



## Yorkshire & North East Branch Newsletter No 22 - July 2022

Edited by Paul Kampen -

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### Branch Chairman's message

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to our new edition of the Newsletter, for which we are grateful to our indefatigable Editor, Paul Kampen.

By the time you receive this, we will have held five excellent meetings at our home, The Bar Convent, York: by Howard Gregg on 'Elgar's Part Songs', Stuart Freed on 'Elgar and the Critical Ear', Wendy Hill on 'Elgar's Early Years', Sarah Lister on 'Elgar and Settle' and Julian Rushton on 'Elgar's *Falstaff*'.

After our summer break we once again welcome Daniel Grimley on the Cello Concertos by Elgar and Delius, both of which were performed by Beatrice Harrison.

We look forward to welcoming you to these and subsequent meetings.

### David Young

#### David Lloyd-Jones

Elgar Society members will be saddened by the death, on June 9th, of David Lloyd-Jones, Founder Artistic Director of Opera North, who was very much involved with the society's activities. Branch members will remember the talk which he gave at the Bar Convent in York some seven or eight years ago. My first contact with David was circa 1975 when he conducted two performances of Rachmaninov's one-act opera *Francesca da Rimini* with what was then the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra in the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and at the Chester Festival. One scene of this opera is punctuated by some rather strange off-stage horn calls and I was engaged to play these alongside one of the orchestra's regular players. DL-J (as we always called him) not only rehearsed and conducted the performances but had translated the libretto into English from Russian.

In 1977 we heard that, rather than a revival of the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra which had been rumoured for years, Leeds was to get its own full-time opera company; I had done a short stint in the D'Oyly Carte company and was spending a good deal of my time playing for Scottish Opera which then employed freelance orchestras; I also knew the Leeds Grand Theatre well having played for many shows there in the days when TMA (Theatre Managers Association) theatres had to book professional orchestras when hired out to amateur societies due to their agreements with the Musicians Union. Pit playing thus appealed to me and I answered the advert for players for the new orchestra being formed – being auditioned initially in the Grand Hall of the theatre by DL-J and by the late Ian Killik; a second audition, at the Coliseum Theatre in London, followed and I was offered, and accepted, a job to start in October 1978.

One thing must always be stressed: David was a very easy man to work for; he was not prone to the tantrums and excesses of so many conductors of his and earlier generations. Yes, he could show irritation, but it was always because the job in hand was not going as it should – it was never personal. David approached his work with humour which he

could also use to deflect outbursts from others. He was also quite happy to queue with everybody else for his drink at the coffee break and would always chat to whomever he happened to be standing next to.

As is to be expected, the music of Elgar was prominent in our work outside the opera pit. Memorable were three performances of the Violin Concerto given on three consecutive evenings with Nigel Kennedy as soloist. It was amazing how these such different characters - the English gentleman and the 'bovver boy' - bonded with their shared love of Elgar. And Kennedy eschewed the normal handshake with the conductor at the end - preferring a more robust greeting which involved a palm and a finger among other things. David seemed embarrassed by that but, years later, I heard him relating this anecdote with a considerable amount of relish.



**David Lloyd-Jones rehearses the English Northern Philharmonia (Orchestra of Opera North) in Elgar's 1st Symphony. Leeds Town Hall 1982.**

We also recorded the music of Elgar including the *Froissart* Overture on a disc of Victorian Overtures (Hyperion CDA66515) - a collection of variable quality music but all of interest. Possibly David's greatest testament was our recording of *Falstaff* (Naxos 8.553879) which was adjudged by the BBC Radio 3 'Building a Library' of

8th October 2016 to be their recommendation above those of world famous orchestras and conductors. This was recorded in the Great Hall of the University of Leeds over two sessions - one on a Sunday evening and the other the following morning before we commenced that week's opera duties. At the time ferocious winds were blowing outside and there were fears that there would be 'noises off' on the completed CD. Thanks to the skills of the engineers this was not the case.

David was a man possessing a rare combination of breadth and depth of knowledge; not only of the Russian repertoire and opera generally, but of English music including Gilbert and Sullivan; we performed the latter's *The Gondoliers* from a critical edition which he prepared, and I believe that it was the first such of a G&S operetta.

Shortly after David's death I played in a gig alongside several ex-colleagues from Opera North, one of whom remarked 'he had a lot to give, and he certainly gave it!' I could not put it better myself.

**Paul Kampen - Branch Committee member**

## Reminiscences of David Lloyd-Jones

I was saddened to hear of David's passing, but I had been informed that he was not well these last few months.

I first met David in 1976/7 while working with Welsh National Opera where I was engaged as second clarinet to make up three players for performances of Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*, in a new production by the company and also new translation made by DL-J, as he was fondly known!

He realised that I was commuting from my London home where he was living and working at the English National Opera at the London Coliseum, as assistant to Charles Mackerras, and so, asked if I could offer him lifts back there after rehearsals or performances, which I was happy to do, from Cardiff or wherever we were on tour. I would also drop him off at Reading station to enable him to return to his Guildford home. As an aside, he never carried any cash with him, but always sought me out next time in the band-room in the theatre in order to contribute to his share of the lift!

As you can imagine, we had many interesting conversations regarding our mutual interest in opera, my career thus far as I worked in different opera companies and his work in this field of music. Clearly, he was a man totally immersed in opera, Russian and English music and was also beginning to be involved in the creation of a new opera company to be based in Leeds.

In my student days in Manchester in the 1960s, there had been much conversation about building a new opera house there as a second home for Covent Garden and a Manchester-based opera company. The result was a new home, now demolished, on vacant land on Oxford Road, with the BBC now based at Media City in Salford Quays. So, to hear conversations about a Leeds-based opera company was joy to my ears as a Leeds district-born person!

Subsequently, a businessman, Mr. Slatter from Norwest-Holst, purchased the Manchester Palace theatre in order to stop its closure, and made it into a trust, as he also acquired some of the Bridgewater estate which allowed him to develop the theatre into accommodating opera companies to perform there; a second home for Covent Garden, and, even D'Oyly Carte were suggested. Indeed, Covent Garden did present two seasons of operas there, but only once with their own orchestra, the second, with the Hallé for accompaniment. Mr Slatter did the same to also save the Opera House there.

David invited me to consider applying to work in this new company and all that this would entail: opera, oratorio, symphonic, chamber music performances along with community and education engagements in the city, district, region and nation.

The idea of the company was to replace the ENO/Sadler's Wells opera companies' two-company summer tours and have an English opera company in the provinces to match Welsh and Scottish opera companies and to have productions taken to places that had never before received visits from a national company: Barnsley, Billingham, Darlington, Doncaster and the like. The company was to be a 'daughter' company of the English National Opera and named English National Opera North (ENON).

David was the key person in creating this company, one with which fellow London freelance musicians warned me against accepting any position as 'it would not last'! How wrong they were: 44 years on with an international reputation for everything that it does. He auditioned some of the 850 applicants for a 54-piece orchestra (named English Northern Philharmonia).

Sadly, the day I auditioned, he was not available, and was initially rejected only to be personally re-invited by David, some months later, to re-audition. This I did and was successfully offered the second clarinet position. The position was offering a salary considerably lower than my freelance and teaching fees, but, the offer of security in a full-time position and in my home city, was hard to decline!

David's concept for the orchestra was to engage younger players, perhaps in their first position and more 'seasoned players' like myself and a number of older players with great London orchestral experience as well as players from 'the north'! He held the same view for the 40-piece chorus. Soloists were on contract under the ENO, which was not ideal, as it meant they had to perform operas that were not necessarily suitable for their voice.

The first notes the orchestra ever played were from the overture, *Die Meistersinger* in the Leeds City Varieties, as the then owners allowed free use wanting to support the company. November 15th 1978 was the Leeds Grand Theatre Centenary and the opening night with *Samson and Delilah* by Saint-Saens and a live broadcast receiving a lengthy standing ovation for all that had been achieved in such a short time, with many thanks to David.

However, two years later, the company broke away from its parent company and became simply, Opera North, and eventually the orchestra dropped its first name for the Orchestra of Opera North.

For a number of years, he and his wife resided in an apartment at Harewood House, home of opera enthusiast, Lord Harewood, who was President of Opera North until his demise.

David's tenure lasted for eleven years, during ten of which I was a full-time member (I continued in a freelance position for a further twelve years), where he achieved so much as he conducted many of the performances. In the first seasons we would perform up to twelve operas and many orchestral concerts. He brought to the company his skill, expertise and knowledge as well as his enthusiasm, and I find it amazing that he has never received public recognition for all that he has done for music, and opera in particular, for this country.

His conducting career developed further both here and abroad, through live concerts and recordings, talks and educational work. His passing is a sad loss to the profession. His wife, Carol died some four years ago.

## Howard Rogerson

*(This article was written for the Light Music Society and is reproduced here with permission. Howard is a conductor, clarinetist, teacher and Musical Director of the Promenade Concert Orchestra of Morecambe. In May of 2023 he will give us a talk on 'Elgar in Morecambe')*

## David Loyd-Jones

I didn't meet David Lloyd-Jones until I came to Leeds in the early 80s, when one of my priorities was to discover Opera North. I heard of him earlier, as a younger expert on Russian music (the elders I have in mind were university teachers). I appreciated his inclusion of Russian repertoire and came to enjoy his company and hospitality, in his flat at Harewood House – reaching it involved processing past a flock of stuffed birds in the Earl's basement – and in Horsforth, where he introduced me to another fine conductor, Alexander Gibson.

It was soon clear that we shared interests in Berlioz, and British music from Elgar to Walton. He recorded a great deal of the latter repertoire – Holst, Walton, Lambert, and much more. He was also an outstanding editor, and I regret not having lured him into preparing something for *Musica Britannica*. He contributed to scholarly editions of Walton, Vaughan Williams, and Berlioz, and his edition of *The Gondoliers* was the first ever critical edition of G&S.

He and I sat round a board-room table at meeting to discuss reviving the Elgar Complete Edition. Novello's had given up after reissuing works they owned; Elgar's principal publishers apparently didn't understand the word 'complete'. David said we could raise a bit of cash by bringing out the short orchestral works, with parts for hire. Under my breath I muttered 'you've got yourself a job'; and after a misunderstanding (they thought I had offered to undertake this complex task), ECE Series IV Vol. 23 duly appeared in 2015, followed by a recording with the BBC Concert Orchestra (Dutton Epoch CDLX 7354). The published score is of Falstaffian proportions – appropriately, as David's 1996 recording of *Falstaff* (Naxos 8.553879, with *Elegy* and *The Sanguine Fan*), with the English Northern Philharmonia (now the Orchestra of Opera North) was rated the best recording by BBC Radio 3's 'Building a Library'.

David kindly gave me his edition of Walton's First Symphony, and we swapped spare copies of our Berlioz editions – mine the early choral works, his *L'Enfance du Christ* (I got the better of that bargain). He was a none-such: and is much missed.

## **Julian Rushton**

*(Julian is Professor Emeritus of Music, Leeds University, and a branch committee member.)*

## **Our Talks for the remainder of 2022**

### **24 September**

**DANIEL GRIMLEY** on *A Tale of Two Concertos: Elgar, Delius and Beatrice Harrison*.

An examination of the genesis of the concertos by Elgar and Delius, both of which were performed by Beatrice Harrison.

Daniel Grimley is a Professor of Music at the University of Oxford and Fellow of Merton College.

### **15 October**

**JACQUELINE EDWARDS** presents a live, lecture/recital on *Dame Clara Butt*.

As mezzo soprano and pianist Jacqueline discusses and illustrates the life and career of the celebrated Edwardian contralto Dame Clara Butt, for whom Elgar composed *Sea Pictures*.

A descendant of Dame Clara Butt Jacqueline Edwards is a concert and opera singer and also performs in a series of one-woman cabarets.

### **26 November**

**PAUL KAMPEN** on *Barbirolli in Yorkshire*.

An examination of how Sir John Barbirolli revived musical life in Leeds, a decade before he did the same for Manchester, through his conductorship of the Northern Philharmonic Orchestra.

Paul Kampen is a horn player and committee member.