies often on the unvoiced rests between sentences for its effect.³²⁹

Warner's musicality may have been innate but her father's early teaching would also have been a major influence on her. George Townsend Warner's book, *On the Writing of English*, is a master-class of gentle instruction for his pupils on writing essays. For example, one telling passage on choosing what to include in an essay if the title appears restrictive:

Yet, however much a subject be narrowed down, there is always room for observation and fancy, if you encourage your mind to work. Think of all the marvellous patterns which musicians have woven out of twelve notes on a piano. Ideas and words have far greater variety than a piano. The puzzle is not that people manage to be original, but that they can achieve being humdrum.³³⁰

As George Townsend Warner urged, so his daughter practiced, refining her fancy and writing in her own way, never conforming to

³²⁹ Gillian Beer, 'Sylvia Townsend Warner: The Centrifugal Kick', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 4 (2004), 24. Originally published in *Women Writers in the 1930's: Gender, Politics and History* ed. by Maroula Joannou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 76-86.

³³⁰ George Townsend Warner, *On the Writing of English* (London: Blackie, [1914/15?]), p.103.

merely conventional styles: her 'most sophisticated thoughts always expressed in the clearest prose, [with] a marked preference for plain words in complex cadences'.³³¹

Warner was writing extensively on music from 1919 until shortly after the last of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes for the Carnegie (UK) Trust had been published in 1929. The writing is scholarly and shows Warner's mastery of the technical difficulties of notation, in particular with regard to the several uses of the 'Point of Perfection', a small tick or dot placed above the staff to help to define the rhythmic structure of the piece to be sung. This was the subject of her first piece of published writing on music, a Paper read to the Musical Association in 1919 entitled 'The Point of Perfection in XVI Century Notation' subsequently published in the Association's *Proceedings*.³³² This subject also formed part of a chapter entitled 'Notation: the Growth of a System' written by Warner and published a decade later in the *Oxford History of Music, Introductory Volume* in 1929.³³³ Percy Buck was the Editor of this revised edition³³⁴ and Warner, now an expert on Tudor notation, assisted him with the substantial re-writing of chapters of the original volume two. The original volume included several subjects within Warner's expertise: chapter 1, containing information on *Ars nova*, *Musica Ficta*, The Hexachordal System and Faux Bourdon; chapter 2, headed The

³³¹ Claire Harman, 'Sylvia Townsend Warner and Romance', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 11 (2011), 44.

³³² Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'The Point of Perfection in XVI Notation', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 45 (1918-19), 53-74.

³³³ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Notation: The Growth of a System', in *Oxford History of Music: Introductory Volume*, ed. by Percy C. Buck (Oxford: OUP, 1929), pp. [66]-84.

³³⁴ The original volumes were published between 1901- 1905 and edited by Henry Hadow.

Formation of Schools and citing England before and including Dunstable, France and the Gallo-Belgic Provinces, The Proportional System, Okeghem and Josquin Despres; and chapter 4, The English School. A further article by Warner entitled 'An Aspect of Tudor Counterpoint', detailing technical aspects of counterpoint and notation, was published in the journal *Music and Letters* in 1921.³³⁵

She also contributed to, and probably wholly wrote, the important 'prefatory matter' to the *Tudor Church Music* volumes. This matter comprises three essays, namely an 'Editorial Preface', 'Historical Survey' and a chapter on 'Sixteenth-Century Notation'.³³⁶ None is signed so it may be supposed that the Editors accepted joint responsibility for them. Richard Searle believes that they bear the stylish hallmarks of Warner's writing:

The main introductory essay, 'A Historical Survey', published without individual attribution, but certainly written by Warner [...] and, since she had become expert, it is beyond doubt that she compiled the preface concerning sixteenth-century notation. Additionally, the editorial preface, which pays tribute to previous collectors of Tudor church music, may similarly be attributed to Warner on stylistic grounds. These pieces are highly significant because they inform the whole ten volume set. They are pragmatic, written to establish context, scope and method.³³⁷

I agree wholeheartedly with Richard Searle's attributions; in these essays Warner's expert knowledge of Tudor Music notation is displayed and her style here can be compared with other writing by her that is discussed below. Two examples of the writing of the other

³³⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'An Aspect of Tudor Counterpoint', *Music and Letters*, 2 (1921), 35-49.

³³⁶ *Tudor Church Music*, edited by Percy C. Buck and others, 10v (London: Oxford University Press for the Carnegie (UK) Trust, 1922 - 29), 1(1923), 'Editorial Preface', pp. ix - xv; 'Historical Survey', pp. xvi - xxxiii; 'Sixteenth Century Notation', pp. xxxiv - xlvi.

³³⁷ Searle, 'Warner and Tudor Church Music', pp. 81-2.

Editors are also given and the writing styles bear no resemblance to that in the prefatory essays. Each of the volumes of *Tudor Church Music* prefaces the music itself with an essay about the composer. It would seem that the essays for the volumes on the music of Robert Whyte and Orlando Gibbons, favourite composers of Warner's, may have been written by her, as well as 'An Appreciation' of the work of John Taverner.

In this chapter I also consider Warner's important response to the criticism of the 'prefatory matter' by the Anglican monk and musicologist Dom. Anselm Hughes, published in the journal *Music and Letters*. It is not known whether Warner responded singularly as an Editor of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes or as spokesperson for all of the members of the Editorial Committee.

In discussing Warner's published work on musicology I examine the characteristics of her writing style and will show how she used humour, often coupled with a wide knowledge of literary works and authors, to engage her audience. Such humour is especially evident in the opening paragraphs of her journal articles. Metaphor and simile are integral to Warner's writing, and I believe that humour is too; both aspects are evident in these pieces on music. Viewed together, they are indicators for what could be called Warner's 'literary presence' when identifying un-authored work such as the 'prefatory matter'.

It was unusual for a young woman to present a Paper to the Musical Association in London in the first decades of the twentieth

century. Between 1900 and 1919, when Warner presented her Paper, approximately one hundred Papers had been presented on a wide variety of musical subjects, but only thirteen had been delivered by women. Mr J. Swinburne's Paper entitled 'Women and Music' was published in the *Proceedings of the Musical Association* in 1919, shortly after Warner's Paper on 'The Point of Perfection'. Having given his opinion on parlour music by women he asks:

What is the result of all this musical activity of women? Nothing; at least nothing good. They have never done anything of the smallest importance in the art [...] it is generally admitted that they are behind in composition; but that is very far short of the facts. Not only are they nowhere in composition, they have done nothing in any mental branch of music.³³⁸

Swinburne continues in this vein for the whole of his lecture. Such remarks exemplify the sexist culture in music in England at this time as shown in one of its premier musical organisations. It shows spirit in Warner that she does not accept this norm; moreover, she displays a confident individuality which is evident in her writing. As with the *Tudor Church Music* volumes, her article published in the *Proceedings* is authored by S. Townsend Warner; she insists on being judged on her work, not on her gender.

Warner's individual style would have been immediately obvious to her audience of professors of music, eminent composers and knowledgeable amateurs at the Royal College of Music, the venue where she delivered her Paper, in that she does not directly approach the apparent topic of her talk. This is a first example of

³³⁸ J. Swinburne, 'Women and Music', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 46 (1919-20), 21-42 (21, 28).

Warner introducing her subject in an oblique and unusual way. Before arriving at the substance of her lecture she gives examples from literature, mathematics and music to show that innovators in any field will take-up and re-use what is already established. Her examples include Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto*, the supporters of which 'chafe under the restrictions of ordinary print and boil over, as it were, in capitals, coloured inks and mathematical symbols'.³³⁹

Warner quotes from the *Manifesto*:

With the object of producing the maximum quantity of vibrations, and a deeper synthesis of life we abolish all stylistic rules, all the lucid chains by which the traditional poets bind their images to their sentences. We use instead brief and anonymous mathematical and musical signs.³⁴⁰

Although quoting Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto* published in 1909, she gives the date as 1913, the year Luigi Russolo wrote *his Futurist Manifesto* entitled *The Art of Noises*. This manifesto demanded a radical move towards the pleasure of noise and the rejection of the 'anaemic sounds of pastoral symphonies'.³⁴¹ It is probable that Warner had read Russolo's work and perhaps confused the dates. She would have enjoyed the mechanical orchestra that he created consisting of 3 Buzzers, 2 Bursters, 1 Thunderer, 3 Whistlers, 2 Rustlers, 2 Gurglers, 1 Shatterer, 1 Shriller and 1 Snorter!

Warner continues her Paper with a discussion of the problems of comprehension that would occur in reading the novels of Henry

³³⁹ Warner, 'The Point of Perfection', p.54.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. quoting the *Futurist Manifesto* of Marinetti.

³⁴¹ Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises* (1913, Something Else Press, 1967), translated by Robert Filliou.

James without punctuation, a comparable situation, she suggests, to that of Tudor music without the use of the Point of Perfection. She gives these examples to show that innovation in notation, as in other arts, is necessary to keep up with innovators. When she finally begins her discussion on the uses of the Point of Perfection she does so with an apology:

You will think all this skirmishing about with Futurists and mathematicians is an entirely gratuitous form of annoyance on my part. But I assure you it is not so. I am particularly anxious to establish the feeling as soon as may be, that there is nothing to be afraid of in the point of perfection.³⁴²

Warner's lecture on the Point of Perfection shows formidable musical knowledge of sixteenth century church music in her discussion of rhythm and how words should be sung. Her discussion, spiked with humour, continues as she links the rhythm and cadence of Tudor music with Elizabethan and Jacobean writers:

It is not only in music that the contemporary mastery of rhythm manifests itself: one can parallel the cross-rhythms of Byrd and Whyte in the blank-verse of Shakespeare and Webster. The freedom and subtlety of rhythm which we find in the work of this great age did not, I am confident, come to it through lawlessness, but through liberty. They could not have broken the rules so well if they had not had them first by heart. Both music and poetry had been to school, and had got a classical education there.³⁴³

It would seem that Warner's audience had an education that day too since Buck, who was Chairman for the session, did not invite the usual discussion after Warner's Paper but put forward his own suggestion as to an adequate response to it:

³⁴² Warner, 'Point of Perfection', pp. 54-5.

³⁴³ Ibid. p.71.

I think the best thing we professional people can do when we find an amateur like Miss Warner – I am sure Miss Warner does not mind being called an amateur in the complimentary sense – who knows far more about her branch of the subject than we do, is simply to adopt the attitude of learners.³⁴⁴

Buck's suggestion appears to have been accepted as there was no discussion after the delivery of Warner's Paper.

This first published piece on music was a template for Warner's future writing on musicology. Her style was her own and demonstrated the breadth of her reading and cultural grasp, often in seemingly unrelated subjects such as the Futurist passage cited above. And she defied the conventions of academic solemnity in her writing. This unpretentious and engaging style can be seen in the writing of all of the 'prefatory matter' of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes which, I believe, point strongly towards Warner's authorship. She certainly wrote the Historical Survey, as is shown in a letter to Mitchell of the Carnegie Trust. In it Warner calls this the 'General Survey':

Dear Mr Mitchell,

I have been asked by the Oxford University Press to contribute to a volume on Tudor Church Music to a series of small text books called 'The World's Manuals' issued by them.

Before I close with them I think I ought to ask you if you think I may do this. What I should write for them would necessarily be based upon the General Survey which I wrote for the Taverner volume. It occurs to me that the Trustees might regard this as a moral infringement of their copyright, and if you think that there is any likelihood of their taking [this] view, I will tell Mr Milford that I am not able to undertake the volume.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Warner, 'Point of Perfection', p.74.

³⁴⁵ CUKT GD/41/239. Warner undated letter to Mitchell, Secretary to the Carnegie Trustees.

Examples of the writing styles of her fellow editors are given below for comparison. They will show, in the light of quotations from the prefatory matter, that it is unlikely that the two ecclesiastical members of the Committee, the Reverends Edmund Fellowes and Alexander Ramsbotham, would have written these important essays. Firstly, this piece by Ramsbotham on the *Old Hall Manuscript*:

Sometimes one is forced to suppose that the members of the Chapel Royal, St. James' who ventured to compose for the services of St. George's, [Windsor] were very imperfect or ill-trained musicians. Otherwise one must conclude either that the Mss. is so full of mistakes that it can never have been used as it now exists, or that musical ears tolerated in those days sounds which now strike us as thoroughly unmusical.³⁴⁶

And this by Edmund Fellowes, writing on cathedral music:

Much has been written on this subject from the liturgical and religious point of view; but very little attention has hitherto been drawn to musical problems that must have confronted precentors, organists, choir-masters, and composers, when the time-honoured forms of the Latin liturgy and usage were swept away, to be replaced by something so fundamentally different from them as the Book of Common Prayer issued in the vernacular tongue.³⁴⁷

There is no sense in these examples, as there is in Warner's writing, of engagement with an audience, no easy conversational style or humorous simile. The difference in writing styles can be noted in Warner's reply to a much later letter from Fellowes regarding hexachords. It echoes her 1919 Paper showing that her style of writing had changed little and encompassed both friends and strangers:

How good I must have been at deceiving in the days of my youth if you now invoke my help about hexachords. I know nothing about them, beyond that they took up a

³⁴⁶ Alexander Ramsbotham, *The Old Hall Manuscript* (Nashdom Abbey, Bucks: Plainsong & Medieval Music Society, 1933-38). Unpagued.

³⁴⁷ Edmund Fellowes, *English Cathedral Music from Edward VI to Edward VII* (London: Methuen, 1941), p.1.

great deal of space in Wooldridge – to, so it seemed to me, little purpose. And on the basis of this knowing nothing I later formed a ripe opinion that hexachords, at any rate by the 16th century, and probably by the 15th, were among those Venerable Bunkums more honoured in the breach than in the observance.³⁴⁸

Percy Buck was the only other member of the *Tudor Church Music* Editorial Committee with a style capable of such lively humour. For example, take this letter to Herbert Howells dated 12 September 1946, when he was aged seventy-four:

My Beloved Puck,

When Israel came out of Egypt they hoped they had done with servitude; and the very thought of putting notes onto staves gives me housemaid's knee in all the vital spots. But if ever I come across any words that seem to ask for a setting I will promise to do them for you and not to send them to anyone else. Hope you feel ginned up for next term – I shall blow in for lunch some time.
Ever, PCB.³⁴⁹

Buck was an extremely busy man when volume one of *Tudor Church Music* was published in 1923, holding two academic posts between 1910 and 1927, teaching music theory at the Royal College of Music, editing manuscripts for the *Tudor Church Music* project and holding the post of Director of Music at Harrow School. With this workload it is unlikely that he had the time to research and write any of the essays forming the prefatory matter, although it is likely that Warner discussed the work with him.

The first essay, the 'Editorial Preface', is a short summary of collectors of Early Music prior to the *Tudor Church Music* project.

³⁴⁸ Sylvia Townsend Warner, typed letter to Edmund Fellowes, 30 August 1949. Fellowes Archive, Oriel College, Oxford. MPP/F/2/2/43, item 101. A hexachord is a musical scale of six notes having a half tone between the third and fourth notes and used in Early Music.

³⁴⁹ Royal College of Music London, Herbert Howells Archive. 'Puck' acknowledges Howells' music of this name.

The writing is straightforward but there are several instances of Warner's engaging style. This, for example, regarding musicians whose works are

known only by such short extracts as can find room in a general history of music, or by isolated pieces which have found favour in the eyes of some enthusiast for polyphony who has had the courage of his convictions to the point of publication.³⁵⁰

There is a sense here of chance shaping the fate of musicians and their place, or not, in music's hall of fame, an ironic awareness of the role that it plays in establishing reputation. No individual collector was responsible for the manuscripts published; then, as now, for collectors it was a question of knowledgeable contacts and deep pockets. Should a collector manage to publish works there was no surety that they would have survived. Warner cites the book by John Barnard published in 1641: *First Book of Selected Church Music, consisting of Services and Anthems, such as are now used in the Cathedrall, and Collegiat Churches of the Kingdome. Never before Printed*, as a published work that had been broken and mutilated:

His own book has not been safe from the world's neglect. No complete copy of the ten voice-parts is known to exist, and the only extant example of the Medius Cantoris part, now in the Royal College of Music, has lost its first eleven leaves, and some incorrigible collector has been at pains to cut out many of the ornate initial letters from the body of the book.³⁵¹

When Richard Terry left the *Tudor Church Music* project in 1921 Warner became the pre-eminent authority on Tudor polyphony among the Editors; the essay on 'Sixteenth-Century Notation' could, I

³⁵⁰ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.* 1 (1923), p. ix.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. xi-xii.

believe, only have been written by her; this is Warner at her most straightforward as she discusses the notation. It is, however, difficult for a non-specialist to explain succinctly. I will only briefly detail those aspects that have a relevance to Warner's writing of the chapter 'Triste Loysir' in the novel *The Corner That Held Them*, or that especially suggest her writing style. Principally, these aspects of notation are Time Signatures and Proportion, together with brief mention of specialized musical terms.

The essay on notation begins with Time Signatures, which indicate the metre or pattern of regular beats by which music is organised:

The unit of sixteenth-century time-signatures was the breve, sub-divisible into three or two semibreves, the semibreve into three or two minims. The relation of semibreve to breve was called Time. If the breve equalled three semibreves, it was called Perfect Time; if two, Imperfect Time. The relation of minim to semibreve was called Prolation. In the Greater Prolation each semibreve equalled three minims, and in the Lesser Prolation two.³⁵²

Musical metre derives much of its terminology from poetic metre, and the division of a line of poetry into feet is similar to the division of a musical phase into what Warner names 'bar-feeling'. Her comments on the use of poetic metre in a later publication have relevance here:

Scholars and Churchmen might avoid regular scansion in Church music, but they studied and practised it in the poetic metres; and when the exigencies of the exciting new art of polyphony made it necessary to contrive some method of regularizing both the composition and the notation of scanned music, it was to the poetic metres that they turned.³⁵³

³⁵² *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.*1 (1923), xxxiv.

³⁵³ Warner, 'Notation: The Growth of a System', 1929, pp. 66-84 (74).

Warner's *Tudor Church Music* discussion then addresses

'Proportion':

The proportional system of the sixteenth century was a simple thing compared to the proportional system of the medieval theorists, who found in the question of the proportional relationship between notes of unequal time-value a stimulating opportunity to differentiate and classify.³⁵⁴

She continues with a discussion on the Proportions of Multiplicity which 'expressed the number of notes of lesser value that could be sung against one whole note of greater value in another [voice] part';³⁵⁵ She describes Sesquialtra and Sesquitertia as terms that are used to indicate Multiplicity, and goes on to define Musica Ficta: 'Music is called *Ficta*, says the author of the early fourteenth-century treatise, *Ars Contrapuncti*, when we make a tone to be a semitone or, conversely, a semitone to be a tone. [It] was a system of temporarily falsifying an interval of the modal scale in order to bring it into agreement with certain melodic or harmonic exigencies'.³⁵⁶

Warner writes amusingly, perhaps with a premonition of criticism, concerning major changes from the modal system to polyphony:

In the days when the modes were living things, such terms as leading-note, dominant, or any sort of cadence, meant something different in kind from what they of necessity meant to the latter polyphonic composer; for his standpoint was no longer primarily melodic.

The above paragraph must be our defence should any lover of the archaic charge us with too liberal a use of suggested accidentals. We share with him a weariness of

³⁵⁴ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.* 1 (1923), p.xxxv.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.* 1 (1923), xl. Sesquialtera: a rhythmic proportion of three beats in the time taken for two; an interval of a fifth. Sesquitertia: a rhythmic proportion of four beats of equal value in the time taken for 3 beats. *Ars Contrapuncti* *see* Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de Musica*, iii.23 [?1870].

the eternal and tedious dominant and tonic cadence of these days, and derive an almost childish pleasure from a flattened leading-note.³⁵⁷

She then comprehensively explains the uses of the 'Point of Perfection'. Her expertise in Tudor notation is fully displayed in these pages.

The essay entitled 'Historical Survey' traces the chronological development of polyphonic music in England by examining the work of composers from John Dunstable (c1390-1453) to William Byrd (1543-1623). Additionally, Warner sketches the parallel development of polyphony on the Continent and shows the musical influence that each had on the other.

As an example Warner cites the Troubadour influence on Chaucer's Squer: 'singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day; he coude songes make and wel endyte'.³⁵⁸ She sets out the intertwining of music and worship before the Reformation and discusses the independence of English Catholicism from that on the Continent where the liturgy was of first importance. In England it was the combined effect of music *enhancing* the liturgy that was more usual in pre-Reformation times. Warner offers this view:

The history of ecclesiastical music is a history of a combination and a conflict of two points of view. Speaking in extremes, one is the churchman's, that music is a garnish to the liturgy, and the other is the musician's, that the liturgy offers material for music.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.*1 (1923),. p. xli.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. xvi.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. xvii.

Warner's scepticism about the centrality of the liturgy is, I believe, key to the strictures of Anselm Hughes when reviewing the prefatory matter discussed below.

Musicians strove for innovation and descant evolved, adding a composed or extemporized part to the plainsong. Embellishments to descant had developed to a point where they threatened the integrity of the chant of the divine service, and their use in any form was forbidden by Pope John XXII in 1322. As could be expected, new ways were found to circumvent the decree. One of these was faux-bourdon, a style of composition with the melody at the forefront of the work:

By adding a third between the bare fifths of organum and afterwards by transposing the lowest part to the octave above, a new and agreeable sound was added to music without obscuring the curve of the plainsong or tampering with its form. Faux-bourdon was of great importance in that it quickened the sense of beauty and pure sound, an aspect of polyphony which had been neglected by descant.³⁶⁰

English composers were pursuing ideas of a form of polyphony based on contrary motion before the cataclysmic effects of the Reformation fundamentally altered the liturgy of the Church in England. In particular Robert Fairfax, Hugh Aston and Nicholas Ludforde supplied new contrapuntal and structural elements in the Mass, thus enlarging the scope of polyphony. Warner states that Ludforde, a favourite composer of hers, was before his time in the experimental nature of his work whilst the 'composers of this period,

³⁶⁰ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.*, 1 (1923), xviii. Organum was a medieval form of part-writing based on a plainsong which was harmonized by adding up to three other voices. It could be called early polyphonic vocal music because it was governed by measurable pitches.

even Taverner, the greatest and boldest of them, are generally content to write in certain established forms, enlarging but not modifying them'.³⁶¹

The English Litany, published in 1544, had a profound effect on church music in England. A principal problem stemmed from the position of Archbishop Cranmer, who decried long, florid passages set to a single syllable and deemed them unacceptable; the music must not hide the distinct sound of the words from worshippers. He stipulated that 'the song that shall be made would not be full of notes, but as near as may be, for every syllable a note so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly'.³⁶² This order to make the service understandable to laymen had a critical effect on music composed for the church:

Times had changed, and for the future English composers for the Church were obliged to write their music on lines laid down for them [...] English Church music had official support, but that support, tempered with suspicion, qualified with regulations, was but a stepmotherly substitute for the natural support of its own past, its own traditions of which it had been abruptly deprived.³⁶³

The great ceremonial Masses, such as Taverner's *Corona Spinea*, had reached a point in which further innovation, so Cranmer believed, would have made the works too florid for church use and now, in 1544, under edict, they were deemed unacceptable. However, as with artists in any field, innovation was the life-blood of Tudor composers. They turned to the lesser forms of worship which

³⁶¹ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et al.* 1 (1923), p. xvii. The Decree is given in full in an extended footnote in both Latin and English. p. xviii.

³⁶² *Ibid.* p. xxv.

³⁶³ *Ibid.* p. xxviii.

offered greater freedoms for adaptation and gave them new scope and a deeper significance. Warner foresaw a potential problem here, as her distinctive writing shows:

The danger underlying such a step is that the music may become finicking; but the influence of their own past, with its tradition of vitality and movement, was strong to save them; and to the traditions of that past they dedicated their newly won technique with such results as the *Miserere* of Robert White, one of the finest examples of an unslackening, unswerving impetus in the whole of music.
³⁶⁴

These three prefatory essays were searchingly and sometimes critically assessed by another eminent musicologist of Early Music. Dom. Anselm Hughes was a monk attached to the Anglican Benedictine Abbey of Pershore. He was a scholar of medieval liturgical music, an influential writer on English polyphony and a prominent member of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society. Hughes later catalogued the early musical manuscripts at Peterhouse, Cambridge and this work was published by Cambridge University Press in 1953. Possibly his most prestigious published work was his volume for the *New Oxford History of Music*, entitled 'Early Medieval Music up to 1300' which was published by Oxford University Press in 1954. Hughes also presented a paper on the *Eton Mss.* at the Royal Musical Association which was published in its *Proceedings*.³⁶⁵ His autobiographical work, *Septuagesima: Reminiscences of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society*, published by the Faith Press in 1959, does not contain any reference

³⁶⁴ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.*1 (1923), p. xxxi.

³⁶⁵ Anselm Hughes, 'The Eton Manuscript', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 53 (1926-27) 67-83.

to working with Warner or to her writing on Early Music or notation. Hughes' archive is held at Royal Holloway College, University of London and, while it includes early manuscript transcriptions and letters by people known to Warner, nothing concerning her is to be found there. In addition, the archive of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, now at the University of Oxford, has no material of any kind that relates to the early twentieth century.

Hughes reviewed volume one of the *Tudor Church Music* project in the journal *Music and Letters*. The review opens appreciatively:

The supreme importance of the new volume (Taverner's Works, Part 1) lies in the fact that it includes three general prefaces to the whole series – (i) an Editorial Preface; (ii) a Historical Survey of Tudor Church Music; (iii) an invaluable dissertation on Sixteenth Century Notation.³⁶⁶

He goes on to remark on the production of the volume, admiring the specially designed type used for the music for example, but then begins his criticism: 'The editorial work has been done so thoroughly, more especially in the palaeographical and collating departments, that it is a thousand pities that it is not just a little better'.³⁶⁷ As Richard Searle comments, 'where fault could be found Hughes found it. He identified clumsy editorial mistakes and judgmental errors in the body of the work; and in Warner's "Historical Survey" he discerned omissions, misattributions, instances of inaccuracy and mistaken emphasis'.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ Anselm Hughes, 'Sixteenth-Century Service Music', *Music and Letters*, 5 (1924), 145-54.

³⁶⁷ Hughes, p. 145.

³⁶⁸ Searle, 'Warner and Tudor Church Music', p. 82.

Hughes saved his especial criticism for the author or authors of the Historical Survey who 'seem to have strangely omitted to see how their assimilation of the modern knowledge of sixteenth-century events should have altered their whole conspectus of the effects which the "English Reformation" produced on English Music'.³⁶⁹ Hughes did not believe that the composers in English had been 'abruptly deprived' of their traditional practices during the Reformation, and he is concerned that the reader 'will take away the conviction that the introduction of English as a liturgical language dealt a death-blow to a flourishing school of composition'³⁷⁰ in which the Mass and motets were sung in Latin. However, Hughes does admit that the author of this survey sums up the position of Latin and English composers accurately:

It is a mistake to suppose that after the bifurcation of Church music the musicians who set Latin texts wrote in the old way, while those who set English texts explored a new way. Changes of style quite as profound as those which occurred in the English music took place in the Latin; but in the one case they were imposed, and in the other developed.³⁷¹

Hughes is defending the Latin Rite and its adherence to Papal authority and appears sceptical of change or innovation; his strict Anglo-Catholic position allows little room for the creativity shown by the composers in English after Cranmer's edict. He was affronted that the Historical Survey implied that composers who set Latin texts did so pedantically in a style imposed upon them, whilst those composing in English were exploring new avenues of musical

³⁶⁹ Hughes, p. 147.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 148.

³⁷¹ Hughes, p.147, quoting 'Historical Survey', p. xxix.

invention. Hughes emphasises the 'Service', as expressed in the title of his article, throughout. He believed implicitly that music was ancillary to the liturgy, not that the liturgy should offer opportunity for music, the duality that Warner had noted. It would seem inevitable then that Hughes and Warner, with differing opinions on Church doctrine and developments in Church music, would disagree on much of the emphasis of the Historical Survey. Hughes continues his estimate of this essay with this ambiguous statement:

It is something like a masterpiece of English writing (except for the use of "overseas" when "abroad" would have served equally well) but not exactly a masterpiece of English History.³⁷²

In his critical essay of almost ten pages, only a few paragraphs contain any positive comment. His concluding thoughts on the Historical Survey are congruent with his generally disparaging opinion throughout his review:

We close the Historical Survey with the feeling that a great opportunity has been missed [...] With the resources at the disposal of the committee we had looked forward to the prefatory matter of the series with a hope that has been disappointed.³⁷³

Warner's response to Hughes' criticism of the prefatory essays is a seemingly peaceful musing upon the responsibilities of editorship, although she makes no direct reference to Hughes. At another level Warner's musings are an ironic reflection on fallibility; 'Doubting Castle', the title of her article, is the home of Giant Despair in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Her image of both strength and weakness express her doubt on the 'infallibility' of church doctrine

³⁷² Hughes, p.146.

³⁷³ Hughes, p.152, quoting 'Historical Survey'.

and Hughes' steadfast adherence to orthodoxy as an Anglo-Catholic monk.

Her manner and style of writing are in direct contrast to Hughes' absolutism as she sets out the varied possibilities of human error by an editor doing his or her best. Her opening sentence is unusually direct: 'Editing is a form of trusteeship. It is proverbially difficult to be an honest trustee: to be an honest editor is not less so'.³⁷⁴ She goes on to explain that she has 'found plenty of scope for false witness in my own small experience of editing such austere and non-controversial matter as sixteenth-century English church music'.³⁷⁵ Warner outlines five ways in which an editor can err; she names them as 'Making the Best of It', 'Having a Theory About It', 'Consistency', 'Loss of Perspective' and 'Blind Faith'. Warner's language is unaffected and engaging; each of these colloquial headings is in contrast to Hughes' formal language throughout his article, and Warner gives humorous metaphors under each heading:

1. 'Making the Best of It': the choice is between two readings of a disputed passage and choosing the less probable version because it is less dull: 'Formerly, I think, editors were inclined to play for safety [...] now, hot heads are in vogue, and if not hot heads, then red wigs'.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Doubting Castle', *Music and Letters*, 5 (1924), 155-168 (155).

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

2. 'Having a Theory about It' is essential to an editor but great care is needed as a theory 'is a savage animal, only to be exercised on a string'.³⁷⁷

3. 'Consistency': 'it is essential for the editor to remember on Tuesday what he did with a like case last Thursday fortnight, and abide by it'.³⁷⁸ Warner gives a warning here that amid the grind of sorting, surveying, collating and generally subduing a mass of material into a singable whole, it can be deprived of its individuality and 'this is the moment when consistency breaks loose, and with a few snips of its abhorred shears maims the laurel into a suburban hedge'.³⁷⁹ Consistency can be misplaced and great caution is required in applying it.

4. 'Loss of Perspective': 'No artist's work has purely absolute value. It is conditioned by time and place; to ignore the surroundings to which, and upon which, it reacted is to belittle its significance'.³⁸⁰ Without a sense of historical proportion, Warner notes, an editor can leave little space for a just comparison with the composer's peers who may well have developed a new idea to better ends. In addition, there are few original scores in any composers' hand; working with scores that have been amended at any date is a particular editorial dilemma:

He must pick his way through a morass where it is very easy to go wrong, and quite impossible to feel sure of

³⁷⁷ Warner, 'Doubting Castle', p.156.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p.157.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

going right. Boiling an egg to the Hartfield standard of wholesomeness does not present a prettier problem.³⁸¹

5. 'Blind Faith': Warner cites the Chinese reverence of Ancestors and the consequent requirement to copy exactly: 'No editorial shadow darkens the candid page [...] the ordinary European editor is scarcely able to maintain the proper Celestial reserve. Sooner or later, circumstances will betray him into an expression of editorial opinion'.³⁸² Warner relates such an error of 'blind faith' made by William Barclay Squire and J.A. Fuller Maitland, two musicologists lauded in his article by Hughes, and comments 'As a piece of Chinese editing the unshirking reproduction of a textual error is admirable'.³⁸³ Here Warner would seem to delight in slyly refuting Hughes' narrow perspective regarding errors and editorial choices.

She warns that mistakes should not be confused with variants in the score, and her comment regarding the unmasking of dubious variants is a surprising metaphor in an academic journal: 'Were all variant readings easily unmasked, the editor would live as pleasantly as in that country where little pigs run about ready roasted with a knife and fork sticking in their ribs'.³⁸⁴ Warner writes in a lively and engaging way in this article. However, beneath the humorous delivery is a description of the care and caution exercised by the Editors; she is here defending the editorial procedure of the *Tudor Church Music* Committee. Hughes' response is not known and

³⁸¹ Warner, 'Doubting Castle', p. 158. 'Hartfield' alludes to Jane Austen's novel *Emma*, where Hartfield is the house where Emma lived with her father. He thought that a lightly-boiled egg was 'not unwholesome'.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid. p. 159.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 162.

consequently neither is it known whether Warner's arrows had hit home. However, several years later Hughes asked Warner to edit the *Eton Manuscript* for the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, so it must be supposed that he came to respect her knowledge of early church music and her reliability as an editor.

Prior to this written dispute with Hughes, Warner had been writing the essay, 'John Taverner: An Appreciation', for the second *Tudor Church Music* volume of the composer's music. Warner's authorship is corroborated by a letter written to the Carnegie Trust by her fellow editor, Alexander Ramsbotham stating that this 'second volume on the work of John Taverner was almost complete except for an appreciation of Taverner's music which Miss Warner has in hand'.³⁸⁵

This short essay differs markedly in style from the purely biographical information given in other volumes of *Tudor Church Music* excepting those for Robert White and Orlando Gibbons. Warner's liking for Taverner is evident in this 'Appreciation' in her lucid writing and admiring tone. She enjoys his ability to change compositional style to suit religious decree, weathering all political and doctrinal storms to make both a living and a reputation in church music. Her writing displays a thorough knowledge of the composer's music, gained when re-editing his manuscripts, a project that Richard Terry had not adequately completed:

It was no ordinary makeshift personality that could have so triumphed over the vicissitudes of time and fashion [...]

³⁸⁵ CUKT GD281/38/49.

Taverner can carry off long stretches of insignificant and charmless counterpoint by some brow-beating quality which belongs to the man and not to the material.³⁸⁶

Warner details the way in which Taverner composes: innovatively, sometimes flamboyantly, sometimes austerely, always creating wonderful harmonies. I quote her final paragraph in full to show her command of the context in which Taverner was working after the Reformation, as well as her wonderfully expressive language:

His command of technical ingenuities and his grim delight in following them out suggest study of Flemish methods. Pure English is his feeling for massiveness and grandiosity; and his close kinship with the Fairfax school shows itself in a filial acceptance of established forms, expanding but never breaking them. But the vitality and intellectual passion of his style is personal: it galvanizes the least meritorious of his writings, and transcends the finest of them. The honest admirer of Taverner must be ready to admit that such and such specimens of his music are not great works. The admission need cost him little, since he can say with conviction that the most insignificant of them betrays, somewhere and somehow, the master-hand.³⁸⁷

The 'vitality and passion' of Taverner's composing style resonated with Warner and this description shows her admiration for his powerful personality. Since she was always interested in the individual, it is not surprising that Warner appreciated both the man and the musician.

Warner's hand can also be found in the introductory narratives on composers in two other volumes, those for Robert White and Orland Gibbons, and is particularly noticeable in the volume for White in the part-chapter 'His Work'. He was a favourite composer of

³⁸⁶ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.*,3 (1924), xii.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. xiv.

Warner's and she was the creator of the cantus part for his *Magnificat* published in the volume, no complete original part having been found in any library or choir school. In her diary for 1 July 1929 she comments on supplying the missing music when she attended a service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate White: 'My precamur,³⁸⁸ the *Magnificat* – it was entertaining to hear my added cantus part careering about that roof on 18th century wings'.³⁸⁹ It is worth noting that Warner appears absorbed by the music, not by pride that she had composed the missing part.

The first paragraph of this short piece on White's music suggests Warner's hand and syntax:

There is a comfortable belief that time and change try reputations by some infallible touchstone; that the worthiest will survive; and that the iniquity of oblivion does not scatter its poppy quite so blindly after all. This belief is sharply challenged by the case of Robert White.³⁹⁰

Warner believed that White's music was skilful and inventive. She thought he was a genius and was mystified that he had been neglected by 'the scholars, antiquaries, and praisers of former times. Though no one cares to drink the wine, the bottle is still held in respect'.³⁹¹ She goes on to discuss respectful memory with regard to Tallis and Bach: 'A canon and a motet in forty parts saved the credit of Tallis; Bach's music might go into the lumber room, but the Old Peruke was here and there remembered for his skill in fugue'.³⁹² If

³⁸⁸ 'We beg or entreat'.

³⁸⁹ STW-PD 1 July 1929, p. 38.

³⁹⁰ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.* 5 (1926), xiv. Alludes to Sir Thomas Browne's Urn Burial.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*

the influence of such powerful and amusing writing could reveal a neglected genius, White would be well known instantly.

Orlando Gibbons was another composer that Warner admired. His madrigal 'The Silver Swan' was a favourite of hers. She called it a masterpiece. It was always in the programme of music and songs performed for her in old age by her cousins Hilary and Janet Machen and their friends³⁹³ and it could, therefore, be expected that Warner would write an appreciation of Gibbons' music in the Carnegie volume dedicated to him. I believe that she did this, although the writing is more sombre than has been described above and with little figurative language. However, Warner's conversational style is shown here, even in the critique of Gibbons' reputation, which was immense in his lifetime, 'This Orlando was accounted one of the rarest musicians and organists of his time'.³⁹⁴ If, as I believe, Warner wrote this chapter on Gibbons, she intimates that later historians of music took this estimate at face-value:

A critical examination of his Church music as a whole leads almost inevitably to the conclusion that his merits were somewhat over-estimated by his contemporaries and that later historians accepted their verdict without questioning it. If this be so, it does not provide the only example of contemporary over-evaluation in the case of a composer of outstanding personality who happens also to be a performer of the very highest rank, as Gibbons undoubtedly was. Added to this, a sensational and sudden death never fails to add glamour to an already great fame.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ STW- PD 15 August 1969, p. 326.

³⁹⁴ *Fasti Oxoniensis*, ed. by Bliss, vol.1, p. 404. Quoted in *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.* 4 (1925), xvi.

³⁹⁵ *Tudor Church Music*, Buck *et.al.* 4 (1925), xxi.

Gibbons died suddenly of what appears to have been an aneurism in the brain.

It is possible that the three appraisals by Warner of her favoured composers in the Carnegie volumes were requested by her and agreed to by her fellow editors; the remaining seven volumes merely contain detailed, formally-written biographical information about the composers concerned.

It can be seen, then, that Warner was writing powerfully and humorously about Tudor Church music in the nineteen twenties. Contingent with her writing for *Tudor Church Music*, she was also engaged with another area of Early Music, madrigals and music for the lute. Originating in Italy in the fourteenth century, madrigals were for secular, not church use and were a type of counterpoint for several voices. The subject is often courtly love and loss.

Warner's long article, entitled 'Madrigalists and Lutenists', was published in the *Musical Times* in 1922. In the article Warner demonstrates her knowledge of the genre and praises fellow *Tudor Church Music* editor Edmund Fellowes, a lutenist and expert in this field. His works include *The English Madrigal School*, published in 1920, *The English Madrigal Composers*, 1921, together with *English Madrigal Verse (1588-1632)*, 1929.³⁹⁶ The opening paragraph of Warner's article would be unexpected to those for whom her writing was new:

The explorer of a new country would seem to be the ideal person to write the guide book of it. Yet the catalogue of

³⁹⁶ Published by Oxford University Press.

guide-books contains few instances of this happy conjunction [...] Every subject has its unknown lands, and there lie the bones of lost pioneers, their specimens scattered, their day-books obliterated, their charts blown to the winds. There is no more distinguished living explorer of the music of the past than the Rev. E.H.Fellowes.³⁹⁷

Warner goes on to give a history of the madrigal and the technical treatment of the songs or poems used, demonstrating her knowledge of the music. She stresses in particular the personal nature of the madrigal and the need for a variety of texture and rhythm to give the madrigal composer opportunities for experimenting with harmony. Warner ends this extended essay with further warm praise for Fellowes and a memorable metaphor:

The debt which we owe to Dr. Fellowes for the enthusiasm, industry, and good sense by which he has restored to us so much of our national heritage is incalculable. It is thanks to him that the Madrigal, so long condemned to languish in a glass case as a praiseworthy antiquity, is now once more established as a living thing. [...] [madrigals] are so lovely and sincere as to be proof against the tarnishing of familiarity as against the moth and rust of three centuries' neglect.³⁹⁸

In 1946 Fellowes published his autobiography, *Memoirs of an Amateur Musician*, which Warner reviewed the following year in *Music and Letters*. It was a positive review and contained another unexpected opening, in this instance a long paragraph referencing Trollope and Thomas Hardy, here quoted in full to show Warner's knowledge of Hardy's writing and her irrepressible use of language:

'Motored with F and G to Exeter. Cathedral service. Psalms to Walker in E flat. Felt I should prefer to be a cathedral organist to anything in the world'.

³⁹⁷ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Madrigalists and Lutenists', *The Musical Times*, 63 (1922), 160-62.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 236-37.

When Thomas Hardy made this entry in his diary he was seventy- nine. His novels lay far behind him, he viewed the cathedral organist as an ideal, not as a theme. Trollope never climbed into the Barchester organ-loft (perhaps he sensed it would be too stormy for him); but what a novel Hardy might have centred there, what couldn't he have done with such material? – the recesses of provincial life, the Hardy-esque forces of Accident (a note ciphering, a button flying off a Dean), the dignified pettifogging routine slashed by the violent emotions which it is the peculiar property of church music to arouse.³⁹⁹

Here Warner's prose is thoughtful but carries her ideas forcefully; the long final sentence asserts her skill as a writer as well as a musicologist.

Warner's oblique approach in opening paragraphs such as this demonstrates the broadmindedness of her writing. Her style highlights her attitude to culture and authority both in musicological articles and in her literary writing. In musicology this style is imaginative and unexpected and Warner is not afraid to show her wide-ranging knowledge of other subjects. However, her use of humour mitigates any sense of an over-assertive personality.

These two aspects of Warner's writing indicate an intellectual freedom untrammelled by a need to conform to orthodox norms. They show, too, her joy in writing; metaphors, similes, juxtapositions, words filling the page much as her 'verbal fireworks' filled the journey to the Essex Marshes with David Garnett some years before.⁴⁰⁰ Warner's diaries detail this joy: 'Instead of going to bed I wrote *In Egypt*, and today I was brought to bed – in Whiteley's of all places, of

³⁹⁹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Memoirs of an Amateur Musician', *Music and Letters*, 28 (1947) 78.

⁴⁰⁰ See footnote 230, p.133.

More Joy. My fingers drop myrrh. I really am writing a poem a day'.⁴⁰¹

Warner's last published works on Tudor musicology were a chapter on notation for the revised edition of the *Oxford History of Music*, and the revision of a substantial amount of H.E. Wooldridge's work on this subject from the first edition.⁴⁰² The original six volume work had been published under the editorship of Henry Hadow between 1901 and 1905 and he wrote one volume of it. A handwritten letter in the Oxford University Press Archive, written by Hadow and dated February 1897, outlines the scheme. It is unsigned but the handwriting is recognisable from other documents. H.E. Wooldridge was to address 'the Ecclesiastical Period, laying special stress upon problems of notation and measurement, upon the Musica Ficta and upon the growth and progress of pure vocal counterpoint'.⁴⁰³

Harry Ellis Wooldridge was an English painter who studied at the Royal Academy Schools in London, later becoming Slade Professor of Fine Arts in Oxford during the years 1895 – 1904. He was a friend of the poet Robert Bridges, who was also a friend of Percy Buck, and he was a musician and an expert on early music.

Buck was appointed editor for the revised edition of *The Oxford History of Music*, on which work began in 1927 whilst he and Warner were still involved with the *Tudor Church Music* project. Buck

⁴⁰¹ STW-PD 4 October 1929, p. 5.

⁴⁰² *Oxford History of Music*, ed. by Henry Hadow, 6 vol (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901 -1905). Warner substantially edited H.E. Wooldridge's *The Polyphonic Period. Part 2: Method of Musical Art 1300 – 1600*.

⁴⁰³ [Henry Hadow], Handwritten letter stamped 25 Feb [18]97, 'Proof to Mr Doble' in blue crayon. Oxford University Press Archive, file reference 2909 'Oxford History of Music'. H. E. Wooldridge, *The Polyphonic Period. Part 2: Method of Musical Art 1300 – 1600*, *Oxford History of Music*, v (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).

added an introductory volume to the edition, published in 1929; it included a chapter by Warner entitled 'Notation: the Growth of a System'. As with her other publications on this subject, her writing is expressive and unexpected; its brio is particularly notable in an encyclopaedic volume:

It must be premised that the novelty of measured music was merely the novelty of something in a new place. There was nothing new about periodic rhythm; no one, I imagine, supposes that the golden age of plainsong was accompanied by a complete atrophy of the impulse to dance, or that church bells were rung with a devout avoidance of keeping time.⁴⁰⁴

Whilst Warner's humour is evident, this chapter encompasses her knowledge of the subject, formidably displayed and illustrated with musical examples. She describes the development of the formal representation of musical sounds and rests during the Middle Ages and beyond and outlines the function of notation; that of expressing the relationship of pitch (or interval) and time (or measure). Warner explains that the inflexions which occurred when the liturgy was recited developed into plainchant. It was soon realised that more than one note could be sung for every note of the chant, and the development of polyphony was underway.

Warner re-wrote a great deal of Wooldridge's *Polyphonic Period, Part 2*. There are five chapters in this volume, extending to 408 pages including the index. Chapter 1 includes subjects about which Warner was expert; *Ars nova*, *Musica Ficta*, *The Hexachordal System* and *Faux Bourdon*; further chapters detail the 'Formation of

⁴⁰⁴ Warner, 'Notation: The Growth of a System', pp. 66-84 (74). *Oxford History of Music, Introductory Volume*, ed. by Percy. C. Buck (Oxford: OUP, 1929).

Schools', including those for England and the Netherlands, together with a chapter entitled 'The Perfection of the Method', in which

Warner's style is apparent:

It is significant that the feeling for mass and splendid proportions which characterizes our national architecture and literature, and had assisted to build up such works as the extended Masses of the Fayrfax and Taverner period, exhibited itself in our treatment of the madrigal [...] With but one exception, the chief English madrigalists, Byrd, Wilbye, Weelkes, Gibbons, are at their happiest expressing the more permanent emotions. The exception is Morley. Morley composed several beautiful madrigals in the grave manner, but his peculiar excellence is in the swiftness and gaiety of his handling of light subjects, and in the possession of a quality which might almost be described as wit.⁴⁰⁵

The other volumes in the revised edition were re-printed with minimal alteration.

The research involved for *Tudor Church Music* may have been the reason for the revised edition of this volume on polyphony, as a great deal of new information on the subject had been gathered by the Editors. Warner's diary testifies to the work that she undertook for Buck, and her early thoughts on it are revealing: 'Cleaned up Wooldridge proof. Wooldridge is without doubt the most damnable piece of idiocy good nature was ever betrayed into'.⁴⁰⁶ She continued working on the Wooldridge material in 1928, noting in her diary that his interpretation of the *Old Hall Mss.* was 'quite out'. In September 1929, with the last of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes at the Press, she appears to have concentrated on completing the revision of Wooldridge's work, as her diary entries show:

⁴⁰⁵ *Oxford History of Music, The Polyphonic Period. Part 2: Method of Musical Art 1300 – 1600*, ed. by Percy C. Buck (Oxford: OUP, 1932), p. 220.

⁴⁰⁶ STW-UD19 November 1927.

9 September 1929

In the afternoon I despatched Wooldridge proof to the end of the first Spanish invasion.

16 September 1929

I dealt flowingly with Wooldridge proof.

17 September 1929

Wooldridged.

19 September 1929

Then I came home and fell on Wooldridge, and dismissed Byrd.

21 September 1929

A slightly grubby day, dealing with Wooldridge. In the evening I finished the text, and began on the illustrations. Looking for one from the *Gradualia* I happened upon *Quotiescunque manducabitis*; and at the bass entry on *mortem Domini* [sic] I was cast into such a rapture of knowing the man's mind that I was ready to count all the damnations of scholarship as nought for the sake of that one passage alone.

[Also published in *The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner*, p.44].

30 September 1929

[I] spent the evening putting positively the last finishing touches to positively the last t.s. [type script] of Wooldridge.⁴⁰⁷

Warner's rapture concerning her understanding of music from Byrd's *Gradualia* shows her immersion in the task and her empathy with it.

The revised edition of *The Oxford History of Music* was published in 1932 and the reviews were not especially favourable. It was thought that more should have been edited throughout the six original volumes and that 'The new edition of Wooldridge's second volume would have made poor Wooldridge squirm';⁴⁰⁸ Warner had re-written Wooldridge's volume to the extent that he would not have

⁴⁰⁷ STW-UD 9-30 September 1929.

⁴⁰⁸ J.B. Trend, archive.spectator.co.uk/article/1st-October-1932/32/the-oxford-history-of-music. [Accessed 19 May 2017].

recognised the work. Warner, with her unequivocal knowledge augmented by years of recent research, would, I think, have been unmoved.

Warner's principal achievements in musicology were in the research, transposition and dissemination of her knowledge of sixteenth-century church music; what she had learned so rapidly in the years prior to the *Tudor Church Music* project, and supplemented by original research in library, archive and choir-school, she gave back to the musical community with added elan and unexpected wit.

Chapter 5: Early Music in the Novel *The Corner That Held Them*

Obbligato

Warner's expertise with the intricacies of medieval musical notation emerges in an extraordinary way in the novel *The Corner That Held Them*. In the chapter 'Triste Loysir' Warner brings together in a single encounter, music, leprosy — a kind of 'death-in-life' — a vision of Paradise and of a more just and inclusive society.

Warner deploys her scholastic knowledge of important advances in liturgical music to great effect as she writes about the redeeming joy of singing the startling new polyphonic music, the *Ars nova*, in the most unlikely setting of the filth and pestilential squalor of a leper house. Here Warner uses her knowledge powerfully to inform us that this music, and its construction, was at that time revolutionary. Philip Hensher in his Introduction to the 2012 Virago edition of *The Corner That Held Them* writes: 'The ecstatic discovery of the *Ars nova* by Henry Yellowlees in a leper house is one of the most accurate and truthful episodes in musical endeavour in any novel'.⁴⁰⁹

Warner explained to her friend the American composer Paul Nordoff, that her 'long book' *The Corner That Held Them*

has no plot and the characters are innumerable and insignificant [...] Anyway, it has remarkable vitality, for it has persisted in getting written through an endless series of interruptions, distractions and destructions, it has been as persistent as a damp patch in a house wall.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Corner That Held Them*. Introduction by Philip Hensher (London: Virago, 2012), p. xii.

⁴¹⁰ STW-PL p. 91.

This experimental novel without a plot includes a musical practice that was unusual and unconventional in its day, reflecting its strangeness in a social setting in the narrative of her novel. The book's immediacy is as original as the music of the *Ars nova*; by portraying the everyday life and passing of five prioresses, four bishops, novices that come, go and die young, a rogue nun's priest, a disgruntled steward, sundry others and a leper house, Warner creates a totally believable and palpable fictional world: Claire Harman calls it a 'tour de force of worldliness, wisdom and controlled irony [...] a masterly piece of contrived realism'.⁴¹¹ With a narrative stance that moves between detachment and focus Warner's experiments in this novel mirror the complexities of the music of the *Ars nova* about which she writes; her musical knowledge and imagery especially shape the chapter 'Triste Loysir'. The chapter includes an animated conversation about a new form of music and the changes to one man's life that occur because of it. The conversation takes place between the leper house chaplain and Henry Yellowlees, the Bishop's steward, and it illuminates the central role that the *Ars nova* plays in the novel.

This new style of musical technique was developed in the early fourteenth century and flourished in France and the Burgundian Low Countries. It rapidly gained ascendancy over plain chant, or 'church note',⁴¹² the traditionally monophonic and unaccompanied music of Christian liturgy. Its principles were outlined in a treatise,

⁴¹¹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Corner That Held Them*, Introduction by Claire Harman (London: Virago, 1988), p. v.

⁴¹² Warner, *Corner*, 1988, p. 202.

the *Ars nova notandi*, or new technique of writing music, written in 1322 and attributed to Phillipe de Vitry, a French composer, theorist and cleric who became Bishop of Meaux. In the treatise Vitry describes the developments in musical technique which would enlarge the notational system set out by Franco of Cologne around 1280 and which had been the first attempt to stabilize the relationship between the shape of the note and its value. Judith Nagley explains that 'Vitry developed three levels of notational division with note values spanning from long to breve, from breve to semi-breve and from semi-breve to the newly-defined note-value of the minim'.⁴¹³ These note values in combination gave a wide range of sub-division, so that the notes when sung by voices ranging from treble to bass gave liturgical music significantly increased complexity and depth.

Mensural music, or as the chaplain of the leper house calls it, 'music in measure', was a term originally used to distinguish the notation of polyphony from the monophony of plain chant. As Anthony Pryer explains, 'In mensural notation two relationships are measured: the proportional relationship between a note and the next note higher or lower in value, and the speed relationship between sections of music in different time signatures'.⁴¹⁴ The significance of the new notational system was that rhythmically complex music could now be written in a much clearer way than had previously been possible. The effect of this great change brought about by the *Ars*

⁴¹³ Judith Nagley, *Cambridge Music Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 96-9.

⁴¹⁴ Anthony Pryer, OCM, p. 763.

nova was to create music of a far greater expressiveness and variety than that of the thirteenth century.

In his dialogue with Henry Yellowlees, the chaplain is also enthusiastic about the 'prolations'. In early notation this was the relationship between the minim and the semi-breve and indicated how these notes were to be sung. If the prolation was 'major' there would be three minims to the semi-breve, if 'minor' only two, the length of the note defining the musical curve.

Vitry was also concerned in his treatise with the technique of isorhythm. This technique uses a repeating rhythmic and melodic pattern which can form the main structure of the piece. The melody in the tenor part was often repeated but not always to synchronize with the rhythmic repeat, thereby effecting variations and extensions for both patterns and adding further complexity to the musical sounds produced. Isorhythm is important in the context of the chapter because it is used in the *Kyrie* by Guillaume de Machaut, the French composer and poet, music which Henry Yellowlees sings in the leper house and experiences as 'paradise itself'.⁴¹⁵ The interplay between tradition and innovation gives some indication of how complex the new music had become, and its complexity is mirrored in this passage of the novel in which Warner is carefully preparing the ground for the revelation that Yellowlees will experience in the leper house.

⁴¹⁵ Warner, *Corner*, 1988. pp. 203-4.

In 'Triste Loysir' Warner demonstrates the practical difficulties of learning the techniques of the *Ars nova*. When asked by the chaplain if he could read music at sight Yellowlees replies, 'What sort of music? I can read church note of course'.⁴¹⁶ The chaplain clarifies the elements of the new notation:

No, no! Music in measure. Do you understand the prolations? Well, I can soon teach you [...] See, these red notes are to be sung in the triple prolation. And these red minims, following the black breve, show that the breve is imperfect. Bear that in mind and the rest will be simple.⁴¹⁷

However, Warner shows emphatically that all was not simple. Singing 'Triste Loysir' Yellowlees 'felt himself astray, bewildered by the unexpected progressions, concords so sweet they seemed to melt the flesh off his bones'.⁴¹⁸ Here is the first intimation of the loathsomeness of leprosy and it presages Yellowlees' thoughts on his experiences at the leper house as he leaves the next day.

The next piece that is sung is the Kyrie from the *Messe de Nostre Dame* by Machaut which is the earliest surviving complete polyphonic setting of the Mass Ordinary composed as an entity. Machaut was highly educated, reading and writing in both Latin and French. He could only have achieved his attainments in an ecclesiastical environment, possibly in Rheims but probably in Paris. As Daniel Leech-Wilkinson states, 'This would seem the most likely explanation for his early adoption of *Ars nova* compositional

⁴¹⁶ Warner, *Corner*, 1988. p. 202.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 203.

techniques – his motet *bone pastor* is one of the clearest examples of the influence of Phillipe de Vitry'.⁴¹⁹

Unusually for this time Machaut wrote the *Messe de Notre Dame* for four voices instead of the usual three. A tenor voice would probably have sung the 'cantus firmus' part but as Nagley explains 'the flowing contrapuntal lines, with long melismatic phrases on extended vowel sounds, make the tenor *cantus firmus* part barely audible'⁴²⁰; this gives Warner the musical licence for three voices to perform in the chapter 'Triste Loysir'. A leper, a professional singer in his former life, is summoned by the chaplain to join Yellowlees and himself to sing the *Kyrie*. Warner's writes that 'he seemed to glimmer like bad fish',⁴²¹ her use of simile highlighting the antithesis of his abject physical presence with the glorious beauty of the music: 'if the song *Triste Loysir* had seemed a foretaste of paradise, the *Kyrie* was paradise itself'.⁴²² This passage has several strands. An underlying sense of a journey is present, beginning with Yellowlees' physical journey to the leper-house:

Before vespers, he said to himself, I shall be in country I have never seen before. So it was; though he could not be certain where the familiar changed to the unknown, the change had taken place.⁴²³

In this juxtaposition of 'familiar' and 'unknown' in a single sentence, Warner has set the stage for a revelation for Yellowlees.

⁴¹⁹ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.14.

⁴²⁰ Judith Nagley, *Cambridge Music Guide*, pp. 96-9.

⁴²¹ Warner, *Corner*, 1988, p. 203.

⁴²² *Ibid.* pp. 203-4.

⁴²³ *Ibid.* p. 202.

This is the beginning of new thinking for the steward, an intellectual journey into the unknown brought about by the transformational experience of the music he shares in such extraordinary circumstances, and it is the power of music, not of religion, that Warner is highlighting here. An example of Yellowlees' revelatory new thinking is his dawning acceptance of the leper, the most reviled of social outcasts. This is underlined by the realisation that the leper and the chaplain frequently came into close contact in order to sing this wonderful music. His initial revulsion at this manifestation of contagious disease is, in the short space of an evening, supplanted by the thought of 'how many an hour these two must have spent together, the leper at one end of the room, the chaplain at the other; or perhaps they bent over the same music-book, their love of music overcoming the barrier between life and death-in-life'.⁴²⁴

Warner emphasizes the transcendental nature and importance of this music for these two individuals. The chaplain's love of the music is made clear when he says of the *Kyrie* 'I tell you, there has never been such music in the world before',⁴²⁵ whilst the leper's excitement at singing the *Kyrie* knows no bounds: 'Again! Let us sing it again!'⁴²⁶ The unusual circumstances in which three voices sing a work the leper must have known and remembered from another, more wholesome life singing in the household of the Duke

⁴²⁴ Warner, *Corner*, 1988, p. 204.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

of Burgundy, is both cathartic and joyous; the leper, too, is transformed.

This explicit combination of socially disparate voices shows the political implications of polyphony; none of the voices is dominant; they are independent yet harmonious and each has its equally important melody. They differ, and by differing they achieve a harmony akin to that of the *Ars nova*. Despite their different walks of life and differing circumstances, the perspectives of the three men merge in the narrative as do their voices in the polyphony that they sing.

Warner uses the art of music to underline her political belief in social equality and inclusion; what Yellowlees learns in the leper house about the necessity for human compassion, generosity, and an understanding of others is a model for all. Warner is implicitly didactic here, writing powerfully of revolutionary new music as an instrument for positive change and the breaking of boundaries: the new music supersedes the old and the outsider, the leper, is accepted as an equal. Both attest to Warner's underlying premise that music can transcend earthly divisions.

This radical concept is further confirmed by Yellowlees' thoughts of a potential new life for himself as he rides away from the leper house next morning: 'I could be happy living like that [...] nursing the music book among the mutton bones, having forsaken this world to live in the fifth element of sound'.⁴²⁷ Warner's final

⁴²⁷ Warner, *Corner*, 1988, p. 205.

image imprints the lesson indelibly: 'Such music, and such squalor! [...] never had he seen a house so dirty, or slept in a more tattered bed. But out came the music as the kingfisher flashes from its nest of stinking fish-bones'.⁴²⁸

However, in this chapter Warner also shows that life can be brutal and music is not always a transfigurative experience; novices in the convent at Oby sing the *Te Deum* with doubtful hearts, and as Gemma Moss notes: '[Music] also has the potential to provoke violence when one's beliefs or material existence are threatened'.⁴²⁹ On his way back to his Bishop Yellowlees meets the leper with whom he had sung. The man is at his wits' end, having fled the leper house when it was attacked and burned down by a gang calling themselves the Twelve Apostles. These men had urged the lepers to revenge themselves on the chaplain who had often kept them short of food, using the money to buy music manuscripts. The lepers murdered him by ramming a bone down his throat. Warner's use of irony is shown explicitly here; the throat, source of sustenance and singing, is destroyed; the lepers are very suitably revenged:

They were always complaining and saying that he spent all on music-books that should have been spent on them. And it's true there was nothing to eat. It was the lepers who killed him, they had hated him for a long time.⁴³⁰

On asking about the music-books, Yellowlees is told that they had been deliberately pushed into the thatch to burn. To assist the helpless leper Yellowlees guides him to the nearest religious house. On the way, stopping to rest, they sang again the music of the *Ars*

⁴²⁸ Warner, *Comey*, 1988, p. 205.

⁴²⁹ Gemma Moss, 'Between Aesthetics & Politics: Music in James Joyce, Ezra Pound and Sylvia Townsend Warner', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2015.

⁴³⁰ Warner, *Comey*, 1988, p. 212.

nova, and regretted 'that they could not sit singing all night through.'⁴³¹

Shortly after his return, Yellowlees' wish regarding a life of music is partially granted. Whilst not quite in the 'fifth element of sound', he benefits from his new musical knowledge as he is 'fanned into a personal secretary-ship'⁴³² by the new Bishop, himself 'a considerable musician,'⁴³³ and one who enjoys an intellectual discussion about music with this once lowly steward. This is a substantial improvement of Yellowlees' position in life and his passion for the *Ars nova* is solely responsible for this advancement. In reality '*Ars nova* had waylaid him: the man who arrived at Esselby was not the man who had set out [...] *Ars nova* had worked its will on him'.⁴³⁴ The transformational power of music as an instrument of change is explicit here.

Warner's use of the kingfisher simile is devastatingly accurate; Yellowlees' drab and utilitarian life is lifted onto another, more intellectual level and coloured by his relationship with his new employer. Here Warner implies that their shared love of music will ensure that Yellowlees' talents will continue to be appreciated and nurtured: his future is assured.

It is evident that the chapter 'Triste Loysir' is exceptional by any standard. The hallmarks of Warner's writing are here: wit, irony and detailed historical knowledge of the period. Her characters

⁴³¹ Warner, *Comer*, 1988, p. 213.

⁴³² *Ibid.* p. 269.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

'come bursting out of the texture'⁴³⁵ she creates in this novel. Her exploration of the responses of the human heart to emotion and circumstance, the basis of so much of her writing, is extended here, and in this passage from *The Corner That Held Them* she uses her scholarly knowledge of early music as the medium for this exploration.

Warner's message is clear: music may enhance any life, be available to all in mutual enjoyment, stand outside any class structure that society seeks to impose, and it can offer glimpses of a paradisaal view of human connection across differences and affliction.

⁴³⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner. 'The Historical Novel' [Lecture to the Third Congress of the League of American Writers 1939], from *Fighting Words*, ed. by Stewart Ogden (Harcourt Brace, 1940). Printed in the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 7 (2007), 53.

Chapter 6: More Than Music: Life, Love and Writing

Affettuoso

Major changes occurred in Warner's private life as the *Tudor Church Music* project was nearing completion. This chapter discusses events in the years from 1928 to 1931 and includes Warner's further work in musicology, the ending of her long relationship with Percy Buck and the beginning of her love affair with Valentine Ackland. Warner's musical life in London is the context in which these events are set and shows that although music ceased to be a career it remained a passion that informed her writing. Gillian Beer suggests that 'Rippling through her work, and sounding through her life, is music: music heard, music played, music composed, music re-imagined and revived, music cross-hatched with dissonance too'.⁴³⁶ Beer's succinct assessment of the major role that music played in Warner's life points to its 'rippling through her work'. My intention in this chapter is to bring to the fore examples of how it does so, a perspective on her work that has been largely unexplored in published literary criticism. These examples show how Warner used music as a key component in her writing. Music is used to describe landscape, delineate character, show or create emotional states and, importantly, to explore complex issues of human nature and society; sound, rhythm and cadence resound throughout.

Following the completion of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes Warner's standing amongst her fellow musicologists in England was

⁴³⁶ Gillian Beer, 'Music and the Condition of Being Alive: The Example of Sylvia Townsend Warner', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 14 (2014), 53.

such that she was asked to transcribe and edit the famous *Eton Mss.* Ironically, the invitation came from Dom. Anselm Hughes and occurred some years after he had taken issue with the Editors of *Tudor Church Music* in the journal *Music and Letters* about what he perceived as errors of judgement in the editing of volume one of *Tudor Church Music*.⁴³⁷ A diary entry by Warner for the 3 March 1930 states 'Today I agreed [...] provisionally, to edit the *Eton Mss.* for the P.M.M.S'.⁴³⁸ Some months later Warner's diary records that 'Dom. Anselm came with the *Eton Mss.* in a large piece of american [sic] cloth tied up with a Franciscan girdle. We paged it and he stopped for lunch'.⁴³⁹ How such a valuable manuscript came to be in Hughes' possession is not known. He must have left the manuscript in Warner's keeping because she began working directly from it, as further diary entries show:

I began on the *Eton Mss. O Maria mater salvatoris* by Bourne. It is interminable, and rather dull, trimmed with little bits of ready-made sequi at the cadences, and terribly adequate technically.⁴⁴⁰

Warner continued to work on the *Mss.* during August 1930 and, as these diary entries over the course of a week show, she spent a good deal of time, and anxiety, on the editing:

23rd August, 1930
Began to score Browne's *Stabat Mater*.

24th August, 1930
I fled to the *Stabat Mater*, which didn't seem so good today.

⁴³⁷ See pages 187-189 above.

⁴³⁸ STW-UD 3 March 1930. PMMS is the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society.

⁴³⁹ Ibid. 20 June 1930.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. 12 July 1930.

25th August, 1930

In the afternoon I finished Browne's *Stabat Mater*.

27th August, 1930

I spent the afternoon in a fierce worry with Browne's *Stabat juxta Christie crucem*, full of snaps.

30th August, 1930

I fought with *Stabat juxta c.c.*, and nearly went out of my mind.

31st August, 1930

Stabat juxta [...] In the evening I found myself writing about my childhood. It is high time.

1st September, 1930

Stabat juxta.⁴⁴¹

There are no further entries in Warner's diary regarding the editing of the *Eton Mss*. The entries above show that the work was slow and tortuous, even for a musicologist as gifted as Warner. It may be assumed that Warner did not complete this task.

The timing, early September 1930, is of significance here because Warner's relationship with Valentine Ackland began the following month. Given that she had been impatient and dismissive of her work with the *Tudor Church Music* project during its later years, it would not be surprising if this new and significant relationship created a similar dissatisfaction and change of focus.

A further example of Buck using his influence on Warner's behalf, and one that again involved the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, is relevant here. It occurred at the same time that Warner began to edit the *Eton Mss*. She had received 'a letter from Anselm suggesting to me once more a seat on the P.M.M.S Council.

⁴⁴¹ STW-UD 23 August – 1 September 1930.

The old gentleman who had previously vetoed me as a female had asked Anselm if he could recant'.⁴⁴² Warner's comment in her diary several days later explains how she used this invitation by the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society to try to impress Buck:

Have to cook a lovely dinner for Teague [...] He was so floridly complimentary about my cooking that I entertained my usual dim hope of tricking an intellectual congratulation from him; so I mentioned the P.M.M.S olive-branch. 'Ah, if you knew how I worked for that'.⁴⁴³

Warner gives no further thoughts on this matter in her diary and it is not known if she was grateful or irritated by Buck covertly working on her behalf again.

Prior to her work on the *Eton Mss.* Warner had assisted her friend and fellow Editor, the Rev. Alexander Ramsbotham, with work on the *Old Hall Mss.*, another of the three great Choir Books that had survived the Reformation, which Ramsbotham had begun at the behest of Anselm Hughes. Warner noted in her diary in February 1928: 'Ram has been affianced by Dom. Anselm to the *Old Hall Mss.*'.⁴⁴⁴ It is possible that Warner was the first to be approached by Hughes to work on the *Old Hall Mss.*, as Ramsbotham was not an expert on early Tudor music. Warner, if she was asked, refused the commitment, perhaps because she was working hard at both her writing and *Tudor Church Music* transcription and proof reading at this time.

She was, however, involved with new research for Ramsbotham's work on the *Old Hall Mss.* from an early date, as she

⁴⁴² STW-UD 8 July 1930.

⁴⁴³ Ibid. 17 July 1930.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. 23 February 1928.

comments on initial research for him in the *Oxford History of Music* 'The Polyphonic Period', Part ii' by H.E. Wooldridge: 'Ram came in the evening. N.B. The *Old Hall* extracts from Wooldridge ii. Wooldridge quite out'.⁴⁴⁵ This opinion shows Warner's confidence in her knowledge of early music as she is content to disagree radically with a man considered expert in polyphonic music.

A year later, Warner 'looked over Ram's *Old Hall* Glorias. Good work on his part, and quite good on the composers' parts too'.⁴⁴⁶ A few days after this on the 30th December 1929 her diary states: 'Ram lunched. He is a lamb ram, I enjoyed seeing him. In the afternoon we did the *Old Hall* Glorias and then I started on the second book of *Cantiones*'.⁴⁴⁷ This editing of the work of William Byrd she did complete, probably helped by Buck as her diary intimates: 'Ram drove us home [from a committee meeting]. It was evening, and I had a childish feeling of the security of being allowed to sleep in public, if the back of a car is public. We finished *Cantiones*'.⁴⁴⁸

It could have been that the work with Ramsbotham re-ignited Warner's interest in editing early church music and led to her accepting Hughes' request regarding the *Eton Mss.* Certainly the dates are congruent; Warner stated in her diary that she was checking the publisher's proofs of Ramsbotham's work on 11 June

⁴⁴⁵ STW-UD 14 September 1928, referencing H.E. Wooldridge, 'The Polyphonic Period. Part ii: Method of Musical Art 1300 – 1600' *Oxford History of Music*, ed. by Henry Hadow, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. 26 December 1929.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. 30 December 1929.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. 19 March 1930.

1930: 'I did another dutiful day of Ram's *Old Hall* proofs',⁴⁴⁹ and she paged the *Eton Mss.* with Anselm Hughes on 20 June 1930, having agreed some months previously to undertake the work. As noted above, the work on the *Eton Mss.* came to nothing and assisting a friend does not constitute a working life in music. This is a further intimation that music was no longer at the forefront of Warner's life but was becoming the accompaniment to it.

Warner's unhappiness about her relationship with Buck did not find a voice in her diary until early in 1930. Entries before that date show that life was continuing as usual. For example, the beginning of 1928 shows the important threads in Warner's life — Buck, music and writing — coming together:

Philharmonic concert in the evening conducted by Ansermet. *Leonora no. 1*, *The Unfinished*, a new piece by Walton and *Daphnis and Chloe*. The Walton was for piano and orchestra, very affected and crowded with matter — as for his idiom, it is little more than Elgar with a French accent. The third movement is the best, an unpretentious orgy. Afterwards P.C.B. went on to sup with Ansermet — he asked me to go too but I didn't feel inclined.⁴⁵⁰

There are several points of interest in this diary entry: it shows Buck at the centre of London's musical life, Warner's decided opinions on the music of William Walton and the wit and flair of her writing about the evening. However, her disillusionment with working in music was evident here as she turned down supper with her lover Buck and an eminent conductor.

⁴⁴⁹ STW-UD 11 June 1930.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. 5 January 1928.

In the same week a diary entry shows how hard she was working at her writing: 'I am worn out with writing poetry'.⁴⁵¹ and shortly afterwards, 'In a final tidying of *Time Importuned* I completed *The Visit* and then went mad and wrote *The Mortal Maid*'.⁴⁵² This intensity of poetry-writing suggests the end of music's predominance in Warner's working life. However, there is no evidence to prove that she made a deliberate decision to replace musicology with writing as a career. In a practical sense her musicological work could be said to have assisted her writing as, working at home, she could move at will between musicology and writing should the mood or inspiration take her. The list of her publications shows that she was working extremely hard in several disciplines, novels, poetry and short stories, during the last years of the *Tudor Church Music* project; clearly the intense focus required to transcribe Tudor music or to correct publisher's proofs did not prevent Warner's literary creativity from burgeoning. By the end of 1929 when the last of the *Tudor Church Music* volumes had been completed, Warner had three novels published, *Lolly Willowes* (1926), *Mr Fortune's Maggot* (1927) and *The True Heart* (1929), together with two collections of poetry, *The Espalier* (1925) and *Time Importuned* (1928). There was also soon after a first publication of short stories, *The Salutation* (1932). The dates of publication of these early literary works show Warner writing prolifically, producing a publication each year for five consecutive years, 1925-29, and another in 1932.

⁴⁵¹ STW-PD 7 January 1928, p.10.

⁴⁵² Ibid. 26 February 1928, p.14.

Warner's route to becoming a published author had been unorthodox and she was fortunate that a friend with publishing connections was interested in her poetry. Warner was as diffident about promoting her literary work as she had been earlier about her music, and it was her friend Stephen Tomlin who showed her poems to David Garnett, bookshop owner and writer. He in turn showed them to Charles Prentice of the publishing house Chatto and Windus. Prentice lost no time in publishing them and requesting other work, and there began a long collaboration for Warner with both the publishing house and its Principal who became a close friend.

A letter from Warner to David Garnett many years later reminded him of how his efforts on her behalf, regarding the publication of her first poems and the novel *Lolly Willowes*, had changed the direction of her life. She also states her gratitude and lack of regret about a life not spent in music:

If you hadn't intervened, dear David, I should have gone on writing poems and hiding them in hatboxes, and being an ornament to the Plainsong and Medieval Society, and publishing such learned treatises on the Hoquet in the Fourteenth Century at long intervals. How glad I am you intervened. And how grateful.⁴⁵³

In her biography of Warner, Claire Harman suggests that

Warner's development as a poet was pivotal to her whole art, however private her practice of it became. Poetry formed a bridge between her early career as a musicologist and composer (which did cease almost entirely in the 1920's) and every branch of her prolific composition.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ Harman, *Biography*, p. 291.

⁴⁵⁴ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *New Collected Poems*, ed. by Claire Harman (Fyfield Books, Carcanet, Press, 2008), p. 2.

The bridge was formed in the summer of 1922 on Warner's first visit to the Essex marshes and in the sixth year of her work on *Tudor Church Music*. In an article for *The Countryman* magazine many years later Warner describes her poetic epiphany: 'All day I walked over the marshes, or sat on the sea-wall listening to the grasshoppers, absorbed in the discovery that it was possible to write poetry'.⁴⁵⁵ Warner also became totally absorbed when writing poetry, as Ackland observed: 'Sylvia is writing a poem, I think – judging by the sharply-indrawn breath and her endless cigarettes'.⁴⁵⁶

The musical qualities in Warner's early poetry publications, *The Espalier* (1925) and *Time Importuned* (1928), reflect her interest in the natural world, in work on the land as well as lives lived behind closed doors, and her research in musicology. Warner often attends to a variety of sounds in her poetry, highlighting her imaginative descriptions and showing the effect of sound on the emotions. As Claire Harman notes, 'Warner is a conspicuously musical poet, highly aware of cadences and tempi [...] often changing words for the improvement of musical effects'.⁴⁵⁷ Peter Swaab concurs in his wide-ranging review of Harman's editing of *New Collected Poems*, as he discusses Warner's 'intensely musical perception of the quantities of words and the connection between linguistic and musical measure'.⁴⁵⁸ He goes on to note that 'Warner's is a twentieth-century sensibility which has learned not just from Hardy but also from

⁴⁵⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'The Way By Which I Have Come', *With the Hunted*, p.16. First published in *The Countryman*, July 1939, p. 476.

⁴⁵⁶ Harman, *Biography*, p.122.

⁴⁵⁷ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p.10.

⁴⁵⁸ Peter Swaab, 'Authenticity, not Originality', *Essays in Criticism*, 59 (2010), 370-381 (373).

Edward Thomas and such later Georgians as Blunden and Graves; and her verses introduce complicating and distinctly modern dissonant notes'.⁴⁵⁹ Warner casts her intellectual net widely and uses the results well.

The poem 'Quiet Neighbours', from her first published volume of poetry, *The Espalier*, shows some of these attributes of sound and musicality and has an element of dissonance within it. Through the thin walls of her lodging the poet hears her neighbour's clock chime. Usually indifferent to the sound, this particular night she wonders 'what lay on the other side'.⁴⁶⁰ In language the opposite of 'quiet' she tells us

They are quiet people
That live next door;
I never hear them scrape
Their chairs along the floor,

They do not laugh loud, or sing,
Or scratch in the grate,
I have never seen a taxi
Drawn up at their gate;

The sounds evoked here are of living, community, and, as the last stanza shows, Warner feels herself to be as insubstantial as her neighbours are to her:

For my life has grown quiet,
As quiet as theirs;
And the clock has been silent on my chimney-piece
For years and years.⁴⁶¹

The over-long third line draws out and displaces the rhythm of the poem; Warner claims no ownership of the clock other than its

⁴⁵⁹ Swaab, 'Authenticity, not Originality', p. 373.

⁴⁶⁰ *New Collected Poems*, p.19. Originally published in *The Espalier*, Chatto & Windus, 1925.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

placement. Had she written 'My clock has been silent for years and years' the implication would be something more than a quiet life, almost an extinguished one. Unlike her 'quiet neighbours' who wind their clock, Warner doesn't and chooses to remain ghostly. Her long friendship with Stephen 'Tommy' Tomlin was ending around the time that Warner was writing her early poems, as Claire Harman explains:

Once his best and most admired companion, by the mid-Twenties Tommy had relegated Sylvia to a lowlier position, calling on her when in the grip of one of his partially-demented attacks of self-disgust [...] Sylvia bore all this out of love and the impulse to support him, but perhaps on one of those disturbing evenings he turned on her and told her what he felt.⁴⁶²

Warner's life may well have grown quiet without the many jaunts and journeys that they had shared, not least the visits to Theodore Powys in Dorset.

Another clock is to be found in Warner's poem 'Tudor Church Music', also from *The Espalier*. In this poem Warner creates the somnolent atmosphere of a truly quiet ecclesiastical library on a warm afternoon; old books and possibly ancient music manuscripts

Mumble and drone;
And the warm sun slants in
Over the cold stone.⁴⁶³

As in the poem 'Quiet Neighbours' the poet is alone and is aware of the sound of the church clock:

Through the long afternoon
I hear the clock
Preach to the empty church:
Tick-Tock. Tick-Tock.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶² Harman, *Biography*, p. 68.

⁴⁶³ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 24.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Time and place appear to contract as the poet muses on the choral music that would have been heard in the church and on the choir-boy who, in a distant time, had caricatured his choir-master on a work by Orlando Gibbons. Centuries have passed since Gibbons wrote this music and he is

'Dumb and deaf, dead and dust',
Confirms the clock.
And life seems so far off [...] ⁴⁶⁵

The arrival of holiday-makers and a talkative verger in the library transforms its peaceful calm. The musing world that the poet enjoyed vanishes and she 'disappears' by becoming a silent, stereotypical scholar bent over her work:

And only when they are gone
Do I doff the mask
Of the scholar deep in his book:
'Did they see me?' I ask,
'Or am I, too, a ghost?' and so
Turn once more to my task. ⁴⁶⁶

Time expands, normality resumes. The internal dialogue of the poem gives an insight into Warner's experiences as a researcher for *Tudor Church Music*. It also reinforces her position as an outsider.

Another reference to Warner's immersion in Tudor church music at this time can be found in a letter of November 1924 to her friend David Garnett. Here she uses musical language to describe Theodore Powys' novel *Mockery Gap*:

The action is like the best 12-part counterpoint, a counterpoint in which each part had a separate fugal subject which it develops quite independently of its share

⁴⁶⁵ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 25.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

in the development of the whole. And the whole affair is as abstract as music.⁴⁶⁷

For all of her writing life Warner was to use musical terms descriptively, often with highly- coloured metaphor, as here in two diary entries for November 1927: 'The river was dark heather-purple and amber [...] it was as aloof as music'⁴⁶⁸ and 'The bright cloud filled up the northern sky, a threshing-machine played the *Prelude to Rhinegold*, and we lay burrowing in the grass'.⁴⁶⁹ The language here is reminiscent of that used by the poet, composer and contemporary of Warner's Ivor Gurney (1890-1937), who shared her love of the natural world. His use of language and unorthodox syntax would, I believe, have resonated with Warner. His writing shows that he may have had the condition known as synaesthesia, a perceptual phenomenon in which the stimulation of one sense triggers an automatic, involuntary experience in another sense. It appears to be particularly prevalent in creative people as V.S. Ramachandran explains:

There may be extensive cross-wiring between brain regions that represent abstract concepts, which would explain why synaesthesia appears to be more common among artists and poets.⁴⁷⁰

An example of Gurney's synaesthetic writing can be found in his essay 'The Springs of Music', first published in the journal *Musical Quarterly* in July 1922 and which Warner would almost certainly have read. Excerpts show how music is central to his thought:

⁴⁶⁷ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Sylvia & David: The Townsend Warner/Garnett Letters*, ed. by Richard Garnett (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), p.14. Letter dated 28 November 1924.

⁴⁶⁸ STW-UD 3 November 1927.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. 15 November 1927. The identity of Warner's companion is unclear.

⁴⁷⁰ V.S.Ramachandran and E.M.Hubbard, 'Synaesthesia: A Window into Perception, Thought and Language', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8 (2001), 3.

Beethoven comes with the majesty of a wide plain on a blowy day [...] A plain roofed by the blue and cloud dappled, gloriously changing, swept clean by wind.

A copse is full of infinite suggestion of Schubert [...]

Brahms has more of Autumn in him, the full coloured new ploughed earth also; rich-tinted, strongly fragrant soil unplanted. He has given us even the smell of leaves, as in the Piano Quintet in F minor. Autumn is strongest in memory of all the seasons. To think of Autumn is to be smitten through most powerfully with an F sharp minor chord that stops the breath, wrings the heart with unmeasurable power.

In Bach is fairytale, firelight, Cathedral space (of this a great deal), much human friendliness [...]. Yet such a man made out of talking [sic] sunlit water the Italian Concerto. .

⁴⁷¹

Warner was aware of the condition called synaesthesia as she writes of it in a letter to Peter Pears about her collection of John Craske pictures and embroideries when she was giving them to the Britten-Pears Foundation at Snape Maltings. She says of them that 'They will be immensely enhanced in the sharpened light of a seaboard sky. I don't know if there is a term for visual acoustics, but I know the condition exists'.⁴⁷²

Although Warner did not know Gurney personally, his writing can be seen to influence her poetry. An example comes in this passage from Gurney's 'The Springs of Music' and Warner's subsequent poem 'Through all the meadows they are flowing':

The quietest and most comforting thing that is yet strongly suggestive, the sight which seems more than any to provoke the making of music to be performed on strings, is that of a hedge mounting over, rolling beyond the

⁴⁷¹ Ivor Gurney, *The Springs of Music*, *Musical Quarterly*, 8(3) July 1922, 319-323. See also <<https://ivorgurney.co.uk>>

⁴⁷² Sylvia Townsend Warner Mss. letter to Peter Pears. Undated but between February 25 and May 1970. File STW-PP (1970-71). Britten-Pears Archive, Aldeburgh, Suffolk. Hereafter BB-PP.

skyline of a little gracious hill. A hedge unclipped,
untamed; covered with hawthorn perhaps, showing the
fragile rose of June, or sombre with the bareness of
Winter.⁴⁷³

Warner's poem was written in 1950 and echoes Gurney's writing,
particularly in the image of a hawthorn hedge, white with flowers,
flowing uphill:

Through all the meadows they are flowing,
To all the hilltops they are climbing:
Hedgerow and hedgerow and hedgerow.
Solemn and processional and shining,
In white garments they go.

From my astonished heart these votive
Hawthorns have come forth in procession,
Hedgerow after hedgerow after hedgerow!
In token of my release and my ransom
In thank-offering they go.⁴⁷⁴

Here Warner is indicating that the image of the hawthorn's white
flowers represents a 'second bridal' as her fractured relationship with
her lover Valentine Ackland had recently resumed and her
'astonished heart' was grateful.

Warner's only comment on Gurney is in a diary entry dated 22
January 1950, the year she wrote 'Through all the meadows they are
flowing': 'I sat up to listen to a group of Ivor Gurney songs. I do not
even know if he lies dead now, or dead-alive still: the most afflicting
ghost of all'.⁴⁷⁵ Warner does not mention which songs she heard but
her 'sitting up' implies a liking and respect for Gurney's music. His
importance is as a composer of songs and Vaughan Williams said of
him that

⁴⁷³ Gurney, *Springs of Music*.

⁴⁷⁴ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 328.

⁴⁷⁵ STW-UD 22 January 1950.

rhythmic patterns'.⁴⁷⁹ In her early poems Warner's lyricism is evident; she was at home writing descriptively of people, everyday events and her response, as poet, to them.

Whether a Dove or Seagull (1934), a joint publication with poems by Ackland, was to be Warner's last poetry collection published in her lifetime, discounting the poems in *King Duffus* (1968) which was privately printed and not widely available, and *Boxwood* (1957) where the poems were written for illustrative purposes for her friend Reynolds Stone. The poems in *Whether a Dove or Seagull* were unattributed, implying an equal distribution of poetic talent. Nonetheless, Warner's expertise and individual voice made equality unlikely. The volume was not well received and both women realised that the arrangement was damaging to their art; as Harman writes, it effectively 'put an end to the poetic careers of both'.⁴⁸⁰ Lesbian love was the theme of several poems in this volume and Warner's poem 'I watch the mirror's grace' shows the extent of her love for Ackland by intimating, in the final lines of the poem, that Ackland meant more to her even than music:

I can with patience
Sit and foretaste the while
That close by this exile
Enriched, when turning
Back into silence, you,
My more than music, renew
My sight with greeting.⁴⁸¹

Warner wrote poetry prolifically throughout the 1930's and 1940's when she was actively engaged against Fascism, but her

⁴⁷⁹ Warner, *Collected Poems*, p. xxii.

⁴⁸⁰ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, Harman Introduction, p.6.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 212.

political fervour did not often invite music or musical allusion in her writing. However, several of her late poems have powerful musical content. In them Warner's enduring love for Ackland is celebrated. January 12 was an important date in their history and Warner's work, 'Poem for January 12th 1968/1931', written in the early stages of Ackland's terminal illness, describes a memory as well as a renewal of her marriage vow. Ackland accompanied Warner to a recital by the celebrated pianist Artur Schnabel in the Queen's Hall, London on January 12 1931. Warner used the memory of this shared occasion in her poem, although no female singer had performed that evening; Warner altered the gender and accomplishment of the soloist to suit her sentiment:

It was a cold night like this:
Midwinter, motionless,
We had come back from a concert.
The singer, still wrapped in her music, had greeted us
— A general blessing and a nuptial, though
She had no thought of such and we did not know.
The hall where we listened, the substantial
House we returned to, toppled into the abyss,
The instruments of music were burned to ashes
This, too, was long ago.
Times change and disconcert:
The frail promise
Made on that winter night holds true on this.⁴⁸²

The overwhelming grief and loneliness she felt after Ackland's death in November 1969 are poignantly shown in the poem 'Night After Night'. Age and ill health are added to Warner's burden and she wishes for release:

Night after night I say,
I may die before day.

⁴⁸² Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 351.

Why should Fate interpose
This tedious cadenza
Between my music and its close?
Would I were away!⁴⁸³

Here Warner takes issue with Lachesis and Atropos, Ancient Greek Goddesses who were said to dispense the thread of human fate and to sever it, causing death. Lachesis has spun too long and Warner likens this to a musical cadenza, an elaborate musical passage played by an unaccompanied solo instrument, often towards the end of the final movement of a work ⁴⁸⁴; Warner's use of the musical term 'cadenza' is carefully chosen. There is great power, and great feeling, in this poem as the poet wishes for her own death.

Harman states that Warner arranged her unpublished poems into themes marked 'People and Places', 'Personal' and 'Miscellaneous', but was dissatisfied with this arrangement. She wrote to Carcanet Press in January 1978: 'My envelope of poems is not at all selected [...] You can have a Dies Irae with them, I propose to be a posthumous poet!' ⁴⁸⁵ She died later that year. Warner's thoughtful choice of the words 'Dies Irae' are a link with *Tudor Church Music*, referring to the Latin hymn about the Day of Judgement and often sung at a funeral Mass.

During the 1920's Warner's volumes of poetry supplemented the income she received from *Tudor Church Music*. Her short stories, however, were not the means of producing a regular income for Warner they later became when published by the *New Yorker* under

⁴⁸³ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 356.

⁴⁸⁴ Definition from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cacdenza>.

⁴⁸⁵ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 2.

a 'first reader' agreement from 1936. Her first volume of stories, *The Salutation*, was published in 1932 and dedicated to Charles Prentice. It contained a lengthened and revised version of 'The House of the Salutation' which Warner began in 1931 as a sequel to *Mr Fortune's Maggot* and finally titled 'The Salutation'. Warner says of it 'I wrote it out of my heart as an amende to my poor Timothy. Not that I could make him any happier, but to show that I did not forget him'.⁴⁸⁶ This comment emphasises Warner's stated method of writing. When asked in an interview if she was haunted by her characters, Warner responded :

I suppose I am. I take them about with me for a long time while I am getting to know them. They need understanding. It threw a light on Mr Fortune's character when I discovered his favourite composer was Haydn. I knew him fairly well before that, but not intimately.⁴⁸⁷

The surprising information that Warner's characters must develop slowly, like friendship, is the antithesis of the seemingly quick-fire wit of her descriptive prose. *The Salutation* stories have little music or sound within them other than 'A Parting Gift'. A clock again takes centre-stage, this time as a weapon thrown in rage at the discovery of marital infidelity, but not before the seduction which has music as its heart:

He sang a love-song by an American composer, accompanying himself upon the piano. At the summit of each arpeggio he raised both hands from the keyboard and pawed the air, and at the close he prolonged the last note on such a terrific and sustained crescendo that one

⁴⁸⁶ Harman, *Biography*, p.124.

⁴⁸⁷ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Writers at Work', *With the Hunted*, p. 396. Originally published Dolphin Books, 1931.

of the piano candles went out. "What lungs you must have! exclaimed Mrs. Pye.⁴⁸⁸

Warner's sense of fun becomes apparent as the story slips into farce. Having discovered his wife and lodger together, a righteous Mr Pye throws the latter out of doors, closely followed by the heavy mantelpiece clock:

Thrown with a more matured and calculating aim, it hit Gordon Moss upon the shin. He danced weakly on one leg, clutching his injury, and wailed aloud. But his outcries were over-ridden by a sound more piercing still. The clock had begun to strike.

Having begun to strike it continued to do so, as though, with a suddenly awakened conscience, it were resolved to atone for years of neglected duty, by striking for the rest of its life.⁴⁸⁹

Warner uses a clock for its sound, rhythm and association in her early poetry and stories. Glen Cavaliero says of these early volumes that they are 'rather folksy and derivative'.⁴⁹⁰ The clock as a homely image would fit this description, but as Cavaliero also says, Warner had 'an eye for strangeness and incongruity [...] a detailed knowledge of the practicalities of daily life and a tart, unjudging awareness of the quirks and perversities of human nature'.⁴⁹¹ I agree with him on his assessment of Warner's writing and would add that Warner also had 'detailed knowledge' of music which she uses to great effect in the short stories. 'Try There', a story from *More Joy in Heaven* (1935), contains many of the characteristics detailed by Cavalliero, for instance an intimidated older woman, a journey with

⁴⁸⁸ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Salutation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932), p.133.

⁴⁸⁹ Warner, *The Salutation*. p.136.

⁴⁹⁰ Glen Cavelliero, 'The Short Stories': Sylvia Townsend Warner 1893-1978: A Celebration, *PN Review*, 8 (1981), 30-61 (45).

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

uncongenial family members which has no obvious destination, and an 'out of body experience' brought about by an intense emotional response to music. Florence Pelham, a dowdily dressed, but wealthy, middle-aged woman obediently carries out the instruction of her younger disrespectful cousin. She alights from the car and knocks on the door of a building called 'The Wee Waif Cafe' to ask for a siphon of soda water. Florence's reticence at the task and the description of the cafe are finely drawn, but it is her response to unexpected music that is surprising. No one answers her timid knock and

Suddenly through the empty house swept a loud and sensuous melody, played by piano, 'cello and violin. Like the coils of some violently-growing tropical creeper the entangling swirling strains clasped her round, encompassed her, closed in on her, their sole hearer, with an implacable hungry fawning [...] presently the music, thickening its texture, falling into a heavier stride, was no longer a tropical creeper, but a warm sea, aiming regular wave after wave upon her, rising from foot to knee, from knee to shrinking belly. She felt herself giving way, melting, streaming with that tide. She was gone, her being was gone from her, swept off like a tress of seaweed to wander undulating for ever at the sea's will.⁴⁹²

Florence eventually responds to the car horn's summons and 'one slavery released her from another, so that she was able to walk along the gravel path between the dying wallflowers quite easily, and cross the road and say, "There was nobody there"'.⁴⁹³ The writing here is an unexpected description, in almost sexual terms, of the response to music by a faded, middle-aged woman. In this

⁴⁹² Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Try There' in *More Joy in Heaven* (Talis Press, 2010), p. 28. Originally published Cresset Press, 1935.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 29.

powerfully imagined story music is a force of nature; the story also shows family life and inheritance expectations in a singularly unpleasant light. However, it is music and the violent emotions that it can foster that is the true heart of this short story; it renders cynical family plotting of minimal account.

Some of Warner's later short stories have deliberate musical settings. For example, 'On Living for Others', first published in *A Spirit Rises* in 1962, has music as its setting but is also an exploration of snobbery and 'social nuances and confusions'.⁴⁹⁴ A composer allows himself to miss the train which would have taken him to a boring and unwanted meeting of a music society, even though a performance of his orchestration of a seventeenth-century masque was to be performed. Warner makes the reason clear; he would afterwards have to attend a meeting of the Advisory Committee and then

Sleep at Adela Turpin's flat, where he would find Humphrey Dudgeon, whose opera on Hannibal was in rehearsal for the Aldeburgh Festival. If only he had not made that silly joke [...] One should never make jokes on the phone; the acoustics aren't right for it. To his inquiry how a sufficiency of elephants could be got onto that small stage Adela had replied, 'But it's *opera da camera* darling'. Thoughts of this, and of the Advisory Committee, where Hilda Carpentras would repeat that the 'cello is no real substitute for the viola da gamba' and everyone would snub old Jones, assailed him.⁴⁹⁵

The comedy builds when on his unexpected return home he discovers his cleaner and her lover, the local rodent catcher, asleep in his four-poster bed. Hurrying away, he encounters the demanding

⁴⁹⁴ Beer, 'Music, and the Condition of Being Alive', p. 63.

⁴⁹⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'On Living for Others', *Selected Stories*, eds. Susanna Pinney and William Maxwell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988), p.189.

client for whom he is writing a mass. He takes her to the village church where he plays his ideas for the mass on an old harmonium:

When he tried the pedals, a smell of mouldy leather was exhaled. He eyed the stops. Diapason, reed, bourdon, dulciana. He pulled out dulciana, and the knob fell off in his hand. But it was a game old instrument, and came snoring and tottering back to life.⁴⁹⁶

She is scandalised that her mass is not worthy of being played on the organ, and the composer grandly replies to her anger 'I prefer the harmonium for *a cappella*'. Gillian Beer notes that 'his solemn declaration is as snobbish and pretentious as the group he had earlier avoided'.⁴⁹⁷ Another reading of the meeting between the composer and client might show the composer merely stating that the music did not need the aggrandisement of an organ.

'The Music at Long Verney' (2001) is another tale of uncomfortable social disparity and snobbery with music at its heart. An elderly patrician couple let their grand house to a parvenu businessman and go to live in a cottage in the grounds. Anthony and his wife, the new tenants, enjoy the house and intend to stay. Anthony has a passion for finance and music but

He still hadn't found the right music for Long Verney. So far, Handel had fitted in best – but Handel fits anywhere. A great deal of Chopin must have been played in the house at one time. But what house hasn't had Chopin played in it? It ought to be something more home-grown: Arne, perhaps. Best of all, maybe, the counterpart music of the Church of England.⁴⁹⁸

The well-bred Furnivals have avoided their not-so-well-bred tenants but are caught spying on an evening concert that was being held in

⁴⁹⁶ Warner, 'On Living for Others', p. 189.

⁴⁹⁷ Beer, 'Music, and the Condition of Being Alive', p. 63.

⁴⁹⁸ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Music at Long Verney*. Washington: Counterpoint, 2001, p.10.

the house. They are invited in to listen, and sit, in their shabby clothes, 'in their own house, listening to music, waiting for the music to end, identically dignified, impassive and ridiculous'.⁴⁹⁹ On returning to their cottage they discuss the events and are 'immune from any consideration of awkwardness, innocent of harm, impermeably self-righteous'.⁵⁰⁰ With impeccable manners Anthony had managed a boorish blunder by the Furnivals and it is he who is truly cultured and could be said to be in his rightful place. Warner's satiric grip is sure; Gillian Beer encapsulates the reader's response to both stories:

There is a caustic edge to the writing [and] we have to face our own snobbery as well as relish the discomfiture of the snobs in the stories. Snobbery is such a shape-shifter, tarnishing pure delight. Warner's satire pinpoints impure pleasures but lets us enjoy them too.⁵⁰¹

'She planted a high Spanish comb in her pubic hair and resumed her horn-rimmed spectacles. "There, that's as much as I shall dress"'.⁵⁰² These opening lines from 'The Foregone Conclusion' are the most surprising of any of Warner's stories. They are spoken by a young woman to her much older lover as he, dressing quickly, prepares to leave to take up his respectable life as husband, father and government official with an OBE.

They had met for the first time six months before at a concert, simultaneously turning to each other and saying "Well!", as if they had simultaneously been dropped from a cloud to find themselves in Row K, Seats 18 and 19. After the first hush the applause exploded. The conductor waved the orchestra to rise. The applause re-doubled.

⁴⁹⁹ Warner, 'Music at Long Verney', p.17.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. p.18.

⁵⁰¹ Beer, 'Music and the Condition of Being Alive', p. 64.

⁵⁰² Warner, 'A Foregone Conclusion', *Selected Stories*, p. 36.

Speech was out of the question, and so they continued to look at each other'.⁵⁰³

As in other works by Warner time and its passing is central here: snatched time for liaisons, the short time taken for the affair to become unsatisfactory for Lucy as her lover's fussy solicitousness — the manners of another 'time' and generation — palls. His gift of a clock, tellingly antique, references their difference in age but also that he has had time to become discerning.

He offers his overcoat both to warm her and cover her nakedness. Her response is to quote a line from Wordsworth's ode 'Intimations of Immortality', 'And custom lie upon thee', as she ponders how many other young women the coat has swaddled. As Mary Jacobs notes the line addresses a child

Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And Custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

She continues: 'Such a meditation on the relationship between youth and age, innocence and experience, the past and the present permeates 'The Foregone Conclusion'.⁵⁰⁴ I would add that Lucy regrets the loss of child-like innocence and finds the 'weight' of experience in the relationship lacking in sustainable joy. Her escape is to her piano to play Scarlatti sonatas which, like her situation, are difficult. They are 'highly individual and innovatory, not only in their technical requirements — which include such elements as hand-crossing and octaves in both hands simultaneously — but in their bold

⁵⁰³ Warner, 'A Foregone Conclusion', *Selected Stories*, p. 36.

⁵⁰⁴ Mary Jacobs, 'Commentary to "The Foregone Conclusion"', The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society website: www.townsendwarner.com/news.php.

approach to harmony and modulation. Many of them show the influence of Andalusian folk-music'.⁵⁰⁵ There are autobiographical elements in the story: Warner was a superb pianist capable of playing difficult music and she brings into the story Spain and folk-music (both of which had been important to her), the love of exotic cookery, research work in the British Museum and cold and hungry early days in London in 1917. The age difference between the lovers echoes that between Warner and Percy Buck, her married lover with whom she shared a passion for music. She notes his habit of carrying an umbrella in a diary entry for October 1929. Buck had just returned from a visit to South Africa and appeared unexpectedly at Warner's home: 'And there was the reflecting piano-top accepting the umbrella, calm as a glacier; and it was only when he said "kiss me", that absence, his share of it, roared in my ears'.⁵⁰⁶ It could be conjectured that the ending of their affair is re-told by Warner in this story, possibly with more deliberate cruelty: as with Buck, the blow Lucy dealt her lover was perfectly taken. He read the curt note of dismissal on the train and 'He drew a deep breath. Presently he got out at the right station'.⁵⁰⁷

Warner uses music in many other stories too; an opera-singer features in 'Plutarco Roo' (*A Garland of Straw*, 1938), a tenor is the main protagonist in 'Song of Songs' (*A Garland of Straw*, 1938) and a trumpeter's daughter in a story of that name (*Cat's Cradle Book*, 1940). 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain' (*The Music at Long Verney*,

⁵⁰⁵ Wendy Thompson, Elizabeth Roche, 'Domenico Scarlatti', OCM, p. 1110.

⁵⁰⁶ STW-PD 1 October 1929, p. 45.

⁵⁰⁷ Warner, 'A Foregone Conclusion', p. 39.

2001) and 'Out of My Happy Past' (*A Garland of Straw*, 1938)

reference Early Music, the latter story being largely biographical.

However, it is the qualities of sound in Warner's short stories that are most vividly portrayed, as in this description from 'Boors

Carousing' (*The Museum of Cheats*, 1947):

All through his lovely empty house rang the noise of the rain singing in the gutters, lispng against the window-panes, plashing on the flagged walk; and in his mind's ear he heard the most melodious rainfall of all, l'eau qui tombe dans l'eau, the rain falling into the swollen river that washed the foot of his garden and tugged at his Chinese willows.⁵⁰⁸

However, there is no elegiac writing in this practical description of a bell being rung at a convent:

It was a single bell, high-pitched and over-sweet. 'Ting, ting, ting', it said in a precise, mincing voice. But presently the iterated single strokes began to trail an echo after them, an echo that swelled and vibrated till the syllables of the bell were almost unheard in it and became a rod of sound that pierced one through like a crystalline gimlet.⁵⁰⁹

Musical instruments, including the voice, often indicate character in Warner's novels. Her protagonists sing, play the fiddle, flageolet, ocarina, mouth-organ, piano, harmonium, guitar, harp and other instruments. Early in *Lolly Willowes*, Laura's great-aunt's harp is described. It was

a green harp ornamented with gilt scrolls and acanthus leaves in the David manner. When Laura was little she would sometimes steal into the empty drawing-room and pluck the strings which remained unbroken. They answered with a melancholy and distracted voice.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Boors Carousing', *The Museum of Cheats* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1947), p. 181.

⁵⁰⁹ Warner, 'A Spirit Rises', *Selected Stories*, p. 79.

⁵¹⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Lolly Willowes*, (London: Virago, 2000), p.8. Originally published Chatto & Windus, 1926.

The mouth-organ also features in this novel and is Laura's first intimation of other-worldly music. Late at night

She heard someone playing a mouth-organ. The music came from far off, it sounded almost as if it were being played out of doors [...] The noise of the mouth-organ came wavering and veering on the wind [...] She lay awake for an hour or more, half puzzled, half lulled by the strange music, that never stopped, that never varied, that seemed to have become part of the air.⁵¹¹

Initially Laura finds the music strange and unsettling, as well as compelling; she is not sure that it is something that she should respond to. However, the music of the mouth-organ becomes the sound that lures her to her first Witches' Sabbath. After this, her life is fundamentally changed: here witchcraft is a metaphor for women taking control of their lives.

Warner also uses the sound of a mouth-organ in the novel *The True Heart*. Unlike Laura's joyful espousal of witchcraft which the mouth-organ heralds, in this novel Warner uses the instrument to signal extreme tiredness, almost hopelessness in a quest. Sukey Bond, during her search for Eric Seaborn, encounters a tramp and walks wearily alongside him:

Even when she heard music at her side she was some time in connecting it with her companion. He had produced a mouth-organ and was gently breathing through it as he moved it slowly to and fro across his lips. The soft rambling sound was not like any music she had heard before; it had none of the vigour of a hymn. Continuous and indefinite, it was a noise to hear rather than to listen to.⁵¹²

⁵¹¹ Warner, *Lolly Willowes*, p.126.

⁵¹² Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The True Heart* (London: Virago, 1978), pp.125-126. Originally published Chatto & Windus, 1929.

In her exhausted state, Sukey cannot hear anything to invigorate her. The melancholy sound from this mouth-organ reflects her misery back to her; she cannot hear music, it is mere noise and brings no resolution or comfort.

The harmonium is the instrument that is most important in the novel *Mr Fortune's Maggot*. Mr Fortune, the new missionary to the island of Fanua, believes that the music he will make on it will help his plan of rapidly converting the native islanders to Christianity. However, their response to hearing it is not encouraging: ' Mr Fortune sat down to his harmonium and sang and played through a hymn [...] when, having finished the hymn and added two chords for the Amen, he [...] discovered that they had already dispersed'.⁵¹³ Even Mr. Fortune's most promising convert Lueli had to 'acclimatise' himself to the harmonium. Warner digresses in her authorial voice, displaying her knowledge of modern music whilst rendering an account of Mr Fortune's ability as a player of the harmonium:

Like the harpsichord, the harmonium has a repertory of its own, pieces that can only be properly rendered on this instrument. Naturally I do not speak of the harmonium compositions of Schoenberg or Max Reger: these would have been too difficult for Mr Fortune to play [...] But without being in any way a virtuoso – and some think the harmonium, being essentially a domesticated instrument, sober and of a religious cast, is inherently unsuited for displays of skill – Mr Fortune played quite nicely.⁵¹⁴

Warner signals Mr Fortune's loss of faith by the destruction of the harmonium, and almost of Mr Fortune himself, in a fire; music is once more central to Warner's narrative.

⁵¹³ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Mr Fortune's Maggot* (Virago, [n.d.]), p.15. Originally published Chatto & Windus, 1927.

⁵¹⁴ Warner, *Mr Fortune's Maggot*, pp. 66-7.

Like the early poetry and short stories, these three novels appear unemphatic in tone. However, Wendy Mulford comments: 'Each of these first three novels has harsh things to say about the complacency, arrogance, hypocrisy and exploitation of the bourgeoisie and its institutions [...] but they are barbs buried beneath a light facade'.⁵¹⁵ Warner was still in London during these years, enjoying all that the city could offer, particularly in terms of concerts and opera and the quiet seclusion of Dorset, and explicit political commitment, had yet to come.

Warner uses music descriptively in *Summer Will Show* (1936), particularly in regard to establishing Minna as a superlative storyteller. Minna speaks to a gathering of friends about her early life and the river near her home being in flood:

I wept with excitement, and my mother comforted me, thinking I was afraid [...] She stopped abruptly, like the player lifting the bow from the strings with a flourish. Murmurs of admiration arose. She seemed to listen to them as a concerto player listens to the strains of the orchestra he has quitted, half relaxing from the stanza completed, half intent upon what lies before.⁵¹⁶

Warner describes Minna's over-decorated and exotic room, which is as unusual as its owner: 'a mandolin leaned against a mounted suit of armour [...] dangling over a harp was a Moorish bridle'.⁵¹⁷ A musical instrument and its owner also links Minna and Sophia. The guitar of Sophia's mixed-race protégé Caspar had enchanted her son Damian in the life that she would escape:

⁵¹⁵ Wendy Mulford, *This Narrow Place: Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland: Life, Letters and Politics 1930-1951* (London: Pandora Press, 1988), p. 108.

⁵¹⁶ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Summer Will Show*, Introduction by Claire Harman (London: Virago, 1987), p. 123. Originally published Chatto & Windus, 1936.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.151.

He had brought a small beribboned guitar on which he accompanied his ditties, singing in a thrilling oversweet treble, forgetful of himself, as a bird sings, his slender fingers clawing the wires with the pattering agility of a bird's footing. He sang every evening [...] hymns and love-songs and melancholy negro rants, his fingers pattering over the dry wires.⁵¹⁸

Eventually the slender fingers exchange the ability to make music with the skill to use a bayoneted weapon; he kills Minna to the sound of drum-beats and church bells as she and Sophia defend the barricade.

Another beribboned guitar is to be found in *The Flint Anchor*. It belongs to Robina, the sister-in-law of the protagonist John Barnard and Warner uses it melodiously to signal the budding romance between John and Julia at the beginning of the novel:

Suddenly they became gay, intimate, intensely amusing. They sang the *Merry, Merry Christchurch Bells*, *London's Burning*, and *Three Blind Mice* [...] Finally John and Julia pursued each other around a chair to the music of Robina's guitar.⁵¹⁹

Voices are used by Warner in this work to signal self-knowledge or the lack of it. Julia, grown stout after marriage, knowingly parodies her size when singing: 'Here, a sheer bulk, lies poor Tom Bo-ow-ling'.⁵²⁰ Her spoiled and self-centred daughter Mary shows no such irony. She practiced a song 'a dozen times a day, always making the same mistakes in the accompaniment, till Julia threatened to lock the piano'.⁵²¹ Mary's sister Euphemia's thoughts

⁵¹⁸ Warner, *Summer Will Show*, p. 43.

⁵¹⁹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *The Flint Anchor*, (London: Virago, 1997), p.11. Originally published by Chatto& Windus, 1954.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. p.14.

⁵²¹ Ibid. p 87.

are apposite: 'Mary caterwauled and Papa thought her singing much improved'.⁵²²

Later Warner uses music powerfully to introduce homosexuality into the novel. Mary's sister Ellen is provoking her with the meaning of scandalous graffiti about her husband Thomas; the musical tension builds and the rising hysteria of Mary follows the discord of the duet they are playing on the piano:

Ellen chose the chromatic scale, and presently Mary, complaining of the din, offered to take part in a duet, and sat down at the keyboard beside her.

Euphemia could have guessed the reason for this but preferred to keep her attention averted from the voices that presently rose and fell among the solemn bounds of a Handel overture. The performers played louder.

"What?" said Mary. "I didn't hear. *Who* goes with Dandy Bilby?"

"Are you at the end of the page? I am. Turn over! One, two, three! One, two, three! Thomas Kettle goes with Dandy Bilby. And you know what that means. *Loves*. That's what it means".

[Mary to Ellen]: "How perfectly silly! So silly that you must have made it up [...] We're in two sharps now, I wish you'd remember [...] They're both men, you silly girl! Men can't love each other."

"Oh yes they can. And I can tell you, but not now. At the Allegro."

The minuet was played without further conversation and towards its close only the bass part was sustained. She was unaccountably afraid; her heart quickened its beat, and the black double bar before the Allegro seemed to lean out of the page and menace her.'

"One, two! One two! Are you ready?"

Ellen's repeated quavers broke on her like the rattle of a hailstorm, and among them Ellen was saying, "Shall I tell you? Shall I tell you?"

"No! I don't want to hear it. It's all nonsense."

"Play louder! Keep on playing louder. Silly old Euphemia doesn't know but I do. Listen! I'll tell you in your ear."

A scream rang out, reverberated by the piano-strings.

Mary was on her feet, struggling for breath [...] then, with a look of reckless delight, she threw herself on the floor

⁵²² Warner, *Flint Anchor*, p.89.

and screamed again and again. The rattling quavers of the Allegro slowed, and broke off [...] Ellen closed the piano-lid and laid away the music-book.⁵²³

Music-making amongst young ladies was a proper occupation in the early nineteenth century, the setting of the novel. However, Warner's potent and unexpected writing of this musical occasion may also reflect socio-political discussions occurring in the early nineteen fifties when she was writing the novel. At this time the laws prohibiting sexual acts between men were being actively enforced; the Wolfenden Committee's enquiry into the legality of homosexual behaviour was underway between 1954 and 1956, shortly to be followed by their recommendations contained in the Wolfenden Report of 1957; all would have been of importance to Warner with regard to her own sexuality and the unfairness of the law.

Warner's use of music and sound in *After the Death of Don Juan*, in which she references Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* as the ground-base for the novel, becomes a shrill din echoing through the work. There are shrieks of excitement, the creak of pulpit steps, litanies are sung, cicadas chirp: we hear 'the noise of a thousand sickles being whetted',⁵²⁴ cats yowl, 'uttering contralto moans', bells are rung, whistles blown, women washing clothes in the stream create a noise: 'clack-clack went the stones and the washing-bats'.⁵²⁵ Men bellow, hum, shout and beat the measure for a song. This

⁵²³ Warner, *The Flint Anchor*, pp. 174-76.

⁵²⁴ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *After the Death of Don Juan* (London: Virago, 1989), p.58. Originally published by Chatto & Windus, 1938.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 99.

cacophony of sound is a counterpoint to the somnolent heat and sparse landscape of rural Spain that Warner experienced in 1936.

As in other novels, instruments are assigned to characters; the 'heroine' Doña Ana has a soprano voice and her ineffectual husband Don Ottavio is learning the flageolet — a type of tin whistle — hardly an instrument of consequence. He is taunted by Don Juan: 'Is no one going to play the flageolet? [...] Tweedly-tweedly-weedle. And he looked with a flat snake's eye at Don Ottavio'.⁵²⁶ Music is used here to taunt and disparage.

At the end of the novel, as the village peasants are trapped and about to be slaughtered by Don Juan's men, Diego, the leader, begins to whistle. For him 'the act of whistling was an accompaniment to the pause in the fighting, like an interminable holding-note in music between one strophe and the next'.⁵²⁷ With it Diego is released into courage to fully oppose his life-long subjection and servitude, even as he knows that he will die for it.

In her essay 'Music and the Condition of Being Alive', Gillian Beer comments that music is a chief resource for Warner in exploring 'which stories are important however humdrum or abstract or extreme they may be'.⁵²⁸ As the subjects or stories discussed in this chapter show, Warner explores snobbery, patronage, passion, politics, idealism and the search for individual identity; she brings to this exploration her musical knowledge and understanding of the human heart.

⁵²⁶ Warner, *After the Death of Don Juan*, p. 216.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 299.

⁵²⁸ Beer, 'Music and the Condition of Being Alive', p. 56.

Enjoyment of an entirely different kind leaps from the guide book that Warner wrote on the county of *Somerset* (1949). She accepted the commission as the groundswell of Ackland's affair with Elizabeth Wade White threatened their life together. The book was published in 1949 and none of the anguish and misery endured by Warner at this time is evident in it. She said of the book: 'Since I am constitutionally incapable of resembling a guide, an err-and-stray book is nearer my measure'.⁵²⁹ Warner erred and strayed to great effect as the countryside, towns, buildings, sounds and smells are described often with recourse to musical language as she explored the county. Written in a conversational style and with no intention of being proscriptive, Warner comments on the unexpected, as in this description of carved bench-ends in North Cadbury church:

They are sixteenth century work, and include among the usual range of gryphons and allegories and other *antique Things* a young man playing a large wind instrument of the shawm kind whose attitude and countenance are expressively musical. He is totally absorbed in the difficulties and raptures of performance.⁵³⁰

She shows her knowledge of sixteenth-century musical instruments here, and in the next paragraph there are echoes of her time as an Editor for *Tudor Church Music* when music manuscripts were argued over at long editorial meetings:

Bruton has a celebrated pack-bridge [...] Castle Cary has, I think, a greater air of period and integrity. Yet angry passions can rage among the serenest sash-windows and hooded doorways, and in 1769 Castle Cary was tossed by

⁵²⁹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Somerset* (Norwich: Black Dog Books, 2007), p. 2.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 5.

dissensions about church-music – always a fruitful ground for dissensions.⁵³¹

Peter Swaab has commented that Warner often placed similes near to the end of a piece of writing, 'to let the implications reverberate and sometimes to introduce a new perspective'.⁵³² This placing is especially noticeable in *Somerset* where Warner's similes are frequently musical. Some examples include when the smell of cider apples 'floats from doorways [...] but this is no more than the first orchestral evocations of the choral hymn in the Ninth Symphony, the real thing begins in August with the first wind-falls'; or the voice of the cow-man: 'like a bass wood-pigeon, the general effect was as edifying as a cello sonata'; and regarding the landscape of the West Quantocks: 'If one were an artist one would re-set one's palette [...] If one were a musician, one would re-balance one's orchestra, charging it with horns and adding several bass-clarinets'.⁵³³ The most evocative description of all is of Wells Cathedral and it echoes that of July 1930 when Warner went to Kings College chapel late in the evening to hear Percy Buck play the organ.⁵³⁴ In her writing on Wells the language is almost reverent, echoing her emotional response to sight and sound and culminating in her paying homage to a highly regarded Tudor composer:

I suppose any sensible person visiting Wells would know that he must stay till sundown. But if he goes away after seeing the centre tower imparadised by the glow of sunset, he goes much too soon: the Falling-Asleep of the

⁵³¹ Warner, *Somerset*, p. 6.

⁵³² Peter Swaab, 'Sylvia's Similes: a Stylistic Approach to Sylvia Townsend Warner'. *Literature Compass*, 11 (2014), 767-75.

⁵³³ Warner, *Somerset*. p. 66, p. 85, p. 97.

⁵³⁴ STW-PD 29 July 1930, pp. 63-4. See also p. 263 of this thesis.

Blessed West Front which follows is quite as beautiful; and only then, I think, does one realise how satisfactorily the cathedral is tied to its surroundings by the line of the buildings on either side [...] Even then it is not too late – on a spring evening – to enjoy the Vicars' Close, where rays of greenish gaslight give a doubled sense of retirement from the world. Somebody may be playing the 'cello; and there are still birds mixing music and shrieks in the Deanery garden. The eastern aspect of the cathedral, with all its complications of choir and chapter-house and lady-chapel, keeps resolving itself as one walks on, like the progress of a Tallis motet.⁵³⁵

Musical language reverberates through this example of Warner's writing; there is a freedom in her narrative and music is the continuo within it.

Warner's diaries are particularly valuable as a source for her thoughts on music. Initially the entries concentrate on the many concerts that she heard in the years from 1916 when she moved to London from Harrow – entries such as this, about a rehearsal that she attended with Buck:

Beecham at a rehearsal, dancing the orchestra to a sforzando. The cymbal broke its strap and remarked; ping: ping: ping: wirra-wirra as it sat down on the floor. Beecham, holding the sfz, waited for all this, then intoned in a piercing melodious falsetto – Bloody Fool!⁵³⁶

Here Warner is both tone and word perfect. Her use of the odd repeat of 'wirra-wirra' exactly describes the sound of a cymbal coming to rest on the ground, and Beecham's flamboyant response would have finally released the orchestra from sustaining the forceful chord.

Early diary entries also show the emotive power of music and its affect on Warner:

⁵³⁵ Warner. *Somerset*, p. 41.

⁵³⁶ STW-UD 17 September 1930. Sforzando: 'suddenly, with force'.

I went to the Music Society [...] Beeth: Op.59 no 1. This so rapt me, from that unassuming beginning after which Beeth. gives a shrug and settles down to it, onwards, that at a *ritenuto* in the slow movement I had a distinct sensation that a hand had tightened round my heart, saying: Beat slower.⁵³⁷

And at another Beethoven concert at the same venue the following year:

Then, what we waited for, Beethoven Opus 111[...] There are melodies beyond all breathing and all compass, accompaniments almost childishly stubborn (the cantilena of the lark, the brio of the Titan). It is beyond analysis and almost beyond endurance moving; and God knows how the old bird did it, heaping his pyre. As for the *air* itself, it is like those people who set out to explore unknown Africa with a walking stick and a ham sandwich.⁵³⁸

Here, too, is an example of Warner's imaginative use of simile.

Harman notes that Warner 'chooses apparent incongruities to illuminate a real relation, often juxtaposing two or more totally different sense impressions to discover possibilities in description quite outside the expected.'⁵³⁹ Peter Swaab also considers that

'Warner responds sharply and distinctly to the imaginative possibilities of simile [...], [they] are a place where her comedy and seriousness meet. They are alert, surreal, piercing and frequent'.⁵⁴⁰

In the description of the Beethoven concert, the final simile is gleeful, it enriches the text and adds an unexpected dimension and description to the writing. However, Warner gives no professional view of the music; 'it is beyond analysis'.

As well as describing her emotional response to music heard, Warner's diary entries are a rich source of information about her

⁵³⁷ STW-UD 26 November 1929. *Ritenuto*: 'Held back', slower, ie. slowing down immediately, not gradually.

⁵³⁸ STW-UD 18 February 1930.

⁵³⁹ Harman, *Biography*, p. 218.

⁵⁴⁰ Peter Swaab, 'Sylvia's Similes' pp. 767-75 (769).

comprehensive technical knowledge of music and her appreciation, or otherwise, of what she listened to. This is particularly true of the years 1928 to 1931, when she recorded many accounts of concerts that she attended. Bach appears to have been a favourite composer and Warner was a member of the Bach Cantata Club.⁵⁴¹ This club was inaugurated in 1926 by Charles Kennedy Scott with the aim of performing Bach's choral works with a small ensemble of singers instead of the mass choir productions that were usual. Warner was not averse to the large choir approach having sung with the London Bach Choir for several years. Indeed, in May 1929 she went to Newcastle to meet Alexander Ramsbotham specifically to listen to a performance of Thomas Tallis' *Spem in alium* by the Newcastle Bach Choir and records her appreciation of the concert:

The Newcastle Bach Choir sang the Tallis 40pt motet three times [...] it was like the Milky Way, a glimmering unaccountable tissue. Slept at the Imperial Hotel, my head still ringing with the shining stir of the motet and the choirs tossing Creator one to another.⁵⁴²

There is no record of Warner singing with the London Bach Choir after the 1922-23 season, but she was still singing publically in 1929 as this diary entry shows: 'Put in two hours of brisk singing at the Handel Society: *Belshazzar*. Great fun if any one either knew it or could read at sight'.⁵⁴³

Warner listened to music attentively. She said, in an autobiographical short story: 'In the matter of music I was fairly

⁵⁴¹ The Royal College of Music holds many programmes of the Bach Cantata Club from its beginning in 1926. It is not known how long Warner was a member of this club.

⁵⁴² STW-UD15 May 1929.

⁵⁴³ Ibid. 28 November 1929.

eclectic; I liked listening to it, performing it, transcribing it and composing it'.⁵⁴⁴ Her listening ranged from Plainchant, Handel, Gluck and Purcell, via Romantics such as Brahms to Wagner and Stravinsky whom she heard conduct *Oedipus Rex* on the 12 May 1928. She comments on *Oedipus Rex* that 'A great deal of the choral writing was pure Taverner'.⁵⁴⁵ Warner's knowledge of the structure of music informs this interesting comparison; and this way of thinking about contemporary music in relation to that of the past is also shown in another diary entry several years later:

In the evening I went to the Sargent concert. Stravinsky played his new *Piano Capriccio*. The slow movement largely lifted from JSB. The flute having a high old time bosun's whistling, and a piano scale repeating it with elfish dexterity.⁵⁴⁶

Warner could also be amusingly disparaging about performers that she heard in concert; she had this to say in her diary about a well-known soprano singing Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*:

Dorothy Silk in her last phrase in the burial recitation got a vibrato on each several note. She was also damnably mannered and coquettish in 'Alas my Saviour', in fact she wanted thrashing throughout. As for the vibrato it grows worse and worse; very soon she will be indistinguishable from an electric drill, and they will be able to use her E flat to take up Piccadilly.⁵⁴⁷

A more serious and enquiring aspect of Warner's love of music can also be found in her diaries; some of the early entries include musical notation beside the commentary. She revisits the topic of church bells and the complexity of peals several times; one example is a visit to Lavenham in Suffolk, where she used a property

⁵⁴⁴ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Out of My Happy Past', *Garland of Straw* (New York: Viking Press, 1943), p. 138.

⁵⁴⁵ STW-UD12 May 1928.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. 2 March 1931. JSB is Johann Sebastian Bach.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. 5 April 1930.

called The Barn, owned by the eminent family of Stationers, the Rivingtons. One evening she went with Charles Prentice to see the church:

It was lit up like a factory [...] Presently the bells began to ring and rang for quarter of an hour. I thought how like the changes were to the Athanasian Creed, and how all the systems of the schoolmen are now to us like a peal of bells rung in a winter's night. They finished ringing off two by two, a major third, a minor third to the dominant (a beautiful bell with an overtone like a flute, so round), a tone; then the A flat bell went on alone, saying over and over again – 'Deum, Deum'. The organ began to play and the Salvation Band to flourish. It made a nice counterpoint on a ground.⁵⁴⁸

Warner writes this diary entry distinctly as a remembrance of something heard and responded to.

During her London concert-going years Warner often comments on the music of composers known to her, as well as others whom she knew only by reputation. Occasionally her opinions of the music and the composer vary greatly. Frederick Delius is one such composer. Born in England in 1862 of German parentage, Delius trained in Leipzig between 1886 and 1888 and so was of the 'old school' of composers. However, he was enthusiastic about the Folk Tune Revival, as were Philip Heseltine and Percy Grainger, both of whom were very much of the 'modern' school of composing. Grainger was a personal friend of Delius and both he and Heseltine appreciated Delius' music. The conductor Thomas Beecham showcased his works in many concert programmes, giving them more rehearsal time than he did for the work of other composers. Warner first comments on Delius' music after a concert in 1928:

⁵⁴⁸ STW-UD 4 December 1927.

In the evening I went to the Philharmonic [...] the Delius *Dance Rhapsody*, the first bar of which took me into a real created world instead of a representation of chaos by an important deity [...] and there was a long time for fiddle through a mist of strings and tremolo like a lark in a morning mist, exquisite in skin and simple perfection.⁵⁴⁹

From this beautifully written and evocative appreciation, it could be understood that Warner thought highly of Delius as a composer.

Henry Hadow did, and he wrote about him in his work *English Music* (1931) appearing to echo Warner's thought but in a less poetic manner: 'His music is intensely personal and introspective [...] most beautiful when it weaves, in a dreamland of its own, its texture and interplay of emotional colour'.⁵⁵⁰

However, Warner's comments about the composer and his work a year or so later are disparaging as she is in a less appreciative mood discussing the composer with Buck: 'We talked about Delius. He has no nationality, or else he is soaked in the national idiom of the moon; probably the later'.⁵⁵¹ She compounds this unkind observation with a harsh assessment of the composer and his music:

Dined with Victor⁵⁵² for a Delius concert [...] There were some incredibly Anglican part-songs, three groups of solo songs – including some Shelley settings which it was just impious to dissent – a violin sonata only good where he left off being careful and trailed off into a long, sloppy slow movement – two worthless part-songs 'to be sung of a night on a river', the first one rather pleasant. [...] Delius should never be shown a word. Words dry him up. He was there, blind and paralysed, bowing his rather bird-like head to the applause. The performance was sympathetically encored, and each time I thought he

⁵⁴⁹ STW-UD 26 January 1928.

⁵⁵⁰ Hadow, *English Music*, pp.166 – 67.

⁵⁵¹ STW-UD12 October 1929.

⁵⁵² Victor Butler was an Old Harrovian, mathematician and son of the then Governor of Burma.

would crash his blind brow into the gallery barrier. We may not be a musical nation, but we are so kind to dumb animals. When he was alive and kicking, who gave a damn for Delius? ⁵⁵³

These are the first instances of Warner being disparaging of a prominent composer. The derogatory comments, although written in a private diary, show a less amicable side of Warner's character and one that is very different from her amusing and scholarly correspondence. It would be charitable to believe that Warner was merely against false sentiment.

Between these two assessments of Delius, Warner had also experienced a difficult evening with the composer John Ireland, who was an acquaintance:

A most surprising evening with John Ireland, an evening out of D.H.Lawrence. He was quite ordinary and conversible at dinner, and had an amusing description of Aunt Holst as a young man with a trombone in one corner and a wash-stand in the other.

Then to his studio, where I admired his taste in pictures. He was about to play me his sonatina when he suddenly went off into what a devil of a time he'd had [...] [and] then his own reaction of marrying a girl of seventeen. They quarrelled horribly; and with a ghastly exactitude he recalled one quarrel, the girl sitting on the piano and swinging her legs, and singing a rag-time – he stopped, musicianly, to give a rather incorrect musician's rendering of 'I want to be happy', and how he had wanted to strangle her. He raged across the room strangling a ghost, and when I jumped up and told him to have done with such tormenting nonsense he stood quite still and dazed.

Afterwards he was like Tommy on the worst evening, speaking like an automaton and saying the same thing over and over again. Perhaps he was a little drunk, I tried to think so, for if he were not, it was creepier still to be alone with this demented stranger. ⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ STW-UD 23 October 1929. Also published, in part STW-PD, p.46.

⁵⁵⁴ STW-PD 31 March 1928, pp. 15-16.

This incident would have been disturbing for Warner as a few weeks before she had thought well of Ireland: 'A letter from John Ireland a triple *con molto sentiment*, but quite comforting after a hard day of being somebody quite usual in the usual mess'.⁵⁵⁵ However, Warner's discomfort did not last long as she praises Ireland's *Sonatina* which she heard in concert a short time later. This work was dedicated to his friend Edward Clark and its last movement was based on her novel *Lolly Willowes*. Her diary for 19 April 1928 gives her reaction to hearing the piece:

In the evening to the BBC John Ireland evening. *Trio - 1919*, too noble for my taste, songs by Hardy, Dekker (very good, an exciting talking vocal curve, almost like hens) and the love and friendship set. Then the *Sonatina*, with a Sabbath last movement based on *Lolly*. This I really liked. It has an excitement of the wild brain, instead of the usual wild body orgy.⁵⁵⁶

It would appear from this statement that Ireland had understood Warner's polemic regarding the plight of single, unmarried women that underlies the novel, and had not centred his music upon the populist 'wild body orgy' imaginings that witchcraft can be associated with.

Warner's comment on this evening includes an observation on music heard at dinner later in the evening:

A very beautiful serious child named Perkins [...] turned over [the music] [...] She, I, Ireland and Edward Clark went on to a late dinner. There was a wireless in the restaurant, and we listened to a very good Blues. I thought how close the analogy is between Jazz and plainsong: both so anonymous, so curiously restricted and conventionalised,

⁵⁵⁵ STW-UD 1 March 1928.

⁵⁵⁶ STW-PD 19 April 1928, pp.16-17.

so perfectly adapted to their metiers, both flowing with a kind of devout anonymity.⁵⁵⁷

From making the analogy between jazz and plainsong, it can be seen that Warner was interested in all aspects of music and the connections that could be made between them. She liked the Blues music so much that she made a point of discovering the composer of it; her diary entry for 12 May states that it was Ira Gershwin's *The Man I Love*. This diary entry also shows that she knew Edward Clark, possibly because he would have been known to Buck. Clark could have assisted Warner with an introduction to Schoenberg in 1914, as discussed in chapter two; however, there is no record that he was asked to do so.

In Warner's attendance at concerts in London, it is striking that none of the many diary entries mentions Buck, although she states that he sometimes gave her concert tickets. Their affair was kept secret for many years as Buck was married, so it may be assumed that not attending concerts together was part of their diplomacy. However, there were exceptions when they were together at musical events outside London. In July 1930 Warner went with Buck to a musical event lasting several days at Kings College Cambridge. Her description of being in Kings College Chapel late in the evening, and hearing Buck play the organ there, is an example of her deeply-felt response to the atmospheric building and to Buck playing of the organ:

⁵⁵⁷ STW-PD 19 April 1928, pp.16-17.

About 10.30 we went to the chapel. It was quite dark, except for the bicycle lamp, and under that enormous roof one had the feeling of being out of doors [...] The air was warm and sweet with wax candles. We sat at the west end, while Boris Ord played (first something I didn't know, then the *Fantasia in G*, with the roulades escaping on iron pinions after the pause) and the light in the organ sent an enormous rod of shadow along the roof. Then he called Teague. There was an interval of conversational voices, and he began to extemporise. I thought I should never hear that again, and in that terrific tunnel of dark masonry with its one useless shaft of light piercing the upper dark, it was like a Donne poem and a funeral. Just at the end, or rather just as one felt the end, he let off for a minute and then started the theme on all the most tigerish and domineering reeds – a last jutting-out rock of a mainland – and then away in a pianissimo. Nothing really has altered. I listened with the old obedient ears, the old destined flesh. Only now I hear with a deeper-sounded abyss below me, a more closely-encompassing darkness, and both accepted.

It was beyond all my dreams, to be listening to music so, in the dark of that ancient and bare building.⁵⁵⁸

In this evocative setting Warner, whilst involved with the music, is also aware of the problems in her relationship with Buck. This excursion ended happily the following day: 'Then too happy to be sorry, we left and travelled back together. Teague came in for tea, and a conclusion of how happy it had all been. It had'.⁵⁵⁹ It was to be their last happy time away.

Problems in their relationship had been building since the beginning of the year. In January of 1930 Warner had attempted to speak to Buck about her misgivings; she believed that he no longer desired her. After lengthy discussion the evening ended well: 'At last we had dinner, and the rest of the evening did justify my instinct in

⁵⁵⁸ STW-PD 29 July 1930, pp. 63-4. Boris Ord was the organist and choirmaster at Kings College.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. 30 July 1930, p. 65. The photograph mentioned in this diary entry was discovered in a 'Miscellaneous' file in the Archives of Kings College Cambridge. A copy has been given to the Warner – Ackland Archive Dorchester.

getting down to it, for it had the serenity and kindness I had
despaired of [...] I can't, though, love less even to preserve our
delight'.⁵⁶⁰ However, a few weeks later Warner was again despairing
of Buck's interest in her. She had accompanied him to a children's
concert in Wandsworth and he had chosen tea at a restaurant
instead of returning with her to her flat. She comments in her diary:

I find it hard to accept that he should prefer this as an
evening's entertainment to coming here; but every day
defeats me a little more, and though I am bewildered, I
feel that there is nothing to be done, only take it for
granted, let go, be silent over the loss of it since I am too
sad and middle-aged for whistling.⁵⁶¹

The final sentence is perhaps a clue to the beginning of her
unexpected relationship with Valentine Ackland several months later,
when she delighted in being very much desired.

Warner first mentions Ackland in her diary at the end of
March 1929. They had met at Beth Car, the home of the writer
Theodore Powys in Chaldon, Dorset, where Warner had been
welcome since 1922, having been introduced by Stephen Tomlin,
her friend and an 'old Harrovian'.⁵⁶²

Warner and Ackland initially disliked each other but
subsequent meetings by chance at Beth Car became easier. On one
occasion Warner visited Ackland who was staying at the cottage
previously rented by Stephen Tomlin, and in February 1930 Ackland
had tea with Warner in London.

⁵⁶⁰ STW-PD 22 January 1930, p.52.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. 5 March 1930, p.56.

⁵⁶² Harman, *Biography*, pp. 48-50.

In April 1930 Warner found a dilapidated cottage to buy in the village of Chaldon called 'Miss Green' after its last owner. Warner wanted Ackland to live there and steward the property for her as Ackland had lost her rented base in the village. Her landlord had suspected that she had sublet the property at a profit and Warner, having used the cottage rent-free, felt responsible for Ackland's situation. 'Miss Green' was purchased and Valentine accepted its stewardship. Warner had been financially secure since the success of her publications in the mid 1920s and the purchase of the cottage for £90 would not have been a strain on her finances. As early as 1928 she records in her diary her thoughts on suddenly being comfortably off:

It is a grand sensation to ring up one's bank to ask what one's balance is, and to await the answer in smug serenity. I find the pleasure of money entirely momentary. I like spending it, I like disposing of it – in between I never give it a thought.⁵⁶³

Warner had intended to use 'Miss Green' for a few weeks at a time when Ackland was in London, but circumstances dictated otherwise and in early October 1930 whilst arranging the cottage together they became lovers – a deeply committed relationship and for Warner life-long. Warner returned to London the following day to fulfil prior engagements and had dinner with Buck. She states her feelings poignantly in her diary:

I cannot forever besiege the past, there is a treachery to the future, too, and perhaps the deadlier, and life rising up in me again cajoles with unscrupulous power, and I will yield to it gladly, if it leads me away from this death I have

⁵⁶³ STW-PD 9 January 1928, p.10.

sat so smugly in for so long, sheltering myself against joy
[...] harrowed and dulled and insincere to myself in a
pretext of troth.⁵⁶⁴

There is both regret and excitement in this statement. Clearly, in the light of her problem with Buck, there can be no happy continuation of their long relationship; she is newly, and unexpectedly, in love with Ackland and will, she says, follow her heart. Warner did not end the relationship with Buck that day; the ending occurred two weeks later:

It was not an easy thing to say, but he made it all extremely clear and secure by his magnanimity. My poor Teague, I can scarcely believe it is done; nothing more became it than its ending [...] There was no dazzle of love in my eyes, no nursed delusion or self-conning. Yet I have never liked him so well, seeing him thus clearly. Alas! ... but here's nothing but what may quiet me, for it was most perfectly taken, the blow I dealt.⁵⁶⁵

Music in Warner's life would suffer from the loss of Buck, his unassuming support and erudition, his 'mind so queerly stored with such queerly assorted riches I cannot expect it to have told me everything, although it has been telling me for eighteen years'.⁵⁶⁶

Ackland, though she played both the violin and the piano, was not inherently musical and would not play for Warner. She attended a concert with Warner in London on the 12 January 1931, and there may have been other occasions on which she accompanied her in the beginning of that year, as Warner would have had subscriptions to concerts already in place before her relationship with Ackland began. Claire Harman states that this was the last season that Warner was to make these arrangements for music in London;

⁵⁶⁴ STW-PD 13 October 1930, pp. 70-71.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. 31 October 1930, pp. 73-4.

⁵⁶⁶ Harman, *Biography*, p.75.

'Concerts and operas, so much a part of her former life, became rare occurrences, for she could not enjoy going often without Valentine, and Valentine preferred not to go'.⁵⁶⁷

The change in Warner's life was radical; not only had Buck gone from it but so had other musical and cultural contacts and friends that Ackland became jealous of. These included David Garnett, Augustus John who was a friend of her uncle Arthur Machen, Edith Sitwell, Ottoline Morrell, Cecil Beaton, Edith Evans and others of the London social world with whom Warner spent time. Her cultural life diminished and became exceptionally small in comparison when she moved from London with Ackland.

By 1930 Warner was better known as a writer, particularly in America, than as a composer or musicologist. The ending with Buck had been polite and orderly, as was the end of her career in music, and it could be said that the relationship with Buck 'book-ends' her musical life; she left Buck and musicology at the same time. His influence, initially concurrent with that of her father and then continuing on a personal level, gave her an example of an enquiring and educated mind as well as expertise in music; her father's example did the same with history, poetry and the skill of writing clearly. The influence of the gifted teaching of these very able men shaped Warner's intellect and honed her talent in music and writing, preparing her for the turbulent yet creative years with Ackland.

⁵⁶⁷ Harman, *Biography*, p.113.

Chapter 7: Warner as Librettist and Collaborator

Sostenuto

This chapter discusses Warner's friendship and later collaboration in music with the American composer Paul Nordoff. It goes on to detail the poem commissioned from Warner in 1938 by the English composer Alan Bush who, like her, was a committed Communist. The poem was to be political and was originally to be set to music by Bush's friend, the composer John Ireland. The complexities of the small project are given and show Warner's zealous commitment to the Communist cause. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the collaboration between Warner and her friend Reynolds Stone: verses written by Warner and engraved by Stone that resulted in the work known as *Boxwood*.

Paul Nordoff was born in Philadelphia in 1909 and later studied the piano at the [Philadelphia Conservatory](#), receiving a Bachelor of Music degree in 1927 and completing a Masters degree in 1932. He then studied at the prestigious [Juilliard School](#) in New York. In his professional life Nordoff served as Head of Composition at the [Philadelphia Conservatory](#) between 1938 and 1943, a high-ranking appointment for a man not yet thirty years old. He was later to teach at [Michigan State College](#), from 1945 to 1949, and at Bard, a private liberal-arts college in New York where he was Professor of Music from 1948 to 1959. Thereafter he was committed to music therapy for disabled children.

Nordoff was also composing for the opera and ballet during the 1930's and 1940's. He wrote the music for several ballets for the Martha Graham Dance Company: *Praeludium* (1935), *Every Soul is a Circus* (1939) and *Salem Shore* (1943), as well as the music for two short operas by his friend Franklin Brewer in 1941: *I Was Born To Be Attractive* and *Did Matisse Find Peace?* In 1946 he toured Central America with the ballet stars Anton Dolin and Alicia Markova.

Warner's friendship with Nordoff, which was to last until his death forty years later, did not begin with a meeting but with a letter, in 1937. Their friendship quickly developed to encompass personal loss, and grief as well as a dynamic involvement in the libretto and music for a short opera and a song-cycle.

There is no published correspondence between the two composers between June 1937, the date of the first letters, and June 1939. The Warner Archive holds fifty-two letters she wrote to Nordoff between 4 June 1937 and 11 April 1975, of which forty-seven are reproduced in the *Letters* edited by William Maxwell. These were returned to Warner by Nordoff's family after his death in 1977, as confirmed by a typescript letter dated 5 June 1977 in the Warner Archive. New York Public Library has two hundred and thirty-seven letters from Warner to Nordoff in its Manuscripts and Archives Division. From the catalogue description it appears that the majority of these letters concern personal matters and include relatively little about music:

Their content ranges from humorous and original descriptions of commonplace events and activities to

more painful accounts of the occasional strains in Warner's relationship with Valentine, and her warm, commiserative responses to the conflicting feelings evidently expressed by Nordoff in his letters concerning his bisexuality and his marriage. There are also occasional discussions of their artistic work.⁵⁶⁸

There is no archive of Nordoff's correspondence to Warner or anyone else; Clive Robbins, Nordoff's partner, at the end of his life believed that all was lost in a flood at Nordoff's home.

Nordoff's initial letter to Warner offered an apology. He had composed an opera, based upon her novel *Mr Fortune's Maggot*, about a naive missionary in Polynesia, without gaining permission to create it from her text; he also requested a meeting with her whilst he was in England. Warner replies generously to this letter:

Dear Mr Nordoff,

Your letter reached me this morning; and I am afraid there is no chance that we can meet before you sail on Sunday [...] I am sorry for this, as I should like to hear your music, and I should like to hear about Polynesia too. For you have been more conscientious than I. I wrote *Mr Fortune* with a placid disregard for fact. It happened that I very much wanted to write the story, and did not feel inclined to postpone the writing of it, or even compromise my views on how it should be written, by seeing Polynesia first.

After this confession, I can hardly reproach you for doing your opera before you wrote for my permission, can I?⁵⁶⁹

Warner's imaginative, perhaps compulsive, method of writing is evident here; ideas, character and story *have* to be committed to paper immediately. She follows this statement with a knowing comment about copyright permission from her American publisher, which demonstrates that she had experience with the intricacies of

⁵⁶⁸ *Sylvia Townsend Warner Papers*, Mss.Coll.3225, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division.

⁵⁶⁹ STW-PL 4 June 1937. p. 45.

publishing. She is adamant that Nordoff should take her advice on this subject and make a prudent request to her publisher before any public performance of his opera.

Warner may not have been surprised that a libretto had been written based on her novel, and music composed using it to complete an opera; a diary entry by her dated 12 March 1927 states 'John Ireland thinks of Mr Fortune's Maggot as an opera'⁵⁷⁰. As far as is known, Ireland made no attempt at composing an opera based on Warner's novel.

Nordoff was anxious to meet Warner, but was to receive another disappointing answer regarding a meeting some months later. Warner remains formal in this reply:

Dear Mr Nordoff,

I am so very sorry. But I cannot get to London, and I cannot ask you to come down here [...]

It is a real disappointment to me, both not to hear your music and to meet you [...] I feel very mean not to have responded to your kindness as I should have liked to.

But please do not carry into action what you too impetuously say about not feeling licensed to carry your music to performance without my approval. I know enough about music – indeed, when I was young I composed, and was convinced that music was my metier – not to know that a work of music is a complete and separate thing, and that the libretto from which it springs is only the earth in the pot that the flowering plant grows from. I have manhandled enough texts for my own purposes to know this; and I beg of you to feel as I do on this matter.⁵⁷¹

Here Warner shows her understanding of the relationship between text and music. This understanding made for a happy collaboration in

⁵⁷⁰ STW-UD 12 March 1927.

⁵⁷¹ STW-PL 5 September 1937. pp. 48-9.

the following decade when the pair, now enjoying an established friendship, planned an opera: libretto by Warner, music by Nordoff.

Warner and Nordoff finally met in New York in June 1939 when she and Ackland were attending the Third American Writers Congress there and Warner read a paper entitled 'The Historical Novel'. The First Congress in 1935 had established the League of American Writers⁵⁷² which, it was hoped, would unite novelists and poets to help speed the destruction of capitalism and establish a socialist 'workers government'. Warner would have appreciated that the opening meeting of the Third Congress was held at Carnegie Hall in New York.

The circumstance of Warner's first meeting with Nordoff is not given in detail in the published *Letters* and neither is there information from a diary for 1939 in the Warner archive. However, it is clear from a letter to Nordoff, written whilst staying in New York, that she had heard him perform some, if not all, of the music for his opera *Mr Fortune*. This would have been a piano performance as no orchestral score was developed. This was confirmed by Clive Robbins in an email to the present-writer:

Mr. Fortune: Sorry to tell you that an orchestral score was never developed; there is only the piano score. Paul played and sang some parts of the opera to me in 1959, too long ago for me to remember except the ardor [sic] with which he sang, That opera was very close to his heart, and he told me how thrilling it was for him to work over the libretto with Sylvia, I probably should have written 'rewritten' as the libretto was originally by Walter Prude in those early pre WWII days. How much of the libretto as it appears in the piano score in Dorchester is by

⁵⁷² The Archive of the League of American Writers', 1935-1942, is held at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Collection BANC Mss.72/242 z.

Sylvia I have absolutely no way of knowing. There are no known recordings of any part of *Mr. Fortune*.⁵⁷³

The editing of *Mr Fortune* by Warner is hinted at in her letter to Nordoff of a much later date: 'No! I did not know that the Phila production of *F.'s Maggot* was definitely off [...] all that work, how hard we worked, and with what confidence and what brilliance – and now this!⁵⁷⁴ How far she edited the libretto or assisted Nordoff with the music is not known.

From the beginning of their friendship Warner was impressed by Nordoff's work. In June 1939 she writes:

Dear Paul Nordoff,

I am sending back your copy of *Mr Fortune* with an inscription.

I wish I could convey half the pleasure and excitement that your music gave me. I have been talking of it ever since [...]

I have had various songs set by various people; and on the whole I have been lucky in my composers: but as a rule I have a private feeling that I could have set the words better myself [...].

I want to tell you that in your setting of *Mr Fortune's Maggot* I had no such reserve. From the first phrase of the prelude (which incidentally I woke up the next day remembering as though I had known it all my life) your music carried me with it. It does seem to me that you have written a most beautiful thing, and I am proud and happy to be in the centre of it.⁵⁷⁵

Warner noted the technical devices that Nordoff used in his score for *Mr Fortune* as is shown in her appreciation of 'the beautiful arioso and chorus in the bathing-pool scene'. But it is the overall harmony of the work that most captivated her: 'for plenty of music has good

⁵⁷³ Clive Robbins, email to Lynn Mutti, 27 January 2010. The full text of the email is in Appendices. The STWA contains three large black folders, published and bound in New York, of the piano score and libretto for *Mr Fortune*, one folder for each of the three acts of the opera. The collection is labelled 'by Sylvia Townsend Warner and Paul Nordoff'. No date given.

⁵⁷⁴ STW-PL 18 October 1956, pp. 159-160.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. 21 June 1939. pp. 53-4. Written from 26 Jane Street, New York.

qualities, fine details of invention, and yet is not good and fine music; but yours both has, and is. It was a wonderful evening, and one I shall never forget'.⁵⁷⁶

Warner's rapport with Nordoff after his performance of *Mr Fortune* was such that she invited him to join her, Ackland and their American friend, Elizabeth Wade White, in Warren County, New York State where they would be holidaying. Warner's description of the place is evocative: 'It is a completely plain-headed house, no instrument of music except a melodion in the attic, but it is lovely country, full of wild raspberries and red-haired butterflies sitting on pink flowers, and cool mountainy airs, and a general feeling of Robert Frost'.⁵⁷⁷ In the same letter Warner offers sympathy for Nordoff's 'worry and trouble' but does not describe what that might be; intimate friendship had developed very speedily.

War was declared in Europe and Warner and Ackland returned to England, arriving on 11 October 1939. For the next decade, until the decision in 1949 to collaborate on an opera, Warner wrote to Nordoff of her memories of America and her experience of wartime Britain. Sometimes her letters contained references to music, as does this reminiscence of time spent in Colebrook, New Hampshire:

I remember every leaf on that locust tree, every apple, every twist of that ramshackle gipsyified vine; and the view from that dining room window the evening of our last dinner, the green meadow darkening, the white flowers turning to scattered clots of sea-foam [...] All my life I shall remember Colebrook and how happy I was there -- a

⁵⁷⁶ STW-PL, 21 June, 1939, p. 54. Written from 26 Jane Street, New York.

⁵⁷⁷ STW-PL 14 July 1939, p. 54. Written from 24 [sic] Jane Street, New York.

happiness one can dive into and never be threatened with grating one's nose on the bottom of it. What an amazing fortune, as amazing as the hazards in music, that brought us into our harmony there, in a place we had scarcely given a thought to in our respective life-times.

I can only compare it to music.⁵⁷⁸

Warner puts another musical reference to good use to explain why she and Ackland could not return to the relative safety of America: 'It's not patriotism, and it's not obtuseness. It's realism. It is a modulation inherent in the tune, it's a variation that the ground bass demands.'⁵⁷⁹ Warner's descriptive abilities are enhanced by her use of musical terminology in her letters to Nordoff; they add a dimension that she knows he will understand. Often she conjured humour from grim situations. An example concerns the requisitioning of the Ackland country house in Norfolk by the Army. Ruth Ackland, Valentine's mother, 'goes around saying "I have been seized" [...] The clearance is ruthlessly being carried on by us, a sort of grinding *alla marcia basso ostinato*, to which Ruth supplies a flrid descant'.⁵⁸⁰

Pure sound flows in Warner's letters to Nordoff, as shown here in a description of late evening: 'The little river, heavy with rainfall, went by with its full hushed spinning-wheel voice';⁵⁸¹ and this description of amorous cuckoos: 'The cock bird, instead of the usual trochee, has invented a charming wobbling *coloratura* version of his

⁵⁷⁸ STW-PL 27 November 1939, p. 56.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. 1 June 1940, p. 63.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid. 13 August 1940, p. 65. Letter to Paul Nordoff. *Ostinato* is another phrase for 'ground bass'.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. 17 November 1940, p. 68.

own' ;⁵⁸² and much later: 'a loquacious thunderstorm this morning which was oratorical without a pause for breath all through breakfast, and having finished what it wanted to say, took itself off '.⁵⁸³ These are examples of Warner's ability to create superb sensory images using musical language and they demonstrate extremely well her sensitivity to sounds in nature.

America entered the war on 7 December 1941, and ten days later Warner wrote to Nordoff:

O, and music paper. My God, yes. *Buy a lot of music paper immediately.* And don't, my dear, unless you have already done so, hazard a great deal of money in getting a copy of the *Maggot* piano score across to me. It might just as likely go down. And I would much rather you had the money, and I got along with a very sound memory of the music. Luckily, I have a tough memory for what I like, and I have most of it tucked away somewhere behind my ears.⁵⁸⁴

Conversations about opera continued in letters. In January 1946 Warner wanted to know if Nordoff had ever thought of using Balzac's novels as a basis for an opera: 'any of the impassioned social ones ought to work up into a grand opera like eggs into a sauce Béarnaise, the duchesses so shrillingly soprano, the villains so profoundly basso [...] Balzac's genius roaring through it all like a quartet of saxophones'.⁵⁸⁵ This entertaining suggestion was not acted upon and it was not until 1949 that opera is again mentioned in Warner's published letters.

⁵⁸² STW-PL 2 July 1941. p. 71. Trochee is a poetic foot of two syllables, 'strong-weak'. Coloratura is a florid style of vocal music usually for soprano voice.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. 29 July 1948. p.103.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid. 17 December 1941, p.76.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. 5 January 1946, p. 91.

The details of how Nordoff was given a commission from Columbia University for an opera could not be discovered in the archive of the university, and the information appears to have been lost with Nordoff's papers. What is known is that the generous finance for the work, including five hundred dollars for the librettist alone, was to come from the Alice.M. Ditson Fund. A bequest from this lady to the university had resulted in the fund being established in 1940, income from which was to be used to benefit music, much as Andrew Carnegie's Trust had done earlier in the century.

Nordoff's choice of Warner as librettist and collaborator for the project was an obvious one given her musical expertise and ability, her imaginative writing and their close friendship. There is no record of Nordoff's initial correspondence to Warner about the libretto for the opera that was to become *The Sea-Change*, and he appears not to have been proscriptive about the subject-matter. Warner's letter of 4 February 1949 gives her initial free-flowing thoughts, together with a tumble of questions about Columbia's resources for the production:

The libretto, yes, certainly a man; and certainly no message; and the man, some sort of Quixote, yes. And the time, presumably, some sort of rough and ready Now. But there must also be a framework, a story; for just a character and incidents is not substantial enough to support the weight of the music. We do not want a Symphonic Variation opera like *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, or a tone-poem opera either. So from now on till when I come back from Italy I shall be devising this framework; and when I get back in March I shall send you the draft of it. Of course I have ideas already, dozens of them; but equally I am sure that Italy will give me better ones [...]

I would like to know roughly your Columbia resources? Can you have a chorus, or is the stage too small? A semi-chorus then? I must know this, because if you can have

neither, then the libretto must allow for the orchestra taking over at the intervals when the solo voices are off. Have you any particular experiments you want to try? Are you thinking in terms of dialogue and arioso, or will you include trios and quartets? I hope the latter. It is so ravishing when the voices flow into polyphony. This, too, would justify the devices of stanza and rhyme, and the pleasure of being a Metastasio, everything flowing into a madrigal.⁵⁸⁶

Warner's pleasure at the prospect of writing this libretto is clear, and she conveys her joy in the writing in a letter to Nordoff of 7 April 1949: 'I wish I could write librettos for the rest of my life. It is the purest of human pleasures, a heavenly hermaphroditism of being both writer and musician'.⁵⁸⁷

Warner's travels in Italy with Ackland in February 1949 were an extremely happy time for her, as she acknowledged in a letter to Nordoff. Rome was 'like the lap of a heavenly grandmother, full of all the toys of time [...] And everything enriched with art and poetry and history';⁵⁸⁸ little wonder that she thought of Shelley, his romantic life and death, as the basis for her libretto. Her long letter to Nordoff of the 12 March 1949 sets out the framework of the opera, and as Peter Swaab notes, 'it deserves to be quoted in full'⁵⁸⁹:

Dearest Paul,

I found your letter and the beautiful spectacle of the Columbia advance when I got home.

That was four days ago; but I have waited to write to you till I could tell you something about the libretto.

⁵⁸⁶ STW-PL 4 February 1949, p.109. Letter to Paul Nordoff. Pietro Trapassi, whose pseudonym was Metastasio, was a prolific eighteenth-century librettist.

⁵⁸⁷ STW-PL 7 April 1949, p. 112.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. 6 June 1949, pp. 113-14.

⁵⁸⁹ This letter first published in *Letters*, ed. by William Maxwell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982), pp. 110-11. The *Sea Change* libretto was edited by Peter Swaab and published with annotations in the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 15 (2015), 14-34, together with his article 'Heavenly Hermaphroditism': A Note on *The Sea-Change*, 35-39 (36-7).

After some false starts on other themes, I am sure of it . . . the theme is Shelley's last summer, at Lerici, where he and Mary, and the two Williamses, and Trelawny went, to suffer their sea-change, as Trelawny prophetically said. They are all falling most beautifully into place. Did you know that early in that summer Shelley saw the vision of a child rising out of the sea and beckoning to him? And after the shipwreck, when Trelawny went to see Mary, 'he did not attempt to console me, but launched forth into an overflowing and eloquent praise of my divine Shelley, till I felt almost happy'? That will be the last scene of the opera – an extended arioso (Trelawny is obviously a baritone) which will answer your idea of a long conversation with someone invisible, either an angel or the devil; for Mary will have no singing part at all in this scene, and the pauses in Trelawny's arioso will be answered by – so it seems to me – by a wordless melodic line, perhaps Shelley's high tenor vocalising, or a solo fiddle; which will comment on the strain of the arioso and lead it further.

There will be only one set: the upper room as Casa Magni with the french window opening on the view of the bay; sometimes this window will be open, sometimes shut, according to the scene. During the scene of the wreck – which will be left entirely to orchestra and chorus voices off – the window will be open, and the three women, Mary, Jane Williams, and Claire, will be silhouetted against it, shaping a group of intensified anxiety and hopelessness. From this window they will see the arrival of the ship when she first comes from Leghorn, newly built for their summer's pleasure. All the ship business, and Trelawny's seafaring talk, and Shelley's enthusiasm, is going to be lovely. Think what music you can have for the ship coming smooth and full-sailed over the water, the solo voices expatiating, and the chorus of the fishing people of Lerici on the beach below the window. This device of the upper room is going to be a godsend, because you can have your chorus, all the chorus you want, without them crowding up a small stage. Then there is Jane Williams, and her guitar, another lovely motive of the lyric voice, the light jarring guitar notes, and the sea-continuo supporting it. And for my fun in the job, there is one fascinating strand: that Shelley, who in all his poems was obsessed by rivers, by rivers flowing to the ocean, by rivers traversing underground caverns, is himself expressing this river's hastening compulsion to be lost in the sea.

Shelley and Trelawny will be the two dominating parts. The women interpose, or supply little lakes of duets and trios. Edward Williams I hear as a *serene* bass; the exponent of the feeling of summer, of natural enjoyment of nature, of the blueness of sky and the amplitude of days. I

think what lovely full cantabile one can get from a bass if he is not being misused as a grunting Hunding, or a pop-pop-pop merry peasant.

So now, darling Paul, give your mind to the Mediterranean, and write and say you love me for this.

I will write and tell you about Rome, and Assisi, and the journeys presently. But except to tell you, I cannot write anything that is not the libretto just now, for it is washing round me and islanding me from anything else.⁵⁹⁰

Edmund Blunden had published a biography of Shelley in 1946 and, as Warner knew him — they had met at a party at the composer Gerald Finzi's home — she would almost certainly have read it. She also knew and used *Trelawny's Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*. An edition was published by Oxford University Press in 1923 when Warner was editing the *Tudor Church Music* volumes with them, but it is likely that Warner already knew the work. Trelawny emphasises Shelley's love of rivers, lakes and the sea: 'Shelley never flourished far from water. When compelled to take up his quarters in a town, he every morning with the instinct that guides the water-birds, fled to the nearest lake, river or sea-shore'.⁵⁹¹

The Shelleys had been living and travelling in Italy for several years before Percy Shelley decided that the family were to spend the summer of 1822 in the Gulf of Spezia. He wanted to spend time sailing, as he had often done in his youth on the Thames in Marlow, and resolved to have a boat built. Trelawny was asked by Shelley to suggest someone to build the boat. He relates in his *Recollections* that 'I wrote to an old naval friend, Captain Roberts, then staying at Genoa, a man peculiarly fitted to execute the order, and requested

⁵⁹⁰ STW-PL 12 March 1949. pp. 110-11.

⁵⁹¹ *Trelawny's Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, (Humphrey Milford for the Oxford University Press, 1923), p.45.

him to send plans and estimates for an open boat for Shelley'.⁵⁹² However, Shelley was insistent that the boat be made to a model belonging to his friend Edward Williams who, with his wife Jane, was staying with the Shelleys for the summer. Shelley overruled both Trelawny and Roberts the boat-builder regarding the design of his boat despite their misgivings. This decision, coupled with the relative inexperience of himself and Williams as sailors in difficult Mediterranean waters, was to prove fatal. Williams believed himself to be a better sailor than he actually was, as he had served for three years in the Navy. Shelley appeared to be boyishly oblivious to the dangers of not being a competent sailor and, as related by Trelawny, continued his habit of reading whilst steering the boat. In her libretto Warner gives Trelawny these prescient lines about the difficulties of sailing:

Aye, but no ship to dream in, or rhyme on.
Shelley must brush the visions out of his eyes
And heave his books and papers overboard.
He cannot put to sea with Plato.⁵⁹³

In his *Recollections*, Trelawny describes identifying Shelley's body by the two books found in the pockets of the dead man's jacket; they were a volume of Sophocles and poems by Keats. Trelawny preferred legend to fact and, as Shelley's body had not been found for many days, it is likely that any paper would by then have been pulp and the script on the binding illegible.

⁵⁹² Trelawny's *Recollections*. p.61.

⁵⁹³ Sylvia Townsend Warner. The *Sea-Change* libretto, *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 15 (2015), 25.

Shelley expressed his enthusiasm for the boat and what he expected of it in a letter to Trelawny dated 16 May 1822:

The *Don Juan* is arrived, and nothing can exceed the admiration she has excited [...] we have sought in vain for an opportunity of trying her against the feluccas or other large craft in the bay; she passes the small ones as a comet might pass the dullest planet of the heavens.⁵⁹⁴

Meanwhile a house had been rented for the family near to Lerici on the coast. All that the near derelict Villa Magni had to commend it was a long 'verandah facing the sea: almost over it'.⁵⁹⁵ It is at this point that Warner's libretto opens as she gives the first description of the opera staging:

The action takes place in the year 1822, at the Villa Magni on the bay of Spezia. The scene is a large room on the upper floor, with a door L. and five french windows in the back wall. These windows have slatted shutters, opening outward on to a flat roof, which extends the whole length of the five windows, and has a low balcony. Beyond is the sea. The room has a faded decoration of frescoed garlands on the walls, which are stained with damp. The furniture is scanty, 18th cent. in date; it has been handsome and now is shabby. In the opening scene the room must appear disused.⁵⁹⁶

A view of the Villa Magni, with its five french windows onto a balcony over the sea, is published as an engraving in the *Recollections*.

Warner names six primary members of the cast of the opera: Shelley (tenor), Mary Shelley (mezzo-soprano), Claire her half-sister and mother of Allegra, Lord Byron's child (contralto), Edward Williams (bass), Jane Williams (soprano) and Trelawny (baritone).⁵⁹⁷ She also lists a chorus of male voices as the fishermen of Lerici, off-

⁵⁹⁴ Trelawny's *Recollections*, p.65.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 62.

⁵⁹⁶ Warner, *Sea-Change* libretto, Warner Society Journal 2015, p.14.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

stage, and a tenor-voiced Sailor. Whilst not part of the libretto, orchestral instruments are listed on the 1962 bound edition of the work, presumably by Nordoff; they are 1st violins, violas, cellos, basses, one flute, one oboe, one G flat clarinet and one bassoon.

At the opening of the opera, Trelawny speaks of the major theme of a sea-change when introducing Mary Shelley to her new home. He defies the shabbiness of the *sala* and seeks to engage her interest in the house saying: 'But when I open this window, everything changes: the house turns to a ship, we are at sea, we suffer a sea-change'.⁵⁹⁸ The sea-change he envisages is that of a summer's sailing for the Shelleys, a direct contrast to their life in the cities of Florence and Pisa. Warner, however, sought to realise the literal meaning of a sea-change, a profound and notable transformation, as given by Shakespeare in Ariel's Song from *The Tempest* :

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding – dong.
Hark! Now I hear them – ding-dong bell.⁵⁹⁹

Warner anchors the allusion in dialogue by Mary, Claire and

Trelawny in Act 1, scene 1:

MARY Trelawny wants us to be turned to coral.
CLAIRE Trelawny wants to set the sea-nymphs
 tolling. (*Singing*):
 Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell,

⁵⁹⁸ Warner, *Sea-Change* libretto, Warner Society Journal, 2015, p.17.

⁵⁹⁹ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Signet Classics. London: New English Library, 1963). p. 56.

TRELAWNY Hark, now I hear it! Sing, Trelawny!
Ding dong bell! Ding dong bell!⁶⁰⁰

From this point onward, Warner largely follows the events that build to the deaths of Shelley and Williams as set out in Blunden and Trelawny. But it is not the tragic events themselves that are the focus of Warner's writing, rather it is what could be called the 'ecstatic' nature of the poet that is at the heart of her *Sea-Change* libretto. Warner portrays Shelley's hard-edged idealism and love of nature at the end of Act 1; here he seeks to encourage Claire to look upon nature and accept the death of her child of which she has just been told:

Weep, weep, dear Claire, weep on this solemn strand!
Weep, while the yearning wave clings to the rock,
Sighing, and falls back, sighing. Weep, while the light
Mutely relinquishes the mountain.
Here in this innocent desolation, unlearn
Hate and remorse and sophistries of comfort,
And as the mountains gaze upon the sea
Gaze on death's patient face until it grows beautiful.⁶⁰¹

Later in the opera Trelawny is to describe this solo of Shelley's as a 'ransom' for them all:

And how, when Shelley came, we were suddenly
ransomed,
Our cautious fetters struck off, our hearts recalled.
To the truth of living, and the truth of dying?⁶⁰²

Shelley's failing relationship with his second wife Mary and the interaction between the friends gave Warner the opportunity to write duets, solos and her much-wanted 'polyphonic' quartet – becoming a sextet at its close in Act 1, scene iii, with Shelley's vision of Allegra.

⁶⁰⁰ Warner, *Sea-Change* libretto, Warner Society Journal 2015, pp.17-18.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. p.19.

⁶⁰² Ibid. p.32.

As she had outlined to Nordoff in her letter of 12 March 1949, Warner makes full use of the sea-faring aspects of the opera, particularly Shelley's reaction to his boat arriving at Lerici, which Warner also makes his last appearance in the opera:

VOICES FROM THE SEA: Is this the Englishman's house?
SHELLEY: Joy! Joy!
VOICES ON SHORE: Here! Here! Steer this way. So. Now
clear the reef.
Easy! Easy! Now let her go! [...]
EDWARD: How smoothly she comes on!
Proud, painted and new
Like the Virgin going in procession.
Going above the heads of the crowd.
How she comes in!
Easily riding like the rising moon.
SHELLEY: My soul flies into her sails. I am
gone. I am gone.⁶⁰³

Warner gives the final word on Shelley to Trelawny:

A poet! . . .
How, from our mortal remembrance
He is wafted;
He rises to that untrammelled region
Where poets as poems survive.
Dying, he has reversed the sea-
change.⁶⁰⁴

After some composing difficulties Nordoff completed the score in October 1950. Shortly after, Columbia refused the opera. Warner writes in her diary 'A letter from Paul – at first about the composition of *The Sea-Change* – and then about the audition with Columbia: they turned it down, killing it with expressions of esteem'.⁶⁰⁵ Years later Warner expanded her thoughts in a letter to William Maxwell:

⁶⁰³ Warner, *Sea-Change* libretto, Warner Society Journal 2015, p. 29. A copy of an undated letter from William Maxwell to Paul Nordoff regarding Warner's *Sea-Change* libretto was given to Jay Barksdale, Warner Society Newsletter Editor by Michael Steinman, editor of *The Element of Lavishness: Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner and William Maxwell, 1938-1978*. It was published in the STW Society Newsletter No.35. Autumn 2017. The letter gives Maxwell's opinion of the libretto and shows his commitment to Warner's work.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. p.33.

⁶⁰⁵ STW-PD 30 November 1950, p.171.

'What kept the opera from being performed was that Columbia, who had commissioned it (University of) reneged, in a fit of McCarthy-mindedness, because both Paul and I were badged with unsound political views – Shelley, too, for that matter – and unsuitable for support'.⁶⁰⁶ The opera was quietly shelved awaiting better times.

Early in 1951 Nordoff sent Warner a record of *The Sea-Change* and her response was ecstatic:

It is such exquisite music, and so thrilling to hear it like this, with your voice speaking to me, as though your disembodiment had come with it. I think the Shelley aria is one of the most moving, most heavenly, most profound things I have ever heard. I had the extraordinary sensation while I listened to it, *that I knew it* [...]. And the lovely duet, so classically spare in its grace: and that heart-rending introduction to the last scene [...] nothing could better convey the feeling of all over and now all to begin, the acceptance, the endurance of despair [...] the blank light patiently fingering through the shuttered window. It is ravishing.⁶⁰⁷

Warner was still hopeful of procuring a production of *The Sea-Change* as late as 1958. Vaughan Williams, his wife Ursula and their mutual friend Joy Finzi visited her in Frome Vauchurch and Warner spoke of Nordoff's *Sea-Change*, and chamber opera generally, knowing this to be one of Vaughan Williams' 'enthusiasms'. She explained to Nordoff in a letter:

Ursula immediately sat up and asked a great many questions, and then said 'It sounds just the thing for the New Opera Company' [...] She is going to write to Peter Hemmings of the New Opera telling him about *The Sea-Change*; and as VW is its honorary patron and president,

⁶⁰⁶ Warner, *Element of Lavishness*, 31 March 1977, p. 319.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 27 March 1951, pp. 127-8.

she will certainly be attended to. I am to write to him too, sending a copy of the libretto.⁶⁰⁸

Warner's dedication to her friends would have ensured that this was done; but however winningly she wrote to Hemmings nothing came of the plan.

There was more success with a song-cycle entitled *Lost Summer*. This was a setting to music by Nordoff of Warner's poems written about Ackland's relationship with Elizabeth Wade White in 1949. Unfortunately there is no correspondence in the Warner Archive regarding how this collaboration came about. Neither does Warner mention it in her diaries. However, the Archive does have a copy of the music score, annotated with verses in Warner's hand, dated Nov/Dec 1949.⁶⁰⁹ The work was composed for mezzo-soprano and orchestra and was commissioned by the Louisville Philharmonic Society earlier in 1949.⁶¹⁰ The orchestra to be made up of 1 flute, 1 oboe, 1 Bflat clarinet, 1 bassoon, 2 horns in F, timpani and strings.

The verses transcribed below, except the first, are listed by Claire Harman as being part of '[1949]' in the volume *New Collected Poems*. There are seven sections in [1949] numbered I – VII; Nordoff set all three verses of II, III and VII. There is no record of the first verse, 'Between the Blackthorn and the May', in either the *Collected Poems* or the *New Collected Poems* edited by Claire Harman. I have

⁶⁰⁸ STW-PL 13 August 1958, p. 167. The Cambridge University Opera Company was formed in 1956, became The New Opera Company in 1957 and closed in 1984 due to the withdrawal of Arts Council funding.

⁶⁰⁹ STWA reference: T/Box4/80 (DHC:D/TWA/A77). N.B. Since May 2018 the STWA has been housed at the Dorset History Centre, Dorchester.

⁶¹⁰ Scan of the Mss.music and words of *Lost Summer* in pdf format on CD. STWA reference T/Box4/77 (DHC: D/TWA/A73). 'Commissioned by the Louisville Philharmonic Society' written on the Mss.

given the verses in the order in which they appear in the manuscript. Warner seems to regard the verses as one poem as she has written on the title page of the manuscript, 'Poem by Sylvia Townsend Warner'.

Words have been altered in several of the verses, probably to make them easier to sing. Those in purple are written in the manuscript; those in green are from the published verses:

Between the blackthorn and the may [sic]
The north wind stole my falcon away
Before the cuckoo changed his tune.
For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer
Singing in his green arbour
My summer was gone.

III

○ Here is my left hand, and here is my right hand,
And I on myself cast up as on a desert island,
In my right hand a dagger and on my left hand a ring,
And from under my feet the earth falling.

O here is my beginning, and here is my ending,
And at my bedside the armoured day standing,
Saying, Rise up, my lost one, and begone
Into reality as into a prison.

○ Here is my troth given, and my truth forbidden,
And here are my good deeds **bewildered** like forsaken children,
The needle in the patch, the dedication in the song.
I cannot take them where I am going.
They rust in the **[cold dew of a]** May morning.

II

And past the quay the river flowing;
And I not knowing
In what gay ripple, tossing **[ambling]** and sidling,
The tears you wept for me go by.

And in the ripples the bridge flaking,
Making and unmaking
Its grey parapet, and I not knowing
How in your mind I am coming and going.

And to my heart the wise river
Murmuring, O never, O never [once only]
Under the bridge of any river
Does the wave flow twice over.

VII

On the forsaken bridge as I crossed [went] over
A dead man stood, looking down on the water,
And as I passed he laid a hand on my shoulder, saying

It was here, [saying], I thought I would row my darling,
And her white hand would feather the water, [holding]
Holding a yellow lily and a long weed trailing.

Or did I indeed bring her?
As skies cloud over and lighten again,
I remember and cannot remember.
I wait to hear my oars splash in the river.

New Collected Poems prints this as:

Or did I indeed bring her? As skies cloud over
And lighten again, I remember and cannot remember.
I wait to hear my oars splash in the river.

The songs were recorded and Warner writes in her diary on the 12 May 1952 about receiving the record from Nordoff; the verses of II she found especially affecting:

I took heart enough to unpack Paul's parcel: *Lost Summer* was in. The singer a Nan Merriman with an extremely wide, dark-coloured vigorous mezzo-soprano – an Amneris voice; and a very good serious method. The music I still cannot assess, for my heart is too much in it. But listening to the 2 river songs I could say, It is justified, I can accept that then, for this music that has come out of it.⁶¹¹

There is only one further mention of this work by Warner, presumably because its subject was painful to her and Ackland. In a letter to Nordoff of the 4 February 1954, Warner expresses her

⁶¹¹ STW-PD 12 May 1952, p.188. Amneris is a mezzo-soprano role in Verdi's opera *Aïda*.

delight that there was to be another performance of *Lost Summer*, this time with a tenor voice. She considers several alternative, more masculine, phrases in place of 'the needle in the patch': 'the spade in the patch' and 'the tractor in the field' are examples.⁶¹²

Vaughan Williams and Warner had been linked in a collaborative sense before the opera 'enthusiasm' of 1958. This was twenty years earlier when Warner was at the height of her enthusiasm for the Communist cause. The English composer Alan Bush was a near-contemporary of Warner's and like her a committed Communist. He had been taught composition by John Ireland, who remained a friend, and composed music for workers' choirs. In 1938 Bush had been invited to organise a choral piece for female choir for the annual contest between choirs linked to the London Cooperative Societies' Joint Education Committee. However, he was about to undertake a six week visit to the U.S.S.R. and sought help with this commission from colleagues. Bush wrote to Ireland on 6 September 1938:

Dear John,

[...] I am writing to ask you whether you would consider composing the music for this work. I have invited Sylvia Townsend Warner to write the text and now await her reply. I have reason to hope that she will agree to do it.

The subject of the poem which I discussed with the committee should be, we feel, a Mother's Song against war. We want something which is strong and in no sense vague in its terms [...]

I do hope you will help us with this.⁶¹³

⁶¹² STW-PL 4 February 1954, pp. 146-7.

⁶¹³ *The Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland, 1927-1961*, compiled by Rachel O'Higgins (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 82. The British Library holds the music manuscripts of Alan Bush, BL MS Mus. 434: Numbered folios.

Alan Bush had written to Warner on the same day, 6 September, and Warner's response was that 'she would certainly do the poem, and with pleasure'.⁶¹⁴ She also enquired if John Ireland was to set the poem as 'I think a little preliminary collaboration between Blest Pair of Sirens, Voice and Verse, might be a good thing from Voice's point of view'.⁶¹⁵ However, Warner demonstrated her zeal by writing the poem immediately – it was posted the following day. The poem, as yet uncollected, is entitled *The Mothers*:

1	2
Soldier home from the war To us, the stay-at-homes, Tell now of the victory, The banners and the drums. I saw a mother With her son laid on her knee. Bitter was her lullaby, And dead was he.	Soldier home from the war To us, the stay-at homes, Tell now of the future, The smiling peace that comes. Lull well your children, Lull them while you may. Cannon will sing a harsher tune Some other day.
3	4
They will be put to sleep By lullabies of hell, Cold they'll lie and tumbled, Whom now you guard so well. Wrong will breed the grudge, Greed will weave the plan. Blindfold to slay and be slain Is the fate of man.	Soldier, march to a war With us, the stay-at-homes! Our voices shall cry down The cannon and the drums. In the fate of man Woman shall have her say. Hers be the last word, And the word, Nay! ⁶¹⁶

Ireland was dilatory in his reply and Nancy Bush wrote to Vaughan Williams enclosing Warner's poem, and asking if he would set it. His reply on the 25 September was stern, almost admonitory:

Dear Mrs Bush,

Many thanks for sending me the poem – I fear I entirely disagree with the idea of making such a music meeting the vehicle for propaganda of any kind. If children learn to

⁶¹⁴ *Correspondence of Alan Bush and John Ireland*, p. 83.13 September 1938.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 45.

love beauty where ever they may be they will grow up to hate ugliness – But the one thing we do not want is for them to associate the arts with all the political strife which unfortunately later on they will be obliged to partake in.

Yrs sincerely R Vaughan Williams⁶¹⁷

There was no mention of this incident, or anything political, in any later meeting between Warner and Vaughan Williams.

Interestingly there is no mention in the *Correspondence* of Vaughan Williams being asked to set the poem. Rachel O'Higgins, the editor of the book, was Alan Bush's eldest daughter; it could be argued that the omission was to protect her father from criticism of his extreme politics.

John Ireland finally replied to Nancy Bush in mid-October and once more it was a negative response. This time the problem seemed to be the complexity, or scansion, of Warner's words:

Many thanks for sending me Miss Warner's poem, which did not seem to me conceived with a view to straightforward setting.

In any case I have been far from well, and did not feel I could attempt any composition, so I hope you will forgive me. Best wishes to Alan and yourself.

Yrs always,
J. Ireland⁶¹⁸

With the deadline of the beginning of November drawing near, Nancy Bush wrote to a prominent female composer of the period, Elizabeth Maconchy, to ask if she would write the music for the female chorus. Maconchy's reply was blithe and opposite in opinion to Ireland. She would certainly make a setting of Warner's verse and added that she thought it was intended 'to be an Accompanied 4-part choral setting

⁶¹⁷ *The Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams 1895-1958* edited by Hugh Cobbe (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

⁶¹⁸ *Correspondence of Alan Bush & John Ireland*, p. 86.

[...] and technically pretty simple'.⁶¹⁹ Maconchy wrote a four-part chorus for women's voices entitled *The Mothers* in October 1938. Unfortunately nothing came of the commission and it was neither published nor performed.

It may have been disappointing for Warner to have two commissions come to nothing between 1938 and 1949, but her early poems were set by both John Ireland and Alan Bush. Ireland's *Songs Sacred and Profane* has been discussed above on page 49; the work by Alan Bush was entitled *The Freight of Harvest*⁶²⁰ and was also a song cycle for tenor voice and piano. Ireland had introduced Bush to Warner's first published volume of poetry, *The Espalier* (1925), in the late 1920's. However, it was poems from her second volume of poetry, *Time Importuned* (1928), that Bush set for this work. It had been commissioned by The Dartington Summer School of Music and was performed at Dartington Hall on August 8 1969. The poems set were 'Country Thought from a Town', 'The Sailor', 'The Maiden' and 'The Load of Fern'. *The Freight of Harvest*, together with the Warner poems from Ireland's *Songs*, was performed at the 'Tribute to Sylvia Townsend Warner' at the Aldeburgh Festival in the summer of 1977 organised by Peter Pears.

Moving on to a further collaboration, Warner came to know Reynolds Stone through Ackland's interest in old bijou items and small antiques. Ackland learned the art of the saleroom from Vera

⁶¹⁹ *Correspondence of Alan Bush & John Ireland*, p. 86. Elizabeth Maconchy's archive is held at St. Hilda's College Oxford.

⁶²⁰ Bush's score is held at the British Library, London. MS Mus. 425, ff. 26-89: Draft score in pencil; score in ink.

Hickson, a Siamese cat breeder and source of Warner's many cats, and in 1952 she persuaded Warner to allow their 'long sun parlour' in the house at Frome Vauchurch to become a small, informal 'shop'. Claire Harman gives the circumstances of how Warner's life was immeasurably enhanced by this venture:

Through the shop and its reverberations Sylvia and Valentine came to make several pleasurable and long-lasting friendships; one with Reynolds Stone, the artist and engraver, and his wife Janet, who lived at Litton Cheney [...] Janet Stone had a wide circle of literary, musical and artistic friends, whom she was dedicated to entertaining, and through her Warner met Gerald Finzi, the composer, and his wife Joy. To dine at Litton Cheney, or at the Finzi's house at Ashmansworth, and meet such people as Edmund Blunden, Frances Cornford, Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears [Janet's cousin], [...] John Piper and John Nash was a pleasure Sylvia had almost begun to think impossible in the provinces.⁶²¹

The friendship with the Stones became especially important to Warner, as she showed in December 1955 by giving Reynolds her great-grandfather's John Flaxman engravings. Flaxman was a celebrated eighteenth-century sculptor and draughtsman who had worked with Josiah Wedgwood and was a friend of William Blake. This would have been a valuable gift and demonstrates both her fondness for her new friend and her practical nature: 'Reynolds was really pleased, and it will have a good chance with an intelligent new generation'.⁶²²

Reynolds supported Warner in her challenge to the proposed atomic reactor at Winfrith Heath near Wool early in 1956, and together they wrote to *The Times*. The following year Warner spoke

⁶²¹ Harman, *Biography*, p. 259.

⁶²² STW-PD 4 December 1955, p. 220.

at the public enquiry in opposition to the scheme and says of it; 'I spoke briefly on the letters after our *Times* letter [...] It is all no use. The heath is doomed'.⁶²³

Warner and Stone began an unusual collaboration later that year, and one that echoed her work as librettist for Paul Nordoff. Stone had been commissioned by The Monotype Corporation to create sixteen engravings, or woodcuts, to illustrate quotations or poems for a book planned to demonstrate a new type font, 'Dante' by Giovanni Mardersteig. Harman suggests that Stone was having difficulty in sourcing material that would be suitable for his hallmark woodcuts of trees and landscape and that Warner had offered to write short verses to "illustrate" the illustrations'.⁶²⁴ The result was *Boxwood*. There is no correspondence between Warner and Stone about the collaboration, as distance required between Warner and Nordoff in America, save one letter from Warner to Stone which shows that some of the woodcuts were not new and that Warner had to write poems to reflect their subject matter. This letter was written some years after the Monotype Corporation's limited edition had been published in 1957. Norah Smallwood had persuaded Warner and Stone to enlarge *Boxwood* by five poems and woodcuts for publication by Chatto & Windus. Warner writes:

Dear Reynolds,
Here are the five additional poems for
Boxwood. XIX is for the woodcut on page 141 of The Open
Air, XXI is for the Scotney woodcut.

⁶²³ Harman, *Biography*, p. 265. Referencing a diary entry for 10 January 1957.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.* p.267.

Now I have a suggestion. I think there should be a list of the woodcuts, saying what places they are (i.e. XX is Ashmansworth Churchyard, I think?), where they have already appeared, when this is so, and their dates if you can remember them [...]

Norah Smallwood is in Italy, lucky she; she will be back next week, all ready to hear from us.
With my love to you all.
Sylvia.⁶²⁵

The Chatto edition of *Boxwood* was published in 1960 without the list that Warner advised but with information regarding the woodcuts given on the verso of the final page.

Warner's poems are rich in music and sound, as the first lines of the first woodcut show :

Out of the silent rock the spring came welling
And air gave it a voice immediately.
I am free, it sang, I am free to hurry away.⁶²⁶

The second reverberates with seasonal song – the ecclesiastical year encompassing those that lie in the churchyard:

Easter awakes them with sound
Of *Alleluia*
And then *We plough the fields* comes round
At Harvest Festival,
Then Christmas with *The First Nowel*,
And in between they sleep knowing all is well.⁶²⁷

The poem for woodcut VII echoes a chorus from the second half of Handel's Oratorio *Messiah*.⁶²⁸

Hold up awhile, ye gates.
Swing on perished hinges, ye ghostly doors,
And the King of England shall come in.
Who is the King of England?⁶²⁹

⁶²⁵ STW-UL 30 November 1957, letter to Reynolds Stone.

⁶²⁶ *Boxwood*, Twenty-one Engravings by Reynolds Stone illustrated in verse by Sylvia Townsend Warner (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 6.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁶²⁸ Referencing *Psalms 24: 7-10*.

⁶²⁹ *Boxwood*, p.18.

Handel's chorus runs:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye
everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is the King of Glory?⁶³⁰

The final woodcut, XIX, is entirely about music:

The wand was in the elder-bush,
The music was in the elder-wand,
I cut the wand and carved a whistle
As good as any man could wish;
But the only tune that it would play
Was *Over the Hills and Far Away*.⁶³¹

From these examples it can be seen that music was never far from Warner's creative mind as well as being of great importance in her daily life. The range of musical influence is notable too, from choral work to folk tunes; both strands of music played an important role in Warner's musical life.

Stone repaid Warner's gift of the Flaxman engravings with an impressive gift of his own at Christmas 1957, possibly as thanks for the extended work for Chatto & Windus which would have paid well. Warner's letter displays all of the anticipation and joy of a gift well-bestowed:

Dear Reynolds,

When I undid the wrapping, and saw the brown leather – 'It can't be', I said, with absolute conviction that all the same it was, 'It can't be Guillim'. And it was Guillim, a book I have loved ever since I was a child and my father used to take it out of the Vaughan Library at Harrow, and have often thought of since, and always wanted, and never found. And now I have it. When you come next, will you please inscribe it for me in your beautiful script. Incidentally, the lettering on the brown paper wrapper was a present in itself [...]

⁶³⁰ Sleeve note: *Messiah*, performed by The Sixteen. 2008. CORO. 16062.

⁶³¹ *Boxwood*, p. 42.

Bless you and thank you, dear Reynolds, for this heavenly addition to our books.

With love,
Sylvia ⁶³²

Collaboration with friends suited Warner; it cemented her friendships and enlarged her experience, both musical and literary. Her commitment to Communism allowed her literary talent to find expression in this sphere too. Of the work with friends that has been discussed, *The Sea Change* opera has not been performed, possibly because there is no orchestral score, and neither has Elisabeth Maconchy's chorus set to Warner's poem *The Mothers*. The poem remains uncollected. Warner remained friends with her collaborators life-long; her collaborative works show her individual talent displayed in new and unusual ways and music is woven through them all.

⁶³² STW-UL 25 December 1957 to Reynolds Stone. John Guillim (1565-1621) was Portsmouth Pursuivant of Arms at the College of Arms, London. The book would have been *A Display of Heraldry* first published in 1621. There were further editions – the Royal Collection has a copy of the 6th edition, 1724 – but it is not known which edition was given to Warner.

Chapter 8: Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten: Loss and Friendship

Adagio

Collaboration of a different kind was to be brought about by Warner because of her passion for the art work of John Craske, a Norfolk fisherman. He had left the sea in 1917 because of mental illness, and took up painting and embroidery. This chapter outlines Warner's request in 1970 to Peter Pears regarding her collection of works by Craske. Warner, wanting a new home for her collection, originally begun by Ackland, asked Pears whether they could be displayed at his and Britten's Snape Maltings Art Centre in Suffolk. Warner met with Pears, and was subsequently involved with a show of Craske's works during the Aldeburgh Festival of 1971; a close friendship developed from working with him on this show. Six previously unpublished letters by Pears and eighteen complete or partial letters from Warner show how the friendship flourished and became important to both Warner and Pears in a relatively short time. I quote from these at length below. The content of the letters is often musical, or addresses musical subjects. But Warner also hints at the devastation of grief — Ackland was recently dead — and comforts Pears as he copes with Britten's failing health and eventual death in 1976. The chapter concludes with a description of the 'Tribute to Sylvia Townsend Warner' day organised by Pears at the Aldeburgh Festival in June 1977.

Warner knew and admired the music of Benjamin Britten for many years before her friendship with Pears began in 1970. Her knowledge of Britten's music is shown in a surprising diary entry for December 1950 as she calms an angry cat: 'Today I have finished typing The Hostage [...] Niou, ravaged with jealousy, hauled around the last pages, and finally hurled himself on my shoulders, and was rocked to consolation by a tune about a kitten in the manner of Britten'.⁶³³ A year later, having listened appreciatively to Britten's opera *Billy Budd* on the radio, Warner met the composer at the Opera House, Covent Garden with the conductor Mark Lubbock, her friend Bea's husband: 'I had tea with Ben and Mark and saw Bea again at Covent Garden in the intervals of *Billy Budd* [...] the music becomes very familiar on a second hearing, and winds itself into the mind'.⁶³⁴ This opera was composed in 1951, the year that Warner was in the audience; she had listened to one of its first performances.

Opera and operetta formed perhaps the most important part of Britten's composing. He was prolific in this genre, writing sixteen operas or operettas. The first, *Paul Bunyan*, with a libretto by the poet W.H. Auden, was composed in 1941, and this decade saw him complete a further five operatic works: *Peter Grimes* (1945), *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946), *Albert Herring* (1947), *The Beggars' Opera* (1948) and *The Little Sweep* (1949). Other major works include *Billy Budd* (1951), *Gloriana* (1953), *The Turn of the Screw*, based on the

⁶³³ STW-UD 13 December 1950.

⁶³⁴ Ibid. 8 December 1951.

novella by Henry James (1954), *Curlew River* (1964), *The Prodigal Son* (1968) and *Owen Wingrave* (1970). Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice*, was composed in 1973 and was specifically written as a tribute to Peter Pears whose voice had inspired him for decades. Pears had, of course, sung the title roles in many earlier Britten operas.

In 1946 Britten and Pears formed the English Opera Group with the aim of creating an English opera repertoire, to include the commissioning of new works and giving concert performances of old and modern English music. Its manifesto declared:

We believe the time has come when England, which has never had a tradition of native opera, but has always depended on a repertory of foreign works, can create its own operas [...] We believe the best way to achieve the beginnings of a repertory of English operas is through the creation of a form of opera requiring small resources of singers and players, but suitable for performance in large or small opera houses or theatres.⁶³⁵

The English Opera Group gave the premiere of Britten's second chamber opera, *Albert Herring*, with a libretto by Eric Crozier and designs by Myfanwy Piper, at Glyndebourne in June 1947, alongside further performances of *The Rape of Lucretia*.

This enterprise would have been a perfect vehicle for Nordoff and Warner's *Sea-Change* opera which had a powerful and absorbing story of an English poet, needed little scenery and needed only a small group of singers across the vocal range. It is surprising that Warner does not appear to have approached this opera group

⁶³⁵ The English Opera Group: <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk> In 1975 this company became 'The English Music Theatre Company'. Administration and financial papers, production scores and files, technical and wardrobe files and other material are held at The National Archives – www.nationalarchives.gov.uk. They are also in the Britten-Pears Foundation Archive.

despite having met Britten at Covent Garden in 1951. There is no mention of the *The Sea-Change* in the English Opera Group Archive, part of the Britten-Pears Foundation in Suffolk, and no mention either in any letters between Warner and Pears. As discussed in chapter 7, nothing came of any submission in 1958 of *The Sea-Change* to The New Opera Group, of which Vaughan Williams was patron. There may have been financial reasons for the opera not appearing with either company, but perhaps Warner didn't put *The Sea-Change* opera forward with the English Opera Group because Nordoff was American.

The English Opera Group was also to be the foundation of the Britten-Pears Aldeburgh Festival. Christopher Headington in his biography of Pears gives information on how this came about. He says that Eric Crozier, part of the management team of the Opera Group

described how, when sitting one evening over pre-dinner drinks, they expressed some pride in what they were doing:

England was at last making some contribution to the traditions of international opera. And yet — there was something absurd about travelling so far to win success with British operas [...] It was exciting to represent British music at international festivals, but we could not hope to repeat the experiment another year. It was at this point that Peter Pears had an inspiration. 'Why not make our own Festival?', he suggested. 'A modest Festival with a few concerts given by friends? Why not have an Aldeburgh Festival?'⁶³⁶

Pears's idea became a reality the following year and has continued since as a premier music festival in England.

⁶³⁶ Christopher Headington, *Peter Pears: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 150. It references *The Aldeburgh Story: A Pictorial History of the Aldeburgh Foundation*, compiled by Jill Burrows (Ipswich, 1987).

Britten expresses his commitment to the Festival in a speech he gave in Aspen, Colorado in July 1964; he was being presented with the first-ever Aspen Award for his outstanding contribution 'to the advancement of the humanities'. In this speech he thanked America for making him realise, in 1941 when he had lived there for several years, that he had to go home to East Anglia: 'I belong at home – there in Aldeburgh. I have tried to bring music *to* it in the shape of our local Festival; and all the music I write comes *from* it. I believe in roots, in associations, in backgrounds, in personal relationships'.⁶³⁷

Warner's love of the voice, whether in motets, operatic arias or lieder is shown throughout her diaries as she describes concerts heard on the radio during the 1950's. The music transmitted from Aldeburgh was a highlight: 'In the evening I listened to the music of Aldeburgh – Pears singing '*Auf dem Wasser*' exquisitely, and Britten's sharp, infallible composer's accompaniments'.⁶³⁸ She would, I think, have been especially delighted to have attended the concert that Britten and Pears gave in Dorchester in February 1954. Whether she met them there is not known but she gives her opinion of both musicians in the diary entry for that day:

The Britten-Pears concert, with Britten's new cycle of Hardy poems. All have power, and his particular forthrightness, and poetic reading of the words: those I was most impressed by were *The Travelling Boy*, with its reiterated figure in the accompaniment, a bouncing futile phrase with the frustration of *To Lincolnshire to Lancashire to buy a pocket-handerkercher*; and the last, *Before Life and After*, which is noble like a slow dance,

⁶³⁷ Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), p. 441.

⁶³⁸ STW-UD 25 June 1953.

sarabande-like solemn climbing. Pears was singing very well, his *Nacht & Träume* superlative, and a Schubert I didn't know, *Sprach der Liebe*, most beautifully phrased [...] As for Britten, a head with no chin, a pounce like a weasel, and a total attentiveness and identification with the music. He has a goblin look, like the child in the Carpaccio Annunciation who peeps down when she ought to have been at her lessons.⁶³⁹

When mentioning Britten in her diaries or letters, Warner often describes his physical attributes, his face, the speed with which he conducted, 'watching his pianist's hands'⁶⁴⁰ as he drove or, at a lunch at The Red House, his 'hooded watchful eyes; an ear for conversation as if it were an orchestra'.⁶⁴¹ But there is one diary entry that shows Warner in awe of Britten's musicianship: 'Re-lay from Aldeburgh – B.B. conducting the *Unfinished*. It was a *transfiguration*'.⁶⁴² Here Warner declaims as a musician and composer. She is profoundly moved by the interpretation of another twentieth-century composer's dazzling reading of the music of a nineteenth-century acknowledged master, Franz Schubert. The understanding of the structure of music is implicit in a comment by Warner on Britten, in which she appears to have breached the outer defences of this self-protecting man: 'I am haunted by the sight of Ben's rather shrewish features melting into love when we began to talk about Mozart. I only knew him slightly before then, and no more since; but that conversation made me know him forever'.⁶⁴³ This impression of a softer, more human Britten is given in a letter to Joy

⁶³⁹ STW-PD 10 February 1954, pp. 206-7.

⁶⁴⁰ Warner, *Element of Lavishness*, p.222, 9 June 1971.

⁶⁴¹ STW-PD [undated, 2 or 3 June] 1971, pp. 356-7.

⁶⁴² Ibid. 23 June 1970, p. 346.

⁶⁴³ STW-PL 8 April 1973, p. 265.

and Marchette Chute when Britten was first hospitalised with heart problems in April 1973.

Another letter, this time to Paul Nordoff, gives a detailed account of Britten's opera *The Turn of the Screw* in 1954, the year that it was composed, after Warner heard it on the radio:

I listened to *The Turn of the Screw*, it came through extremely well. The form is very interesting. Both acts consist of eight scenes, with orchestral interludes, which have their own connections, as they are a set of variations, developing with the opera but also in themselves. The scoring is very light, the tessitura inherently high [...] the voices are two straight sopranos, a boy treble, and two dramatic sopranos: nothing lower, till the tenor comes in in scene 8 of the first act. This entry is marvellous. [...] he is on the tower looking down at the two children, the celestra twirls are developed, there is no interruption of other singers, and then the tenor enters on a pedal note, very quietly, and the note so ambiguously in his middle register (perhaps B flat or A) that it might be anything, the bottom note of a soprano or a viola. By the time a moderate crescendo has established that it *is* the tenor, the effect of something supernaturally dominating and yet furtive is overwhelming. It is exactly like what one is told of bad ghosts appearing: the growing sensation of intimidating cold. And the moment this is established, Quint begins a series of leaping, flickering coloratura phrases: the sort of coloratura one finds in Taverner's virtuoso masses.⁶⁴⁴

This description echoes Warner's letter to Nordoff of 12 March 1949 when she tells him of her ideas for the opera that became *The Sea-Change* near the beginning of their collaboration. Gillian Beer in her Hesse Lecture at Aldeburgh in 2014 says of it that Warner describes *The Turn of the Screw* 'with a brilliance that takes us far into the uncanny interior of the music'.⁶⁴⁵ The brilliance lies in the marrying of musical knowledge with an outstanding literary ability; this is Warner

⁶⁴⁴ STW-PL 17 September 1954. p.150

⁶⁴⁵ Gillian Beer, 'Music and the Condition of Being Alive', p.71.

at her formidable best, writing with passion and totally bound up in the music; and once again she references her work of the *Tudor Church Music* years.

Warner's approach to Peter Pears regarding her Craske collection came about through her friend Reynolds Stone, whose wife Janet was a cousin of Pears. He told Warner: 'Write to Peter Pears; he likes pictures'.⁶⁴⁶ Warner did so in February 1970:

Dear Mr Pears,

Reynolds Stone has advised me to write to you about my collection of pictures by John Craske. I enclose an article about him, this I should like to have back.

You will see he is an artist whose work should be on view in East Anglia, and I would like to leave my collection to The Maltings or some centre in Aldeburgh. I have ten: four needleworks and six paintings. All are framed. The largest is 35 inches by 26.

Obviously you cannot decide without seeing them. But if you, or Mr Britten, would consider this proposal perhaps you could combine seeing them here with a visit to Reynolds and Janet Stone.

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Townsend Warner⁶⁴⁷

It is not known when Pears responded to Warner's letter but he took up her offer of a visit to Frome Vauchurch to view the Crasques, as her diary of 10 May states: 'Peter Pears (with sister) came to see the Crasques. And in five minutes SAW them; and in fifteen had conceived a Craske exhibition for 1971. I liked him a great deal: he has the ardour of his singing'.⁶⁴⁸ The liking was reciprocal as Pears

⁶⁴⁶ STW-PL 20 May 1970, p.247.

⁶⁴⁷ Sylvia Townsend Warner, letter to Peter Pears, 19 Feb 1970. Britten-Pears Foundation Archive: 'Correspondence from Sylvia Townsend Warner to Peter Pears. (1970-71)'. All subsequent quotations from the letters from Warner to Pears were transcribed at this archive. Dates marked * were published in an article by Peter Tolhurst in the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 4 (2004), [33]-44.

⁶⁴⁸ STW-PD 10 May 1970. p. 344.

returned the following day 'and sat talking about Mozart productions, et.al. & singing folk-tunes mezza voce'.⁶⁴⁹

What Pears immediately appreciated is encapsulated by Julia Blackburn, a twenty-first century writer, describing her own first view of Craske's work:

I cannot begin to explain how much the pictures [and embroideries] impressed me. They were images of the sea and boats on the sea and the coast seen from a boat, but they were also images of life itself and its precariousness and how we struggle to keep afloat and to stay alive in the face of fear and uncertainty. All these fragile vessels: tossed by waves and sometimes almost engulfed by them, out there in the vastness of the ocean. Some were pinpointed by the angled glare of a lighthouse like the eye of God staring straight at them, others had smoke billowing from their funnels as they tried to plough a way through a storm. I had the sense at once that it was all true: the tilt of a boat in relation to the swell of the waves and the strength of the wind: the rigging, the billowing of the sails.⁶⁵⁰

Something of the juxtaposition of fragility and stubborn strength in adversity that is represented in Craske's work must have appealed to Valentine Ackland who 'discovered' him in Norfolk. She was the first buyer of his work and laid the foundation for what was to become Warner's collection of Craske art works and those of many of her friends. In recounting the story of Ackland's Crasques and Aldeburgh, Warner tells her friends Joy and Marchette Chute that

It was she who found Craske, going to his house [...] finding it full of pictures painted on any surface he could lay hands on, tea-trays, door-panels, Mrs Craske's pastry-board, and instantly recognised his quality, was his first buyer, his first promoter. So this will be a lovely and living memorial to her.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁹ STW-PD 11 May 1970. p. 344.

⁶⁵⁰ Julia Blackburn, *Threads: The Delicate Life of John Craske* (London; Jonathan Cape, 2015), p.11.

⁶⁵¹ STW-PL Letter to Joy and Marchette Chute, 20 May 1970. p. 247.

The immediate rapport that Warner had with Pears would ensure that she told him all of the details surrounding the acquisition of the Craskes offered to him for display at Aldeburgh, as well as the intended tribute to Ackland. After his visit to view the Craskes, Warner wrote to her twice within a week, once to declare her pleasure that the art-works would be going back to their home in East Anglia, and again to say how much she had enjoyed his visit. The first letter is undated but formally addressed to 'Dear Peter Pears'. The second addressed to 'Dear Peter' is akin to a conversation:

[...] Anise is the basis of that revolting French liqueur. You see, I have read your Artemesian Holiday. It delighted me: the cottage-loaf wife, and all that generous happiness. I have a passion for people being happy. One of the worst things about bereavement is that it makes one mistrust one's capacity for enjoying – which is impious ingratitude for the past. You were very restorative while we sat in the garden. I had hoped you might admire the Craskes but I had not foreseen that I would get a new friend by it. Please come again if you are anywhere nearby. There will always be coffee, and soup of the day, and a very welcoming

Sylvia⁶⁵²

This early letter to Pears shows considerable personal warmth towards him, a trait in Warner that is found in letters to other, more established, friends. It demonstrates that she had set great store by this developing friendship.

Warner's correspondence with Pears throughout the following year largely concerned her attempts at cajoling friends to lend their

⁶⁵²Warner letter to Peter Pears, 19 May 1970,* BB-PP. There is no mention in Christopher Headington's biography of Pears of a publication by him called *Artemesian Holiday*. Further research regarding this title has not provided any information. Pears's *Travel Diaries 1936-78* were published in 1995 by the Boydell Press in association with the Britten-Pears Library.

Craske works for the exhibition. Her excitement about this enterprise is shown in a letter to Pears of 10 June 1970: 'This is no moment to write to you, when you are in full Festival, but I am so excited with the latest Craske development that write I must or die of tight-lacing'.⁶⁵³ The piece in question was a large embroidery that Warner and Ackland had once owned. Warner concludes the letter with elan: 'There! I have cut my laces and feel much better. Love, Sylvia'.⁶⁵⁴

No surviving letters from Pears to Warner could be found from June 1970 until March 1971, when Warner replies to one of his letters:

Dear Peter,

Your letter and the brochure arrived this morning (six days in transit, God help us all!). You are extremely kind, and I most gratefully welcome your kindness . . .

I see with majestic pride that I am arranging the Craske Show. But though it would be bliss to spend days and days hanging, do you think June 1st to 4th perhaps a trifle lavish? On the other hand, I have great gifts for self-entertainment and could never feel eternity too long in East Anglia. Do with me as thou wilt. And I look forward to seeing you on May 10th.

Love from Sylvia.⁶⁵⁵

The brochure would have been the large, beautifully illustrated programme of events for the weeks of the Festival. In it Warner had written the information about Craske for the exhibition. She also wrote the bibliographical matter and introduction to the small Craske Exhibition catalogue and replies to what must have been Pears' compliments on it:

⁶⁵³ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 10 June 1970.* BB-PP.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ STW-UL letter to Peter Peers, 17 March 1971. BB-PP.

[...] It was a great pleasure to write the piece about Craske. I am glad you like it – and that I was able to get a word in about Laura Craske. She was a Gluck character. If it hadn't been for her we should not be writing to each other about a Craske exhibition.

Much love,
Sylvia.⁶⁵⁶

Warner's opening paragraph of that catalogue is immediately engaging:

When John Craske, aged thirty-nine, emerged for a few months between his recurrent comas and thought he would like to do a painting, he faced the problem of what to paint with, and what to paint on. Paper would cost money. Fortunately, his home supplied flat surfaces. He painted on door-panels, window-boards, box lids, trays, the back of Laura Craske's pastry-board. Not until he had exhausted these did he buy paper – cheap and regrettably flimsy, as the *James Edward* shows. For paints he used the only paints he knew: heeltaps of house paint, distemper, poster-paint . . .

But as to what he would paint, Craske was never in doubt. He would paint what he knew: ships, because he understood their behaviour, the North Sea whose behaviour he had experienced, the East Anglian coast [...] They were life and death matters to him, and he painted them as such, seriously and truthfully [...] He painted like a man giving witness under oath to a wild story.⁶⁵⁷

Forty-seven paintings and needle-works were displayed in the exhibition. Fourteen were owned by Warner and given, not loaned, to the Snape Maltings Art Centre. The number of works collected for this exhibition indicates the dedication with which Warner set about persuading her friends to loan their works; she and Ackland had been instrumental in persuading them to purchase Craske works in the first instance to help the artist financially. Warner's cousin Janet Machen loaned items, as did Joy Finzi, wife of the composer Gerald

⁶⁵⁶ STW-UL letter to Peter Peers, 20 March 1971. BB-PP.

⁶⁵⁷ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *John Craske, Fisherman and Artist 1881-1943*, Produced by Snape Maltings, 1971. BB-PP.

Finzi, and Bea Lubbock and Elizabeth Wade White among others. Warner also prised out works from The Shell Museum near Holt in Norfolk and The Minories, Colchester.

On the 1 of June 1971 Warner travelled to Aldeburgh to mount the Craske exhibition and to attend concerts during the opening days of the Festival as a guest of Pears: 'I should love to hear King Arthur on the 4th and both the Blytheburgh concerts on the 5th. No one travels the Winter Journey like you and Ben do'.⁶⁵⁸

Her journey by train to Aldeburgh brought back memories of happy times spent in Norfolk with Ackland and she arrived dispirited and unsure of herself in the novel situation of hanging an exhibition. Warner gives no information about this or whether she enjoyed the experience. She did, however, say in a letter to William Maxwell shortly after her return from Aldeburgh that Pears and Britten were kind and welcoming to her. During her stay, her diary entries are poignant with memory of past times and her enduring grief at the loss of Ackland. Climbing out of a bath she decries her 'clumsy body':

I thought of past love and pleasure and wished it dead, so I could escape it.

But all the wings of my spirit, love & beauty & the sea and music & art & all knowledge & enlightenment and sorrow & pleasure & joy ALL came to it via the body I was wishing dead [...] And even now my sight totters to my eyes to see the wind and the sunlight on the sea.⁶⁵⁹

It isn't known for how long Warner suffered this resurgence of intense grief; there must have been a hiatus at this time as she no

⁶⁵⁸ STW-UL letter to Peter Pears, 17 March 1971. BB-PP. Referencing *Die Winterreise* by Franz Schubert.

⁶⁵⁹ STW-PD 2 or 3 June 1971, p. 357.

longer had the task of gathering Crasques for display in Ackland's honour to occupy her, but she continued writing and writing to her friends. Where she could she made connections between them. One such connection was between Britten, Pears and Paul Nordoff. Warner had spoken to them of Nordoff's musical work with disabled children and thereafter Britten wrote the preface to Nordoff's book *Therapy in Music for Handicapped Children*. Warner writes to Pears that

Paul Nordoff was here a couple of weeks ago with tapes of his Therapy by Music sessions. He was very happy about Ben's preface to the book. So was I. So will a great many readers be, for the book is selling well. It — the preface — is as convincing as if Ben had written it as music. That is what I feel about Ben's music: I believe every note of it.

Much love to you both. Sylvia.⁶⁶⁰

The flow of letters between Dorset and Norfolk increased during 1972, the year before the onset of Britten's health problems. Pears visited Warner at least twice in that year, possibly in conjunction with singing engagements in the West Country, and Warner expresses her pleasure at the prospect of the first visit: 'I have put a ring of roses round July 13. It will be a great pleasure to see you. I hope you will stay the night and we can breakfast in the garden'.⁶⁶¹ This visit, of unknown length, was a comfort to Warner as her note to Pears a few days afterwards shows:

Come again! — endeared Peter — and don't let the next interval be such a long one.

⁶⁶⁰ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 3 November 1971.* BB-PP.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. 22 April 1972*.

You are the most comfortable of visitors, the most
reviving, the most reassuring. You make me feel as
stroked as the cats. I bless the fortune which brought you
here to look at the Craskes and began our friendship.
Come again!
With love, Sylvia.

ps. You are very good for me.⁶⁶²

Another visit to her by Pears was planned for October and her
letter in response to a lost one of Pears' shows her pleasure. It also
shows that she was composing again and it could be conjectured
that the shared love and knowledge of music between herself and
Pears reignited this old passion. For the first time she addresses
Pears as 'Dearest Peter':

This is delightful. I shall love to see you on the 13th,
better still if you will spend a night, or both nights here?
[...] I have been composing a piece for two violins.⁶⁶³

Warner follows this surprising information by sending him the
completed work with a note: 'Here is my boasted-of composition for
two violins. No need to return'.⁶⁶⁴

Britten's long-standing heart problems intensified in 1973 and
he was admitted to the National Heart Hospital in early May for major
heart surgery. He had been working intensely on his opera *Death in
Venice* which may have contributed to his failing health. Warner
says, effusively, to Pears in a letter that

I have been haunted all day by *Death in Venice*. I hope it
will haunt me for the rest of my life. It was like listening to
a stained glass window, but the glass pliable as a piece of

⁶⁶² Warner letter to Peter Pears, 19 July 1972.* [Tolhurst dates this 19 April 1972]. BB-PP.

⁶⁶³ STW-UL to Peter Pears, 9 October 1972.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. 23 November 1972. This music is not in the Britten-Pears Foundation Archive. However, there is a rusty paperclip mark on the note from Warner that suggests that it was there for some time. A search by an archivist did not find the music.

silk [...] Ben is an alchemist and a magician, and every note he says is true.⁶⁶⁵

She is concerned here solely with Britten's music, not the libretto that he set. As a librettist herself, it could be expected that Warner would comment on this aspect of the opera, but, as a friend, she appears anxious only to compliment where it was due in her letter to Pears. As Jan Montefiore notes regarding the content of letters, this may have been 'a model of discretion and kindness, not to mention ordinary good manners'.⁶⁶⁶ Warner may perhaps have had another opinion of the libretto of the opera but she has not recorded it in her diary.

Warner then did not hear from Pears for almost a year. During this time, mid-1973 until mid-1974, Britten had been ill, having had a post-operative stroke, and was unable to compose or conduct. How much detail Warner knew of Britten's health is not known. Her letter of 1 May 1974 shows that she was missing the correspondence with Pears:

Dearest Peter,

I have thought of you and thought of you, and each time with a sadder heart; one climbs up a steep hill called Hope, and from the summit looks down and recognises the prospect of descent stretching in front of you [...] The last news I heard of you was when I was at Boughrood, not long after you had stayed there, sitting in the sun considering emendations to *Death in Venice*. It has been a picture in my mind ever since.

I listened to your reading of the Sonnets. They could not have been more perfectly, more unaffectedly read [...]

As for me, I am well, and to my surprise for the last year have been writing story after story in a new way: my

⁶⁶⁵ STW-UL letter to Peter Pears, 23 June 1973. BB-PP.

⁶⁶⁶ Janet Montefiore, 'Something Understood: Formality and the Language of the Heart in the Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner', *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 9 (2009), 11.

posthumous manner. There is one in this week's *New Yorker* if you would care to know more.

'Your' room will always be ready for you. Your rooms, indeed, for Valentine's sitting room, with its views of the river and walls of books, would be yours if you wanted to be by yourself. And you know how happy I would be to see you.

True love to you both.
Sylvia.⁶⁶⁷

Pears responded to this letter rapidly; something of Warner's sadness and anxiety may have communicated itself to him. He writes:

Dearest Sylvia,

Thank you very much for your marvellous letter. It was dear of you to write and a great lift to my spirits.

Ben in fact is quite a little better, and I am hoping. We are today hearing the tapes of *Death in Venice* which we made last month. They are good, Ben is happy and finding the listening not too exhausting.

How good that you are writing. Will the *New Yorker* stories turn into a book? I do hope so. We cannot have too many STW books!

The nightingale's in full voice on the golf-links and, I never heard such blackbirds as this year. But oh! we need rain.

Much love to you, my dear, from Ben as well as Peter.⁶⁶⁸

Warner's joy at the news in Pears' letter is evident in her reply of 22 May 1974. She writes of Spring being the time to get better, that lilacs are in bloom and strawberries are imminent. Her hopes have been lifted. But it is the opening lines of this letter that would have resonated with Pears: 'The postman has just delivered your letter. He must have known how happy it would make me for he went

⁶⁶⁷ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 1 May 1974*. BB-PP.

⁶⁶⁸ Peter Pears, letter to Warner [undated but probably May 1974]. All six letters from Pears to Warner in this chapter are in the STWA, but were not in the Britten-Pears Foundation Archive. Copies have been sent by the Dorset History Centre, where the STWA is now housed, to complement the holdings of the Britten-Pears Foundation Archive.

away whistling (it should have been Dalla sua pace) [...] ⁶⁶⁹ This is Don Ottavio's aria from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* and scored for tenor voice. It is undoubtedly a part that Pears would have sung. The title of the aria is part of Warner's point as it references Britten's improving health and the subsequent raising of Pears's spirits. 'Dalla sua pace' roughly translates as 'On her peace of mind depends mine too', a loving reassurance for Pears.

Later in 1974, as the reference to the records of *Death in Venice* imply, Pears writes again to Warner:

Dearest Sylvia,

For months I have been hoping that the letter I would write to you would begin 'Ben & I are coming down to Dorset'. We had planned a two week excursion in March, and long ago last autumn I had hoped. But it is no good. Ben cannot do long journeys, and Kings Lynn was as far as we dared go in March. The operation of a year ago has not worked. It looked better for some time but now it has gone right back, and I do not know how long or short he will last.

I have much missed seeing you. As a correspondent I am wretched always and have not even thanked you, I believe, for last year's Crasques, which are still in London waiting to go or stay. I would loved to have seen you and I do hope you are well and that the dear river flows as usual past 'my' window.

We have just made records of *Death in Venice* for Decca at Snape, and Ben did just manage to attend some of the sessions but was y exhausted after. The records are good, I think. Now I am on *Owen Wingrave* at Covent Garden. I had so much pleasure when I was asked to read Shakespeare Sonnets for the BBC. What things! Dearest Sylvia – I send you much love, as does Ben. Peter. ⁶⁷⁰

Towards the end of 1974 Pears was singing in the United States and must have written to Warner from there as her reply to a

⁶⁶⁹ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 22 May 1974*. BB-PP.

⁶⁷⁰ Pears, letter to Warner. It is undated but the content indicates 1974 as Pears was performing in *Owen Wingrave* at Covent Garden on the 7 May 1974. STWA.

letter is ecstatic at the news that Britten was composing again. There is little correspondence of note between Warner and Pears in 1975; presumably this was a better time as Britten's health appears to have stabilized and Pears could expand his singing commitments. However, there must have been an underlying unease amongst his friends, as Warner shows in a letter to William Maxwell:

I understand your resentment at the death of people you love. I feel even angrier at the death of those who are cut short; or their frustration; like Ben Britten, who cannot write the flute part at the top of an orchestral score without having his arm lifted for him [...]⁶⁷¹

Britten's stroke of 1974 would have caused this disability, but this comment by Warner is the first time that it has been mentioned in any letter.

In a letter to Pears in January 1976 Warner's prose is playful, her mood positive. Her thoughts on how she would stage Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* are redolent of her tongue-in-cheek descriptions of the trials of an editor. A production she had been told about in letters from friends was being performed in the United States and praised as 'charming'. Warner's response to Pears was

I went about hissing 'kitsch' like a nest of serpents. When I produce the *Flute* I shall aim to go back to the original theatre: garret, rather dirty and reach-me-down with quantities of Woolworth jewellery for the Queen of the Night.⁶⁷²

Warner was obviously dismayed at the prospect of a 'charming' production, with its intimation of pretty costumes overlaying the power of Mozart's music. *The Magic Flute* is a complex and

⁶⁷¹ STW-PL 7 December 1975. p.283.

⁶⁷² Warner letter to Peter Pears, 21 January 1976*. BB-PP.

sophisticated opera; its libretto and staging reference the secret society of the Masons but its 'good' and 'bad' characters suggest a more rustic beginning in folklore which is what Warner suggests in her comment to Pears. The 'Woolworth' jewellery is a delicious snub to the imperious character of the Queen of the Night.

Shortly after Warner's letter to him, Pears wrote what must have been a surprising invitation to her

Dear Sylvia,

I have a little plan.

I would very much like to put on a programme next year '77 in the Festival about You. Would you allow it? And will you think slowly what it should be? Some poems, a story, some songs – the Ireland ones or others? Some of the music you like, a motet or a madrigal?

It would be a lovely occasion. Do think it over, dear Sylvia.

Much love,
Peter.⁶⁷³

Warner's response on the 1 March is eloquent and appreciative of the offer. She relates her joy to the signs of Spring and knows immediately that she would want Mozart's music as part of the programme:

Dear Peter,

Your letter came this morning; and with it all the crocuses opened and bees hurried into the crocuses. It is a lovely and glorious plan. I am primed up with Majestic Pride. Thank you very much for thinking of it.

I will think slowly about what it could be. But I know instantly one thing I would like: the Fire and Water music in the Magic Flute. I took myself to hear the Flute in 1912 [...] [and] I was Mozart's for life. If I heard it on a tin whistle and a dustpan lid I would be on my knees.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷³ Pears, letter to Warner [undated but possibly late February 1976]. STWA.

⁶⁷⁴ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 1 March 1976. * BB-PP.

However, there is here another instance of what Jan Montefiore terms the 'discrepancy'⁶⁷⁵ between what Warner writes to friends and what she records of her feelings in her diary. The joy of the reply to Pears is not evident in her diary entry for that date. Her enduring grief at Ackland's loss is expressed in bleak terms qualifying — she thinks that she may be dead by then — her appearance of warmth and happiness at the proposed event: 'A letter from Peter Pears about an S.T.W. day at Aldeburgh. My first dishevellment was abated when I realised it would be 1977, & I might well be dead by then'.⁶⁷⁶ She did, however, note the crocuses and the bees in her diary. Her reply to Pears is effusively well-mannered, it is her social self, and in that guise she *is* grateful for his kindness in wanting to honour her, her writing and her influence on musicians who had set her poetry to music.

Between letters discussing his recitals on the radio and inviting him to visit: 'I wish you would be glad to come here later on. Daffodils? Strawberries? A seasonal soup? I often talk to you in my mind. Give my love to Ben and yourself. Sylvia',⁶⁷⁷ Warner had her last *Kingdom of Elfin* story, 'The Duke of Orkney' accepted by the *New Yorker* and survived floods in her river valley in Frome Vauchurch.

In June she wrote to Pears about Britten having received the honour of becoming Baron Britten of Aldeburgh. She also comments that Paul Nordoff had telephoned her to say how happy he had been

⁶⁷⁵ Jan Montefiore, 'Something Understood', p.10.

⁶⁷⁶ STW-PD 1 March 1976, p. 373.

⁶⁷⁷ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 10 February 1976.* BB-PP.

when visiting Britten and Pears and that it had 're-made him';⁶⁷⁸ the connection initially fostered by Warner had continued, seemingly to the benefit of all.

Warner began to plan the content of her tribute day at Aldeburgh, which, like the time-consuming work assembling Craske artefacts for the 1971 show, would have been a distraction from her grief. She applies the same resolution to choosing music, poems and a story:

About one thing I am categorical. You must read my poems, and a story if you please. I have listened to you reading poetry on the 3rd [programme], and I realised the quality of poetry read with breath control instead of the usual puff-and-pant. I think you have King Duffus. Shall I send you a few more recent ones? Because of breath control, I would like to hear you read the one in KD about the river full of trees – You would make that river flow.⁶⁷⁹

The poem is untitled:

There is a mountain's-load of trees in the water
From bank to bank the river is brimmed with trees.
Perhaps because of the smooth brushwork of the water
They do not seem to be this year's trees.
The river has no room for the shape of the mountain.
Beneath that glass runs no warrant of place or time.
It is plumed with the trees of no particular mountain
And green with a summer of no time.

This passing summer writes no word on the river
Except where a few small apples bob on the tide,
Cast off by some wilding further up the river
And carried onward by the tide.⁶⁸⁰

Warner's letter continues:

[...] There is a volume of Elfin stories due out early next year and I will send you a copy. One about the power of

⁶⁷⁸ STW-UL letter to Peter Pears, 12 June 1976. BB-PP.

⁶⁷⁹ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 14 August 1976.* BB-PP.

⁶⁸⁰ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 348.

choral singing – it moved a Welsh mountain – might be suitable.

This story is 'Visitors to a Castle' and in it Warner is thinking of the power of music:

The Court Poet's nephew recommended singing, 'there is nothing so powerful as singing. Everyone knows this with an inward certainty' [...] He would compose a special Removal Song, to be sung without accompaniment and of narrow compass so that all could join in it.

At sundown precisely, they met to sing. Not a cough was heard among them [...] At first they sang in unison. Then they sang in thirds. As the power of the song took hold of them, they threw in some spontaneous descants. When they realised that the song could be sung in canon, like Three Blind Mice and Tallis's Evening Hymn, their joy knew no bounds. They sang. They sang. The poet's nephew, singing himself and conducting with both hands, led them from an ample *forte* to a rich *fortissimo* and tapered them down to a *pianissimo espressivo* and roused them again and again calmed them. Each sang, and at the same time felt the anonymous ardour of those singing with him [...] Glorified and exhausted by a total experience [...] [they] climbed into their ash trees and slept till well past sunrise.⁶⁸¹

Here Warner's writing about the power of music is redolent of the passage in *The Corner That Held Them* that I discussed in chapter 5.

Her letter continues:

I would like to hear the Alan Bush cycle in real life. I only heard it by sight. I am not overly attached to the J. Ireland settings. Would it be possible to have the second and fourth of Paul Nordoff's *Lost Summer*? The other two didn't work out with a piano accompaniment very satisfactorily. Too many notes, like wasps around the sugar. And please, one or two madrigals. I can never hear Wilbye often enough. And will you sing?

⁶⁸¹ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Visitors to a Castle', *Kingdoms of Elfin* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 94-5. Originally published by Chatto & Windus, 1977.

It is unclear if Warner received many letters from Pears during the Summer and Autumn of 1976. The letter that she did receive from Pears in late November 1976 held the news that Britten was dying:

Dearest Sylvia,

I should have written long since. Forgive me – but I am in touch with you through the New Yorker anyway!

I am writing this at Ben's bedside. He is slowly sinking into eternity.

In your letter you wrote of Paul Nordoff's settings of your poems. I do not know them. Are they available in print? If you have them, could you send the ones you like to me, and I will have them photographed and return them. I will send copies to Kenneth Bowen and Alan Bush (if you think they can do them).

Fire and Water Music will only be heard, I fear, through loud speakers, but it can be made to sound good. Whose performance do you prefer? Your own, of course, but, like mine, it is not available!

Much love dearest Sylvia.

Peter⁶⁸²

Warner's response is intimate and shares Pears' undoubted desolation at Britten's imminent death; it would have been a painful reminder of Ackland's last days and her own sense of helplessness:

Dearest Peter,

My mind often pauses to sit with you at Ben's bedside. His death after these years of hope and disappointment is like a long-prepared enharmonic modulation. He will pass from making music to being music⁶⁸³; though it must wring your heart – it does mine – to think of the music he will carry with him.

About Paul Nordoff [...] he is in a German hospital, dying. I had a leave-taking letter from him a fortnight ago. It is so long since he had a settled place that I don't know where to seek his manuscripts. The two songs I had in mind are in *Lost Summer*, voice and orchestra [...] All I have here is

⁶⁸² Pears, letter to Warner [undated but probably towards the end of November 1976]. STWA.

⁶⁸³ Here Warner uses a phrase of Vaughan Williams's who, when asked by Warner what he would be in his next incarnation said 'Music. But in that world I shan't be doing it, I shall be being it'. STW-PD 13 August 1958, p. 249.

a setting, voice and piano, of a poem of mine called 'The Arrival' [from *Time Importuned*]. This I will send tomorrow. The 'Fire and Water Music' would be ideal loud-speakered. It belongs to disembodiment [...] It is strange to be planning for such a benefit ahead.

With my love,
Sylvia.⁶⁸⁴

The Arrival

When I set out I did not know
Whether an ash tree or an elm
With branches waving slow
And a soft summer voice would overwhelm
My questing thoughts with the certainty of arrival;

But now on the dusky lawn I stand
And neither ash nor elm tree greet:
A deeper plumage is fanned,
The air wanders enchanted with one sweet,
And in the lime tree a nightingale is singing.⁶⁸⁵

Warner heard of Britten's death on the radio on the morning of 4 December 1976 and wrote to Pears immediately:

Dearest Peter,

I have just heard the announcement on the radio. It came to my mind that a thousand hearers must be thinking of you with compassion, and with gratitude for all you have done in making Ben's music known to them. It was the voice of many waters on this cold silent morning.
Love, Sylvia.⁶⁸⁶

Nordoff was to die the following January in Germany. Warner would have felt the loss of these friends keenly; she 'wrenched her vitals'⁶⁸⁷ writing an obituary for Nordoff for *The Times*. Later Pears writes in reply to Warner's last letter:

Dearest Sylvia,

Thank you for your very sweet note about Ben. He stopped breathing gently, not without discomfort in those last days, with my hand in his.

⁶⁸⁴ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 27 November 1976.* BB-PP.

⁶⁸⁵ Warner, *New Collected Poems*, p. 89. First published in *Time Importuned*, 1928.

⁶⁸⁶ STW-UL letter to Peter Pears, 7 December 1976. BB-PP.

⁶⁸⁷ STW-PD 19 January 1977, p. 375.

I am coming to Wessex on Mon 7th to my sister in Sherborne and Osian and I do a concert there on Tues 8th, and in Salisbury on the 9th, thence, I fear, to London. Could I aim at seeing you in the middle of the day of the 7th? – and I must also see Reynolds that day.

I have *King Duffus*, *Opus 7* and *Boxwood*, but not your other poems. I have just ordered the new book. How lovely!

Much love, Peter

Ps. Any luck with Paul Nordoff's songs?⁶⁸⁸

Pears did visit Warner on the 7 February 1977; it was the first time she had seen him since Britten's death. Although Pears had other visits to make that day, his sister's borrowed car broke down and he spent the entire afternoon with Warner, who writes about the visit to William Maxwell:

I have spent today with Peter Pears: that is to say, he came to lunch [...]

We discussed the problem of going on living after one has been cut in half. He has found his solution in the harp. There can never be another accompanist like Ben; and pianist after pianist has played beautifully in his pianist's compartment, and nothing came of it; but Osian Ellis the harpist & he get along very nicely, and Ravel's songs, especially *Sainte*, bloom on harpstrings. I suggested they might try Moore's Irish melodies. It was one of my good ideas. He looks so gaunt, so solitary, that except for his height and his speaking voice I think I could not have recognized him.⁶⁸⁹

Warner does not mention in her diary that she attended either of Pears' recitals in Sherborne or Salisbury.

Warner's musical choices for her tribute day and the difficulties that arose with the lack of orchestration – there was to be a piano accompaniment only – and the location of music, led to the programme being radically different from that originally envisioned.

⁶⁸⁸ Pears, letter to Warner [undated but probably the end of January 1977]. STWA.

⁶⁸⁹ STW-PL, 7 February 1977. pp. 293-4.

There was no Mozart 'Fire & Water Music', no Wilbye madrigal and no music of Britten's. Warner's preferred story, 'Visitors to a Castle', which referenced her work in Early Music was dropped in favour of what Pears' called 'the rather wicked story'⁶⁹⁰ 'The Cold' from *The Museum of Cheats*. And she did have to listen to the John Ireland works that she didn't care for. These changes must have occurred during the Spring of 1977 when Pears was in the first trials of grief; Warner would have wanted to make the arrangements as easy as possible for him. The programme for the 'Tribute to Sylvia Townsend Warner' on 21 June 1977 in the Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh was as follows:

Poems from *Time Importuned* (1928)
The Espalier (1925) and *King Duffus* (1968)

Four songs:

The Arrival	Paul Nordoff (1909-1977)
The Maiden	Paul Nordoff
The Soldier's Return	John Ireland (1879-1962)
The Scapegoat	John Ireland

Short Story: 'The Cold' (from the *Museum of Cheats*, 1947)

Virelai and Rondeau for Two Voices	Guillaume de Machaut (1300- 1377)
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Recent Poems	
Song Cycle: 'The Freight of Harvest'	Alan Bush (Born 1900)
Two Poems	

The 'Recent Poems' were, I think, chosen by Pears who says of them: 'She had written these in the last few years and I think they are very fine, characteristic of her late work, worthy of a good musician and a wise woman'.⁶⁹¹ The poems were: 'Azrael', 'Three Poems', 'Dorset Endearments', 'Ballad Story', 'Graveyard in Norfolk', 'Earl

⁶⁹⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Twelve Poems*, preface Sir Peter Pears (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), p.8.

⁶⁹¹ Warner, *Twelve Poems*, p.8.

Cassilis's Lady', 'December 31st St. Silvester', 'In April', 'Gloriana Dying' and 'A Journey by Night'. These poems were read again by Pears in a BBC programme following Warner's death in 1978.



Warner and Pears at Aldeburgh, 21 June 1977. © Britten-Pears Foundation

During the Festival, the Craske embroideries and paintings gifted by Warner were displayed in the South Bar of Snape Maltings. The programme note reads: 'It seems appropriate to show these remarkable works again at this Festival to mark the visit of Sylvia Townsend Warner'.⁶⁹² Pears had also partnered Warner's tribute given in the late morning, with an evening performance of music solely by Britten with the mezzo-soprano Janet Baker singing; there could have been no greater affirmation of their friendship than this.

⁶⁹² Programme of the 30th Aldeburgh Festival of Music and Arts, 10 – 26 June 1977, p. 57. Tribute to Warner, p. 39.

Warner was driven to Suffolk for her tribute day by her friend and sometime carer Antonia von Trauttmansdorff and they returned to Dorset by a marvellously circuitous journey via Ely Cathedral, lunching in a cornfield. Surprisingly, Warner does not write of this special day in her diary; she does, however, give information in two letters, one to David Garnett immediately after her return from the Festival, the other to William Maxwell a little later, describing her pleasure at Pears' reading of her poetry:

I think I told you I was going to Aldburgh [...] Peter Pears read a number of my poems so beautifully that I forgot to be constrained and sat enjoying them [...] The finest part of the programme was when he and t'other tenor (who was there to sing various settings of me) leaped back over six centuries and sang two *a capella* pieces by Machaut.⁶⁹³

Letters between Warner and Pears became less frequent, but Warner, still firmly attached to her musical life-line, the radio, writes to Pears about a recital of his that had been broadcast: 'Just to say what rapture it was to hear you in those Canticles – your voice as pliable and tenacious as the bindweed in my garden'.⁶⁹⁴

But Warner's health had begun to fail. She writes to Pears in musical terms about it: 'I have been ill, and am an aged rubbish heap. I am tremolando as if Vivaldi had composed me, and fall over at a touch'.⁶⁹⁵ She was editing the letters between herself and Ackland – for what was much later to become the publication */// Stand by You* – and steeped herself in memories of the past. The radio became more and more of a life-line, and she records that

⁶⁹³ STW-PD 13 July 1977, pp. 297-8.

⁶⁹⁴ STW-UL letter to Pears, 3 October 1977. BB-PP.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. 25 January 1977. Tremolando, meaning to 'tremble' or 'quiver'.

'Snow blocks the northern roads, the wind is spiked with it. But the late Schubert 4th [Symphony] looked after me. It is remarkable how his music encompasses one, its youth and outgoing'.⁶⁹⁶

Warner became increasingly frail, falling frequently. On the 3 March 1978 she wrote a final letter to Pears:

Dear Peter,

This may be my last letter. I want to send you my love and my thanks for all the beauty that your music has meant to me.

And keep an eye on the Crasques.

I've just been told that your singing of *Die schöne Müllerin* with Murray Perraia [sic] accompanying was beautiful, deeply felt and a hymn to Ben. Sing on my darling.

My love, Sylvia⁶⁹⁷

Pears' moving response speaks of love and deep friendship, something that Warner inspired in very many people:

Dearest Sylvia,

Your letter was precious. I love you and you will go on forever. As Ben does with his eternal spring-like music so you with your fastidious, joyful words. I will go on singing as long as I can for you and Ben.

With my devoted love, Peter.⁶⁹⁸

Warner died on the 1 May 1978.

Pears captured the essence of Warner's writing in his parting letter; her carefully chosen words *do* give extraordinary life and exuberance to her written works. And for those who know her life in music, it is the love shown to her by her fellow musicians who knew that she understood their world that reveal another aspect of this exceptional woman.

⁶⁹⁶ STW-UL letter to Pears 21 November 1977.

⁶⁹⁷ Warner letter to Peter Pears, 30 March 1978.* Reproduced in the Preface written by Peter Pears to *Twelve Poems*, p. 9.

⁶⁹⁸ Pears, undated letter to Warner, STWA.

Conclusion

Coda

Warner is known today for her diverse literary writing. The existence of music within it has not yet been comprehensively studied and integrated into current academic thought which, until now, has concentrated on lesbianism and politics in Warner's life.

This thesis has brought together the findings of hitherto unknown aspects of Warner's life and the importance of music to her. Her unusual upbringing, without formal education, at Harrow School, together with the teaching and influence of her father and Percy Buck, gave her an informal structure and freedom in which to develop her writing skills and her musical ability. This ability, together with her intimate relationship with Buck who knew the leading musicians of the day, and her sharp intellect, enabled her to quickly master the difficulties of transposing Tudor church music and to become the most knowledgeable Editor for the Carnegie UK Trust project.

Music was at the centre of Warner's London life between 1917 and 1930, both professionally and personally. She went to concerts frequently and had contact with the professional musicians at the Royal College of Music where Buck was well-known. But earning a modest living in musicology was not enough intellectual stimuli for Warner when the skill required for researching and transposing music gave way to the tedium of proof-checking for publication. The poetry and prose she had been writing concurrently with her work on

the *Tudor Church Music* volumes was shown to David Garnett by her friend Stephen Tomlin (Warner never appeared to promote either her musical ability or her writing) and then to Charles Prentice of Chatto & Windus; Warner's career as a published literary writer had begun. Her writing on musicological subjects, and her own musicianship, were now harnessed to literary ends, with music and sound evident in her prose and poetry. Her knowledge of music and love of sound in nature continued to be noticeable elements in her writing throughout her life.

Literature came to predominate over a life previously immersed in music when Warner's long relationship with Buck ended in 1930, shortly after she had fallen in love with Valentine Ackland. This major fracture in her musical life was exacerbated by Ackland's dislike of concerts and their subsequent move to rural Dorset. From then onward, the wireless became Warner's chief source of music and was vital to her until her death.

Friends were important to Warner who was a peerless letter-writer to them. She wrote with wit, warmth and humour, often using musical references or musical language, particularly to musicians such as Paul Nordoff and Peter Pears. Janet Stone, cousin to Pears, introduced Warner to her literary, artistic and musical friends, the composer Gerald Finzi and the artist John Nash for example, and so widened Warner's cultural circle – something that was lacking in her life with Ackland. It is not surprising, therefore, that in middle-age Warner collaborated with friends on musical and other projects. From

her joyful, one could say exuberant, letters about the *Sea Change* libretto to Paul Nordoff, to the immediate writing of a requested Communist-inspired poem for the composer Alan Bush to have set to music, Warner enjoyed collaboration with others. If they were not known to her initially, Peter Pears for example, they very quickly became her friends. Her friendship with Pears, made in old age, is perhaps the most poignant. The visceral pain of shared loss coloured this friendship and Pears was a great support to Warner in her final years, as she had been to him throughout Britten's long illness.

From her early years in Harrow to the end of her long life, I have shown in this thesis how music and sounds in all their forms were a passion of Warner's. They enlivened and often substantiated her prose and, I believe, were vital to her personal well-being. The results of the original research undertaken for this thesis presents to the academic community another, hitherto unexplored area of Warner's life, and one which I have shown had immense importance to her.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER: A MUSICAL LIFE

Abbreviations

BB – PP	Britten-Pears Archive, Aldeburgh, Suffolk.
CUKT	Carnegie (UK) Trust Archive, National Archive of Scotland, Edinburgh.
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography. Online version
NGD	New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2001.
OCM	Oxford Companion to Music, 2002.
OUP Archive	Oxford University Press Archive, Oxford.
STWA	Sylvia Townsend Warner – Ackland Archive Dorchester.
STW - UL	Unpublished letters, Warner – Ackland Archive Dorchester History Centre, Dorchester.
STW - PL	Published letters: <i>The Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner</i> , ed. by William Maxwell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982).
STW - UD	Unpublished diaries, Warner – Ackland Archive Dorchester History Centre, Dorchester.
STW - PD	Published diaries: <i>The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner</i> , ed. Claire Harman (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994).

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER: A MUSICAL LIFE

Appendices: 1 - 3

1 Warner's Manuscript Music in the Sylvia Townsend Warner Archive

4 pages of Mss music & words in Warner's hand entitled '*The Lonely Traveller*', Stephen Tomlin & Warner, 1921.

30 pages of Mss music in Warner's hand entitled '*Memorial – Rhapsody for Solo Voice and String Quartet 1918-1920*'.

3 double sheets of music (incomplete?) '*They bear him to his resting place*', a work for piano and solo voice. This is possibly a draft for '*She at His Funeral*', with words by Thomas Hardy, music by Warner.

Mss music in Warner's hand, '*Dum transisset*', for 6 voices (2 soprano; alto, 2 tenor and bass) in Latin.

1 page Mss music '*Song for Two Voices*'.

6 lines Mss music '*Still in our ears, Andromache complains*'.

Mss music, not Warner's hand, but her initials, at top '*Walking & Singing at Night*'.

2 Clive Robbins: Email, 27 January 2010

27 January 2010

Dear Lynn,

Thank you for your letter. I read it with much interest, and only regret that I am not able to help you more than I can. But here goes:

'Disappointments at Columbia' of course concerns the opera 'The Sea Change.' Paul never spoke of that work to me. I think he had in sense, put it behind him, particularly as he was now so caught up in his new all-engrossing, fascinating and satisfying musical life. I know no more than can be delved from the letters, There is a piano score which contains some indications for orchestra parts, but no complete orchestral score. I presume you know the reference to The Sea Change in William Maxwell's letters to Sylvia, The Element of Lavishness, pages 312 and 315

Lost Summer: Yes, there is an orchestral score to that, and a copy is in the Dorchester Archive.

Mr. Fortune: Sorry to tell you that an orchestral score was never developed; there is only the piano score. Paul played and sang some parts of the opera to me in 1959, too long ago for me to remember except the ardor with which sang, That opera was very close to his heart, and he told me how thrilling it was for him to work over the libretto with Sylvia, I probably should have written 'rewritten' as the libretto was originally by Walter Prude in those early pre WWII days. How much of the libretto as it appears in the piano score in Dorchester is by Sylvia I have absolutely no way of knowing. There are no known recordings of any part of Mr. Fortune.

I understand your 'private passion' to have Sylvia's operas performed. I have carried a similar passion for fifty years with regard to Paul's pre-music therapy compositions.

About the best news I can give you is that a dear music therapy colleague of mine in Windsor, Canada, Professor Colin Lee, is working to arrange a concert of Paul's music that will include 'Lost Summer.' I'll keep you informed.

Let's keep in touch. A meeting in England in April may be possible.

Best wishes,

Clive

3 Littleton Collection, List with Bibliographical Details

List of Books in the Littleton
Collection of the University
of London Library

- 26 A., A. Alla Maestà di Giorgio R^e della Gran Britagna,
etc. [Six cantatas and six lessons for viola d'amore,
with a dedication to George I. signed A.A., i.e.
Attilio Ariosti.] London, 1728.
- ANIMUCCIA (Giovanni). Joannis Animuciaie magistri
sacrosanctae basilicae vaticanae Missarum liber primus.
Rome, 1567. [145]
- 12 BIBLE. Psalms. Bassus (Medius-Tenor-Contra Tenor) of the
whole psalmes in foure partes. John Day: London, 1565. [120]
4 vols.
- 13 BIBLE. Psalms. The Whole booke of Psalmes...With apt
notes to syng them withall. John Day: London, 1565. [184]
- 21 BIBLE. Psalms. The Whole booke of Psalmes: with the
hymnes evangelicall and songs spirituall...Newly
corrected and enlarged by T. Rauenscroft. [45]
London, 1621.
- 23 BIBLE. Psalms. Choice psalmes put into musick for
three voices. Composed by Henry and William Lawes.
J.Young: London, 1648. 4 vols. in 1. [46] [107]
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