



MUSIC IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

ANDREW MORRIS
and
BERNARR RAINBOW

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY PETER DICKINSON



Music in Independent Schools

Music in Independent Schools

Bernarr Rainbow, Andrew Morris and others

Edited by Andrew Morris

GENERAL EDITOR OF THE SERIES: Peter Dickinson

THE BOYDELL PRESS

PART I: Studies from *Music and the English Public School*

© Bernarr Rainbow and various authors 1990

PART II: The New Millennium © Contributors 2014

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General Editor's Foreword

Peter Dickinson

THIS book records the musical achievements of Independent Schools. As Rainbow's historic section shows, it was a long struggle to get music accepted as a fit study in a public school curriculum. George Dyson, in his 1952 address to the MMA (pp. 104–8 below) recalled the low status of the music staff: 'When I went to Marlborough in 1911, I was the first musician to be made, by right, a full member of the Masters' Common Room ... In 1914 ... at Rugby I was the first musician to be salaried like the rest of the staff.' The popular period drama *Downton Abbey*, created by Julian Fellowes and first shown on ITV in 2010, reflects the atmosphere of the 1920s. The Earl of Grantham was not planning to ask the famous contralto Dame Clara Butt, played by Dame Kiri te Kanawa, to join them for dinner until his American wife insisted. Over the centuries music was not regarded as a suitable occupation for an English gentleman and female musical talent struggled for recognition beyond the drawing room. Times have certainly changed in a more meritocratic society influenced by the fortunes to be made in film music, television, pop and at the top of the classical sector. In several of the new chapters in this book we read of school choirs and ensembles performing at the leading venues in this country and abroad.

My own musical background started in Lancashire with church choirs and organ music. At my preparatory school there was virtually no music at all. Thanks to a good piano teacher, I gained a music scholarship to The Leys School, Cambridge, then under the enlightened director, H. S. Davis. He introduced me to the organ works of Bach; there was scope for playing chamber music; and I was featured as a concerto soloist in my last two years. I took one piano in two-piano accompaniments to Gilbert and Sullivan: there was a flourishing inter-house music competition. From this background, where I was never penalised for being more interested in music than sport, I gained an organ scholarship to Cambridge.

Music at The Leys may have been typical of the 1950s, but in 2013 the school sent forty-nine musicians to the USA for a ten-day tour with choirs and seven instrumental groups performing at six different venues. As this book shows, standards have risen. The arts reached wider audiences in a period that can be seen with hindsight as a golden age. The Arts Council followed from war-time initiatives; the BBC set up the Third Programme, later BBC Radio 3; the long-playing record arrived, then cassette and CD; and it was only well after the 1960s that popular culture started to make inroads into the audience

for classical music and dominate media coverage. In the early 1960s President Kennedy invited distinguished artists, such as Stravinsky, to the White House. Thirty years later Tony Blair feted pop musicians at No. 10 Downing Street. The impact of popular culture in schools is not prominent in the accounts that follow since such activity was almost always unofficial, although widespread. Schools, both state and independent, have recognised the value of musical training in developing acumen and personality. Universities multiplied and degrees in music proliferated providing entry to a variety of careers.

Although Andrew Morris notes that Rainbow was not an insider in the public school scene – he attended Rutlish School, Merton, in London, and was a church organist as a schoolboy – his research, as elsewhere, was punctilious and revealing. This was his final book publication in 1990 and I have no recollection of talking to him about it, although I had reviewed *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* in *The Musical Times* when it came out the year before. Charles Plummeridge reviewed *Music in the English Public School* in *The British Journal of Music Education* in March 1993 and concluded: ‘*Music in the English Public School* is a splendid book and provides access to a rich literature which would otherwise probably remain unknown to the busy practitioner. What emerges from these collected writings is the sense of a long established and ever growing community committed to certain principles and ideals. Professional music educators today have absorbed values articulated by a devoted and distinguished body of teachers during the past hundred and fifty years.’

By reprinting articles published in the late nineteenth century, and adding his own commentary *en route*, Rainbow provides unique detail about individual schools. Then there is the debate in *Music & Letters* published in 1922, which I have condensed here: it shows progress but, at the same time, reveals curious uncertainties about the place of music in a general education. There are problems familiar to later generations – the place of music in examinations, in the school timetable, the need for facilities. A. H. Peppin’s book, *Public Schools and their Music*, published in 1927, reads clearly and shows some psychological penetration too. Students of musical perception amongst young people would do well to consult it. Peppin was ahead of the game in asserting that the ability to teach is a vital factor and it will not necessarily be found in university graduates without teacher-training. The programmes for Instrumental House Competitions show how high standards were then at the top of the pyramid. Another book chosen by Rainbow, John Ivimey’s *Boys and Music*, is anecdotal but provides a kind of social history apart from its musical context. Consequently we have retained Rainbow’s original text as a chronological introduction to the important new material. Rainbow dedicated his book to the memory of Leonard Blake, sometime Director

of Music at Worksop and Malvern, as ‘mentor and sponsor’. See *Bernarr Rainbow on Music* for details of their connection. Since this is the last large volume emanating from the Trust in its initial stage I should like to thank the advisory board for their support – The Lord Wigglesworth, Dr Gordon Cox, Professor George Odam, Dr Charles Plummeridge, John Stephens, OBE and Professor Graham Welch – and add my personal thanks to Dr David Roberts, the staff at Boydell & Brewer and my co-trustee, Francis Dickinson. Bernarr Rainbow’s centenary was on 2 October 2014 and the publication of *Music in Independent Schools*, as well as the final tranche of his Classic Texts in Music Education, provides the opportunity to celebrate his unique achievements in the field of music education. As the late John Paynter said, in reviewing *Music in Educational Thought and Practice*, ‘He was, by any measure, a great man: a pioneer, single-minded in the tasks he set himself.’

The Trust has been fortunate in having Andrew Morris as editor and contributor to *Music in Independent Schools*. He knows the scene from the inside and has been able to document the issues of the day in detail through his membership of several organisations where he has made significant contributions. His contributors show impressive dedication to achieving the best from their pupils even though there is still competition for the time of students and there are often difficulties in obtaining adequate accommodation. Meanwhile there are musical benefits in welcoming students from abroad although the future may show more schools opting to become Academies and more closing because the traditional supporters in middle-income families have been priced out. I hope that the publication of the new assessments, as well as Rainbow’s historic investigations, will help to support the continued growth of music in schools of all kinds as well as indicating the achievement of independent schools, which may indeed seem like a golden age.

Editor's Introduction

Andrew Morris

MUSIC and the English Public School was the last of Bernarr Rainbow's many books and is, in some ways, his most curious. I was educated in the independent system, taught in it for thirty-two years, and worked in secondary modern, grammar and comprehensive schools before that. Rainbow's book suggests to me that the world of Public Schools, now called Independent Schools, was a strange one to him. He clearly recognised that these institutions had an interesting and important musical story to tell and that the ancient schools, such as Winchester and Eton, were particularly fascinating, as they had choir schools attached. In many ways, these and several other schools were part of the musical history of England since many of their pupils became leading musicians of their day. However, there seems to be a feeling, in Rainbow's book, of curiosity about what was to him a strange system involving an educational setting which he considered a playground of the rich and the privileged classes. The picture on the jacket shows the Harrow football team in the 1860s, in their pyjama-like costumes and hats with tassels, in front of a Latin song by John Farmer. The inside title page includes a definition of public schools taken from the *Penguin English Dictionary* of 1965, when *Music and the English Public School* was published in 1990:

Public School (*England*) expensive fee-paying school mainly taking upper class pupils; (*Scots and US*) state-controlled school generally without fees.

All this suggests to me that Rainbow was not only uncomfortable with the notion of these schools but may have been mildly poking fun at them.

In his book, Rainbow reviewed the literature covering the history of music education in these public schools. The expression 'Public School' was not generally used until the early nineteenth century and did not officially exist until the Public Schools Act of 1868. This linked together a group of nine schools, soon joined by many more, which gave birth to the Headmasters' Conference, later the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference. Rainbow's introduction to the book gives a wide, but not complete, survey of the music in pre-twentieth century public schools. His second chapter, 'Nineteenth Century Visits to Various Public Schools', consists of articles written between 1888 and 1892 by John Graham, to which Rainbow adds a commentary, where there is a good deal of information about eight schools. 'Public Schools and their Music' (1927) by Arthur H. Peppin, a director of

music at three schools, was originally a short book giving the author's thoughts on various aspects of music teaching and learning. 'Boys and Music' (1936) by John Ivimey, also originally published as a book, recounts the author's time as director of music at five different schools. These chapters give a fascinating insight to music education in these schools at the time. The new material that has been commissioned for the present, expanded version of the book presents information about a large number of schools, including updates on several that were featured in Rainbow's original book, and brings the literature up to the turn of the twenty-first century.

'The Oundle Phenomenon' (1922–3) tells the remarkable story of music at Oundle involving the whole school in performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *B minor Mass*. This chapter, which reproduces an article in the *Musical Times* and a critique by H. C. Colles of *The Times*, celebrates Clement Spurling, Oundle's Director of Music at the time. Spurling was a pioneering force in school music before the Second World War and was in the same mould as Edred Wright, who set the standards for other schools during the post-war period and beyond through his achievements in orchestral and vocal music at The King's School, Canterbury.

Rainbow's *Music and the English Public School* was but a small part of his far-reaching project to create an anthology of historical texts on music education and was never intended to be a balanced and comprehensive appraisal of music in independent schools. Nevertheless, a surprising aspect is that although the book was published as late as 1990, it is almost entirely concerned with music in these schools before the Second World War. The only post-war item in Rainbow's book is the address given by Sir George Dyson to the then fifty-year-old MMA at its Conference in 1952. Yet, as we shall see from the new writings in this present book, music in independent schools was gathering pace at an unprecedented speed in the 1960s and 1970s, with the introduction of music scholarships and the creation of music schools in many senior independent schools. This new book, showing the vast increase in both performance standards and opportunities which developed in these schools over the last sixty years, updates Rainbow's collection of writings to create a balanced appraisal of music education in independent schools. It also looks at other features such as the curriculum and the new links these schools developed with junior or 'preparatory' schools. Furthermore, the independent sector became the home of the newly created Specialist Music Schools and is in most cases the stable of the ancient Choir Schools. Girls' Schools also became an important part of the picture during the twentieth century.

Music in Independent Schools is not only an informative record but also a celebration of the huge developments in independent school music which, in 1952, could only be dreamt of by the most optimistic of music educators. A few

schools are mentioned individually and some, where knowledge is extensive on a personal level, are taken as examples of general trends in the independent sector over this period. It was obviously impossible to cover all the many schools which day after day provide exciting possibilities to a large number of music pupils and the absence of a mention does not mean that fine work has not taken place or continues to take place in them. Indeed, the high standards to which the various chapters refer are common across the board and music has become an area which independent education has made a priority as part of its *raison d'être*. We therefore provide a study of the general trends interspersed with individual cases.

As with Rainbow's original book, the new contributions to *Music in Independent Schools* have been written by a number of authors. They are all experts in their field and have taken, or are taking, a leading role in developing music education in their particular area of work or academic concern. I am grateful to them all for taking part in this project so enthusiastically. The project resulted from a few words spoken to me by John Stephens, who had been Staff Inspector of Music in the Inner London Education Authority. He realised that the excellent new edition of Rainbow's book *Music in Educational Thought and Practice*, brought up to date by Gordon Cox, covered a vast area but did not include the independent sector. My thanks are due to the General Editor of the series and Chairman of the Bernarr Rainbow Trust, Professor Peter Dickinson, for agreeing to support the proposal to update *Music and the English Public School* and to the Trust itself for making the publication possible. I am also grateful to various MMA colleagues for their encouragement and also to many friends, but particularly to Brian Watchorn, Richard Morris and Marie Rességuier, who have read over much of the material and given technical assistance before submission of the text. I am also grateful to the staff at Boydell & Brewer and David Roberts as copy editor and indexer.

Andrew Morris
Cambridge, 2014

Biographical Notes

Bernarr Rainbow (1914–98) began to be recognised as the leading authority on the history of music education from the later 1960s. His 400-page book, *Music in Educational Thought and Practice* (1989; 2nd edition with further chapters by Gordon Cox, a foreword from Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, and a biographical introduction by Peter Dickinson [Boydell Press, 2006/paperback 2007]) has been widely read and used as a standard text in music-education courses in many parts of the world.

Rainbow's writings are both practical and scholarly, as a list of titles shows. He began with *Music in the Classroom* (1956; 2nd edition 1971) and *A Handbook for Music Teachers* (1964; 2nd edition 1968). All Rainbow's subsequent books are now available from Boydell & Brewer – *The Land without Music* (1967; reprinted 1991); *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church, 1839–72* (1970; reprinted 2001); *John Curwen: A Critical Biography* (1980; reprinted in *Bernarr Rainbow on Music*, 2010); *Music and the English Public School* (ed., 1991, now included in this enlarged edition); *Four Centuries of Music Teaching Manuals, 1518–1932* (2009); and *Bernarr Rainbow on Music: Memoirs and Selected Writings* (2010). Rainbow has also edited a collection of primers on music teaching from originals in various languages – the *Classic Texts in Music Education* – that is a major landmark being enhanced as the final volumes in this unique series become available.

Bernarr Joseph George Rainbow was born in Battersea, London, on 2 October 1914 and died at Esher on 17 March 1998. His grandfather was a member of the Royal Household at Sandringham; his father was a cabinet-maker at Buckingham Palace, and finally Curator of Pictures at Hampton Court, where the family moved in 1931. Bernarr went to Rutlish School, Merton, and held various posts as a church organist while still a schoolboy. He then attended Trinity College of Music part-time while working in the Map Branch of HM Land Registry, Lincoln's Inn Fields. The war interrupted his studies and he spent four years in the army serving in North Africa and Italy. Soon after his return he became Organist and Choirmaster of All Saints Parish Church, High Wycombe, and then the first Music Master to be appointed at the Royal Grammar School. He started the influential High Wycombe Festival in 1946 and as conductor, performer and entrepreneur, affected the musical life of the entire region.

Rainbow's appointment in 1952 as Director of Music at the College of St Mark and St John, Chelsea – the Church of England teacher training establishment – brought him new opportunities and it was here that he began

his research. In addition to his music diplomas he gained three postgraduate degrees from the University of Leicester – the MEd (1964), PhD (1968), and that university's first DLit (1992). From 1973 to 1979 he was Head of the School of Music, Kingston Polytechnic (now University), and he founded the Curwen Institute in 1978. Rainbow was made an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College of Music in 1995 and in the following year he established the Bernarr Rainbow Award for school music teachers under the auspices of the Bernarr Rainbow Trust, a registered charity that also supports initiatives in music education such as the series of lectures published as *Music Education in Crisis: The Bernarr Rainbow Lectures and other Assessments*, ed. Peter Dickinson (Boydell Press, 2013). The Bernarr Rainbow Archive is at the Library of the Institute of Education; his family papers are at Hampton Court; and his collection of Christian and Jewish Hymnals and other Liturgical Music is at the Foyle Special Collections Library, King's College, London.

Andrew Morris was a chorister at Westminster Abbey under Sir William McKie. After a music scholarship to Bembridge, he studied at the Royal Academy of Music, Goldsmiths College, and the Institute of Education in the University of London before completing a research degree at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he was also a Schoolmaster Fellow Commoner. He was Organist and Director of Music at The Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, 1971–9, where he broadcast with the Choir and founded the St Bartholomew's Festivals in which he played and conducted many UK and London premieres. He has continued with his interest in new music, being Chairman of the Macnaghten Concerts, 1981–4, and a member successively of all the Park Lane Group committees from 1985 to the present day. He is also a Trustee of Voces Cantabiles Music.

Andrew Morris taught in secondary-modern, grammar and comprehensive schools in London before becoming Director of Music at Bedford School for thirty-two years. At Bedford he conducted a wide repertoire of music, including new music, and oversaw an extensive music programme in one of the largest music departments in a UK school. Also at Bedford he developed the music scholars' programme, arranged a composer-in-residence scheme, encouraged composition tuition, and oversaw the building of an award-winning new Music School which was opened by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies in 2006.

He was President of the Music Masters' and Mistresses' Association from 1996 to 1997 and President of the RAM Club at the Royal Academy of Music 2005–6. As an organist, conductor and continuo player he has appeared at venues such as the Royal Festival Hall; the Royal Albert Hall; St John's, Smith Square; St Paul's Cathedral; St Paul's, Knightsbridge; and King's

College, Cambridge. He is currently Chairman of the Concerts Committee of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and a member of the Court. He has examined for the ABRSM for over thirty years. He is now a freelance musician and his work includes adjudicating, organ playing, conducting and writing.

Contributors to Part II

Catherine Beddison is Head of Prep School Music at Cranleigh School.

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Timothy Daniell taught for fifteen years in Cheshunt before becoming Director of Music at Walthamstow Hall School, 1986–2010.

Richard Mayo was Director of Music at Cranleigh School before moving to Dulwich College as Director of Music in 2004.

James Peschek was Director of Music at Monkton Combe School, 1960–9, and at Uppingham School, 1969–78.

Alastair Sampson was Organist of Eton College, 1968–2005.

Graham Smallbone was successively Director of Music at Dean Close School, Marlborough College and Eton College. He then became Headmaster of Oakham School. He was President of the Music Masters' and Mistresses' Association, 1975–6, a Governor of the Yehudi Menuhin School, 1989–2011, and was Chairman of the Governors of The Purcell School, 1998–2010.

Jonathan Varcoe was Director of Music at Merchant Taylors' School, 1968–75, and St Paul's School, 1975–96. He was President of the Music Masters' and Mistresses' Association, 1993–4.

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Hilary Webster was Director of Music at The Pilgrims' School, Winchester, 1987–2010, and President of the Music Masters' and Mistresses' Association, 1997–8.

Abbreviations

A level	Advanced Level
A2 level	The second year of a full A Level
ABRSM	Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
AM	Andrew Morris
AS level	Advanced Supplementary Level, and the first year of a full A Level
BR	Bernarr Rainbow
FMS	Federation of Music Services
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GSA	Girls' Schools Association
HMC	Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (formerly Headmasters' Conference)
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
IAPS	Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Education
ISAI	Independent Schools Association Incorporated
ISCC	Independent Schools Curriculum Committee
ISEB	Independent Schools Examination Board
LEA	Local Education Authority
MDS	Music and Dance Scheme
MMA	Music Masters' and Mistresses' Association
MTS	Merchant Taylors' School
NAME	National Association of Music Educators
O level	Ordinary Level
PD	Peter Dickinson
Pre-U	Pre-University qualification (an alternative to A Level)
RCM	Royal College of Music
RCO	Royal College of Organists
SATIPS	Society of Assistant Teachers in Preparatory Schools
SHMIS	Society of Headmasters in Independent Schools
SMA	Schools Music Association
SPGS	Saint Paul's Girls' School
SPS	Saint Paul's School
VMT	Visiting Music Teacher

PART I

Studies from *Music and the
English Public School* (1990)



I

Music and the English Public School: Early History¹

Bernarr Rainbow

THAT essentially English but somewhat misleadingly named institution, the Public School, had its origins in a liberally endowed grammar school founded at Winchester in the fourteenth century. As early as 1369 William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England, planned the establishment of a college at Oxford in close connection with a new school at Winchester. The joint enterprise was in fact delayed for some years by his political disgrace and downfall, but with the accession of Richard II in 1377, the bishop received a royal pardon and both projects went ahead. Within a few years what became known as New College, Oxford, and 'Seint Marie College of Wynchestre' were both established on a magnificent scale; the former with seventy youthful scholars to study law, philosophy, and theology, the latter with an equal number of boys from the middle classes 'suffering from want of money' who were to be taught grammar. In addition, there were places in the school for ten commoners, 'sons of noble and powerful persons'. It was this last feature of the school's constitution, together with its independent and self-governing status, that separated it from other grammar schools of the day² and led to the claim that here was to be found the 'germ of the public school system'.³

A second school, modelled on Winchester, was founded by Henry VI at Eton in 1440. Here capable boys were prepared for places at the sister foundation, King's College, Cambridge. Although receiving their education without charge in accordance with the royal founder's endowment, pupils at Eton 'paid large sums for boarding in the houses of fellows, and in the town'.⁴ It was this practice that later made Eton an expensive boarding school largely

¹ All Rainbow's prefaces to his series of Classic Texts in Music Education, including this one, appear in *Four Centuries of Music Teaching Manuals 1518–1932*, with an Introduction by Gordon Cox (Woodbridge, 2009). [PD]

² St Peter's School, York, for instance, was founded in 627, and The King's School, Canterbury, in the late sixth or early seventh century; both enjoyed celebrity as centres of learning established by the early English Church and emphatically pre-date Winchester. But antiquity alone is not the decisive factor.

³ A. F. Leach, *History of Winchester College* (London, 1899), p. 96.

⁴ A. F. Leach, *Schools of Medieval England* (London, 1915), p. 254.

devoted to the sons of the gentry – another characteristic of the term ‘public school’ in modern English usage.

To this nucleus of patrician schools was added a number of others endowed in Tudor and Elizabethan times as local grammar schools, but afterwards outgrowing local associations through the diligence of individual headmasters. Urban foundations, such as Westminster and Merchant Taylors’, as well as schools in more rural areas, like Harrow or Shrewsbury, made up the small number of institutions of the kind now customarily referred to as ‘ancient’ public schools. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of them fell into disrepute, their discipline only precariously maintained by a succession of notorious birch-wielding headmasters. But in the 1830s a new model for the public school was developed at Rugby under the headmastership of Dr Thomas Arnold. As a result the whole system was recast in more or less its present mode: the curriculum was to some extent modernised, increased attention was given to religion, the school was divided into forms, discipline was undertaken jointly with senior boys, and a good deal of attention was given to organised games. Emphasis was placed on the classics. As yet there was no place for the sciences or arts and crafts; and musical skill was commonly frowned upon as a sign of degeneracy, particularly unwelcome in an institution where sturdy character-forming was rated high.

Arnold’s Rugby was made the model for reform in older schools where indiscipline, profligacy, and bullying had grown unchecked in Georgian times. And in the new educational climate that followed the passing of the first Reform Bill of 1832, further schools for the sons of the growing middle and professional classes were established on similarly ambitious lines. But it was in another type of boarding school for boys that the first effective moves were made to justify a place for music in the school curriculum.⁵ While the chapel services at Rugby were seen by Arnold partly as an occasion for moral teaching, little attention was paid there to the choral element in worship. But in a number of new schools set up during and after the 1840s, particularly those designed for the sons of the clergy, not only were the daily chapel services made important features of the school’s life, but under Tractarian influence unusual efforts were made to celebrate them with worthy music.⁶

The first of these schools was Radley, founded by William Sewell, a vigorous follower of the Oxford Movement, who attached great importance to the

⁵ A brief experiment, prompted by the Prince Consort, which saw John Hullah’s method of teaching music introduced at Eton, Winchester, and elsewhere in the 1840s proved disappointing and was not repeated. See T. Adkins, *The History of St John’s College, Battersea* (London, 1906), pp. 80ff.

⁶ B. Rainbow, *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church, 1839–1872* (London, 1970; Woodbridge, 2001), chapter 12.

'aesthetic' element in worship. Sewell provided his school with an imposing chapel furnished with antique panelling, medieval glass and choir stalls, and a fine organ. When the school opened in 1847, with a handful of pupils and just four members of staff, one of those four was the music master and chapel organist, E. G. Monk. Under his direction a musical tradition was arduously established at Radley, centred upon the chapel services. The time and attention devoted to singing and musical instruction during the early years, two hours and a half daily,⁷ now appear extravagant; but only thus were the founder's aspirations realised.

Fired by this demonstration of the way in which Tractarian sanctity might be allied to educational activity, other reverend headmasters took to giving choral activity an important place in their schools – closely allied to the music in their school chapels. Nowhere was this policy more assiduously followed than in the institutions founded by Nathaniel Woodard. At Hurstpierpoint (1835), Lancing (1857), and in the growing number of other schools he established later, Woodard strove to maintain choral services at a high standard of proficiency in buildings erected and equipped on as noble a level as circumstances permitted. The chapel at Lancing remains to this day a striking monument to Woodard's exalted ideals.

Through the new schools founded in mid-century under Anglo-Catholic influence arose a new musical tradition – one which depended for its stimulus almost entirely upon music's role in corporate worship. In a rough parallel to the circumstances that created the first Song Schools, this situation yet reversed the process: by first founding the schools, then justifying a place for music in them. That example was not followed in the older public schools, prone in any case to deny equal status to newly founded schools catering for other than the sons of gentry, themselves entirely untouched by Tractarian views, and disposed to regard anything approaching ritualism with suspicion. There, chapel services were either sung by professional choirs – as at Eton and Winchester – or the music of the services was limited to metrical psalmody, which called for little in the way of preparation. A different impulse was needed to bring music to the old-established public schools.

This second impetus came independently to two of them in the 1860s. Uppingham and Harrow then each appointed music masters; though in very different circumstances and without seeking a common policy. In one case the headmaster was the instigator; in the other the initiative came, remarkably enough, from former boys of the school.

When Edward Thring was appointed headmaster in 1853, Uppingham was an unremarkable grammar school of twenty-five boys. He left it thirty-five

⁷ E. Bryans and T. D. Raikes, *History of S. Peter's College, Radley* (Oxford, 1925), p. 34.

years later among the foremost of English public schools, transformed by a new attitude toward the curriculum which had widened it beyond the classics to embrace the needs and aptitudes of every pupil. Part of each day was devoted to French, German, chemistry, drawing, carpentry, or music; every boy was required to choose one or more of these activities outside the traditional range of classical studies.

Thring himself was quite unmusical; the notion of including music in the school's programme was almost certainly put into his mind by his German wife.⁸ But once suggested, the idea appealed to him as fulfilling his aim to provide a curriculum which should stimulate the imagination and the senses as well as the intellect. Music was made an optional study at Uppingham from 1865, when Paul David, significantly the son of a celebrated German violinist, was appointed to direct teaching throughout the school.

Instead of centring music teaching in the classroom, an instrumental approach based on individual tuition was adopted. But there was also a voluntary 'singing class' from which a choir was formed. David had the assistance of several instrumental teachers – all Germans like himself – and soon an orchestra was established from the most capable boys and their teachers. The rest of the school attended concerts given by choir and orchestra joined by visiting soloists, in much the same way as they attended football or cricket matches at other times.⁹

At Harrow, the second public school to appoint specialist music teachers, there was a school organist as early as the 1840s. But although Walter Macfarren, who held the post between 1848 and 1850, was prepared to give piano and organ lessons, he had not a single pupil.¹⁰ No boy at the school in those days was prepared to face the accusation of being a 'milk-sop' by learning to play the piano – a pursuit then still regarded as the province of their sisters. Just how far this taboo was to lose its potency during the 1850s is seen from an article on 'Amateur Music' published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1863:

The cultivation of music as a recreation is not now confined in England to one class ... A reaction set in some years ago [and] it is a great gain that all the barriers of prejudice against music have been broken down; that boys are permitted to be taught the art; and that it is generally held to be a rational and humanising occupation for men of all conditions.¹¹

Initial signs of change at Harrow came in 1857 when the organist of the day,

⁸ G. R. Parkin, *Life and Letters of Edward Thring*, 2 vols. (London, 1947), vol. 2, p. 625.

⁹ See James Peschek's account, pp. 287–91 below, for a continuation of the story at Uppingham. [PD]

¹⁰ P. A. Scholes, *The Mirror of Music*, 2 vols. (London, 1947), vol. 2, p. 625.

¹¹ 'Amateur Music', *Cornhill Magazine* 8/ 43 (1863), pp. 93–8.

Bradbury Turner, formed a college Musical Society, since named the first of its kind. Obligated to hold its meetings off the school premises, and given to performing Beethoven on the concertina, the society's activities were at best primitive;¹² but they marked an important step and were soon to be followed by John Farmer's introduction of House Singing.

Farmer's installation at Harrow was curious. After studying music at Leipzig, then teaching at Zurich, he returned to England in 1861 with no regular employment. However, as a former pupil of Moscheles he was a more than competent pianist; and he eventually secured an engagement to give daily piano performances on the instruments displayed at the 1862 International Exhibition held at Kensington Gore. This exhibition attracted even greater crowds than that of 1851 – whose tenth anniversary it was designed to celebrate. And among the throng was a group of Old Harrovians, who heard Farmer's playing and were sufficiently impressed to invite him to set up in a private capacity at Harrow as a piano teacher and the director of a local music society.¹³ This he agreed to do, and from the end of 1862 he lived at Harrow, with boys from the school among his private pupils. A year later Bradbury Turner, then school organist, resigned, and Farmer was appointed to succeed him.

Having obtained a footing in the school, Farmer gradually established an informal relationship with the boys, which enabled him to start a tradition of holding singing sessions in the boarding houses in turn. Some of the academic staff at Harrow disapproved of this innovation; but the youthful headmaster – H. M. Butler had been appointed only in 1859 at the age of twenty-six – anxious to modernise the school, but aware of the opposition of older colleagues, lent his support to Farmer's activities and House Singing became a recognised feature of Harrow life. When a collection of the songs traditionally used at Harrow, many of them written by Farmer, was published in 1881 it was prefaced by this revealing dedication:

To the Revd H. Montague Butler, Head Master of Harrow School,
under whose encouragement Singing had become part of our school
life, these Songs are dedicated.

Nor was Farmer entirely without support from the teaching staff. In 1864 Brooke Foss Westcott, later bishop of Durham but then teaching classics at Harrow, wrote Latin words for a number of songs including 'Io triumphe', 'Strenua nos exercet inertia', and 'Decor integer aevi'. Farmer arranged them to be sung to existing tunes, such as *Gaudeamus igitur*. But in the following year

¹² *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 1893–4, pp. 108–9.

¹³ *Dictionary of National Biography*, Compact Edition, 2 vols. (London, 1975), vol. 2, p. 2626.

he began to set further songs by Westcott to original tunes of his own. The use of Latin in all these early songs during 1864 and 1865 clearly helped to ease the introduction of House Singing. Thereafter other members of the teaching staff contributed song texts in English – notably Edward E. Bowen, whose ‘Willow the King’ and ‘Forty Years On’, both set to music by Farmer, became enduring examples.¹⁴

Following this unorthodox introduction – itself perhaps based on Farmer’s experience of the students’ songs which formed an essential rite in German universities during his stay there – and using his ‘wonderful power of making nearly everyone with whom he came into contact enthusiastic for music’, during the twenty-three years he spent at Harrow John Farmer was said to have turned many boys formerly brought up to scorn music into music-lovers.¹⁵

Yet it would be unrealistic to suppose that the measures taken either at Harrow or Uppingham were sufficient to transform every boy there. The resources supervised and directed by Paul David at Uppingham doubtless encouraged boys with some musical inclination to learn to play an instrument or sing – though the decision ultimately rested with their parents. Edward Thring’s frequent attendance at choir practices and concerts added a stamp of respectability to those events. But boys whose unmusical natures had been hardened by parental influence and example remained largely untouched by voluntary activities of this kind. Individuals and coteries of the unmusical were still able to victimise youngsters whose enthusiasm for music seemed to them excessive. Arthur Somervell, who held the post of Inspector of Music to the Board of Education between 1901 and 1928, has told of a boy who ‘had to take several lickings at Uppingham because musical manuscripts were found in his study’.¹⁶ Somervell was himself a pupil at Uppingham in the 1870s and already dedicated to a musical career. He was to make important contributions to English composition in his choral works and song cycles. There can be little doubt that the victim of his anecdote was himself. Too rosy a view of musical affairs under David at Uppingham should not be taken.

The position at Harrow, where every boy – not just the enthusiast or those conscripted by parents – was expected to engage regularly in organised singing, perhaps exerted wider social influence upon members of the school as a whole. But even there, as one assistant music master later acknowledged, House Singing was not more than tolerated by some boys who would ‘grouse

¹⁴ Details drawn from J. Farmer, *Harrow Songs and Glees* (n.d.), *passim*.

¹⁵ Scholes, *The Mirror of Music*, vol. 2, p. 626.

¹⁶ A. Somervell, ‘The Public School and before it’, *Music & Letters* 3 (1922), p. 280. See also *Sir Arthur Somervell on Music Education: his Writings, Speeches and Letters*, ed. Gordon Cox (Woodbridge, 2003).

at having to attend'.¹⁷ Moreover, music was not dignified with a place in the curriculum at either school in spite of its admission to the roll of approved leisure pursuits.

Despite such shortcomings, the changes of the 1860s at Harrow and Uppingham were straws in the wind that did not escape notice at more staid public schools. Other independent boarding schools for boys, whether formally classed as public schools or not, introduced facilities for musical tuition, rehearsal, and concert performances. The appointment of a director of music to supervise individual tuition, to train the choir and play the organ became standard goals. Without overtly following Tractarian practice otherwise, the whole school was generally encouraged to sing in chapel, whether from choir-stall or pew.

Eton and Winchester, hardly susceptible to outside influence, and more accustomed to lead than follow fashion elsewhere, were each endowed with resources to maintain the music of their chapel services. At their foundation both institutions had been housed in buildings of an elaboration far beyond anything of the kind previously provided for a school, including in each case a chapel more splendid than most churches, staffed by resident chaplains, lay clerks and choristers. To begin with, the minimal duties of chapel organist will have been supplied by a lay clerk; but later a separate post was justified.

The names of a few holders of the post of organist at the college chapel at Winchester during the sixteenth century are known. Thomas Weelkes, the most celebrated of them, was appointed in 1598, remaining there for three or four years before moving to a similar post at Chichester Cathedral. His successors at Winchester during the centuries that followed have been traced and recorded by Alan Rannie¹⁸ to reveal that, though occasionally scamped, choral services were celebrated at the college without interruption even during the persecuted years of the Civil War and Commonwealth in the seventeenth century. Likewise the sixteen resident choristers of the original endowment were still being maintained five centuries later, though changes in the forms of service brought about by successive religious upheavals had greatly changed the nature of their duties meanwhile.

Yet it is difficult to feel that the liturgical diligence of generations of organists, lay clerks, and choristers had anything more than slender effect upon the musical susceptibilities of later generations of boys who filled the college chapel daily – so long, that is, as those boys were neither called upon nor prepared to take active part in anything more than perfunctory metrical psalmody. The original statutes of the college laid down that all entrants, even

¹⁷ J. W. Ivimey, *Boys and Music* (Marlborough, 1936), p. 14.

¹⁸ A. Rannie, *The Story of Music at Winchester College, 1394–1969* (Winchester, 1970).

at the minimum age of eight, should already be grounded in reading, Latin, and music.¹⁹ There seems no reason to doubt that before the destruction of Song and Chantry schools at the Reformation – where those skills were customary taught – candidates could fulfil those requirements. But by 1545 Roger Ascham was writing in his *Toxophilus*, ‘I wysshe from the bottome of my heart, that the laudable custome of England to Teach chyldren their plainsong and priksong, were not so decayed throughout all the realm.’ Thereafter it became extremely rare to find music being taught in English schools until the early nineteenth century. And though scholarship candidates at Winchester were still superficially questioned at interview about their musical powers until the beginning of the twentieth century, this was no more than an empty formality. So little was an affirmative reply to the vague enquiry ‘Can you sing?’ expected, that candidates were ‘told beforehand to reply with the words, “All people that on earth do dwell ...”’²⁰

The first member of staff at Winchester to make anything of a serious attempt to remedy its musical shortcomings was Charles Wordsworth, the brilliant classical scholar, all-round sportsman, and inspiring teacher, who was elected Second Master in 1835. He at once set in train a number of improvements to the lot of the chapel choristers, at that time depleted in number owing to curtailment of their entitlements. But it was his attempt to introduce singing classes for the college as a whole that marked the biggest break with custom.

In 1841 a considerable stir had been created by the introduction to England of mass instruction in singing on lines already triumphantly demonstrated in Paris. John Hullah, the composer of a mildly successful opera to a libretto by Charles Dickens, had adapted the French method to English use and begun teaching it to the first intake of boys to start their training as future teachers in the new institution set up for the purpose at Battersea. So remarkable had been the results in the early stages that many distinguished philanthropic visitors were attracted to Battersea to see these youngsters singing at sight with a skill that few of their audience could match. Among their number had been the Duke of Wellington, the Prince Consort, and Dr Hawtrey, the redoubtable Headmaster of Eton College.²¹

Astonished at what he saw, Dr Hawtrey, no doubt with the urging of the Prince, invited Hullah to teach his method at Eton. Other invitations followed and classes were formed under Hullah’s direction at Merton College, Oxford, where ‘mature and unmusical M.A.s hammering away without much result’

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ T. Adkins, *The History of St John’s College, Battersea* (London, 1906), pp. 80ff.

at the exercises in Hullah's singing manual provided the university with an uncommon spectacle.²² Wordsworth now followed Hawtrey's lead by summoning Hullah to teach at Winchester in 1842, but after an initial show of enthusiasm, Hullah's rule-of-thumb primer and its pedestrian songs failed to hold the interest of pupils, more sophisticated than the artisans and members of the labouring classes now thronging his new Singing School at London's Exeter Hall. Before long the experiment ceased, not only at Winchester but at Eton, Oxford, and Charterhouse, where enthusiasm also waned.

A different approach was needed to stimulate interest in those circles. As it was, the boys at Winchester preferred to go on as they had always done – entertaining themselves by noisily singing traditional ditties, particularly as a winter pastime around the fire, refreshed with mugs of the weak beer that took the place of tea in such institutions in those days. Every boarding school for boys was to become familiar with this spontaneous mode of relaxation.

However, from time to time a musical boy at the college would try to form a more competent group to sing glees and catches – in the 1840s a well established aristocratic hobby among the clubbable. One tyro glee club formed at this time was authorised to use a small room in the college for its meetings. But individual masters held different views on such matters, and the departure of Charles Wordsworth in 1847 to become Warden of Glenalmond robbed music of one of its most influential advocates in the college. When one new boy brought a violin back after his first holiday break in 1852 it was promptly confiscated 'on the ground that he had come to work and not to idle'.²³ Deprived of his violin, the same boy²⁴ later got permission to start a glee-club; but when he sought help in training the singers it was to one of the cathedral lay-clerks that he was obliged to go for assistance. Not until the 1860s would such enterprises be blessed with official recognition to become acknowledged college societies.

It is tempting to suppose that the arrival of S. S. Wesley as chapel organist in 1849 must have brought music to life in the college. But such was not the case. Wesley had come to Winchester for the cathedral post and his interest was centred in the cathedral alone. He saw no opportunities for musical advancement in the college. Most of the chapel services were played by his deputy, though Wesley was at the organ himself on Sundays. His customary extempore voluntary before the sermon then stirred and delighted any music-lovers among his hearers as much as it exasperated others by its length.

²² W. Tuckwell, *Reminiscences of Oxford* (London, 1900), p 74.

²³ Rannie, *The Story of Music at Winchester College*, p. 29.

²⁴ Ironically enough, this boy was W. A. Fearon, who became Headmaster of Winchester in 1884.

During the 1860s the college enjoyed remarkable expansion. The newcomers now drawn to the teaching staff introduced more liberal attitudes leading to relaxation of the academic rigidity that had marked Dr Moberly's reign as headmaster. The curriculum was enlarged, and various clubs and societies encouraging leisure pursuits appeared. Among them was a recognised college Glee Club eventually to become the centre of a much wider range of activity than its name suggests. The prime mover in its foundation was George Ridding, elected Second Master in 1863 and Headmaster three years later. Two others who took active part in its development were C. H. Hawkins and G. Beckwith, both chaplains and newcomers. William Hutt, a young cathedral lay-clerk now appointed official accompanist to the Glee Club, was soon to assume a far more vital role in the musical life of the college.²⁵

When Wesley resigned his Winchester appointments to go to Gloucester Cathedral in 1865, Hutt was made chapel organist in his place and given the additional post of Winchester's first full-time musician in modern times. Now for the first time boys were able to receive instrumental lessons – from Hutt on organ and piano, and from a visiting teacher on the recently forbidden violin. Other developments followed. Regular concerts including choral and instrumental items were produced under the aegis of the Glee Club; newer members of the academic staff were often found willing to take part in them; boys from the school now began to be admitted to the choirstalls alongside professional members of the choir in chapel.²⁶

During the thirty-six years between his appointment and retirement in 1901, William Hutt was able to witness and contribute toward marked musical expansion at Winchester. The Revd G. Beckwith, who combined a canonry in the cathedral with his post as chaplain to the college, had always striven to improve the singing in chapel as well as taking active part in the programmes of the Glee Club. At his death in 1877, A. J. Toye, a new housemaster, took formal charge of the Glee Club. A notably capable musician, Toye effectively converted it into a fully fledged choral society with a steadily growing repertoire of large scale works to its credit. Even so, despite these improvements when compared with other schools of similar calibre Winchester at the end of the nineteenth century must be regarded as having made no more than precarious provision for music. Not until the appointment of E. T. Sweeting in 1901 was that situation to be remedied.²⁷



²⁵ Rannie, *The Story of Music at Winchester College*, p. 33.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 33–5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 40–5.

Modelled closely upon Winchester, at its foundation in 1440 Eton College was even more sumptuously equipped for worship. The splendid chapel, originally meant to form only the choir of a much bigger building, was staffed by ten priests assisted by lay-clerks and choristers. A large part of the duty of this assembly of clergy, more numerous than those at Winchester, was to sing masses for its founder and his father, Henry V. From the first, then, music was even more highly prized and developed.

The Eton Choir Book, an early sixteenth-century manuscript on parchment, survives largely intact to represent the chapel repertoire at that time. It contains fifty-four motets, sundry settings of the *Magnificat*, and a complete *Passion*, the work of some twenty-five contemporary composers, employing elaborate contrapuntal part-writing. Four composers were lay-clerks, fellows, or former scholars at Eton; and another, Robert Wilkinson, formerly a lay-clerk there, was appointed master of the choristers at Eton in 1500.²⁸ Works of the calibre demonstrated in the Eton Choir Book were employed until the Reformation put an end to votive masses and changed the whole nature of corporate worship. Thereafter a new repertoire was developed to accommodate the vernacular; but daily routine continued to require attendance by choir and scholars at chapel service as before.

Much that has been said earlier of conditions at Winchester applies equally to Eton. Over the centuries the conduct of chapel services in both institutions shared the same fortunes. Just as a close connection was established between college and adjacent cathedral at Winchester, so shared interest led to sharing of duties between Eton College and St George's Chapel situated in the castle on the opposite bank of the Thames at Windsor. Until the seventeenth century the two musical establishments were maintained independently; and during the Commonwealth, when choral services were formally suspended, the disbanded choirs were both assembled by a senior Fellow at Eton 'to sing privately in his rooms what they were no longer allowed to sing in their stalls'.²⁹

But after this Puritan disruption the position at Eton was never again secure. Subsequently from time to time a lay-clerk from St George's filled the role of organist, and a detachment from Windsor sang in the chapel at Eton. The change underlined a less obvious but far-reaching consequence of the Commonwealth, demonstrating that after centuries of mounting apathy and empty compliance, the Church had at length ceased to be acknowledged as the driving force behind the elaborate machine set up in medieval times to educate her sons and equip her future priests.

On the whole we must perhaps suppose that the musical impact of

²⁸ F. Ll. Harrison, ed., *The Eton Choirbook*, Musica Britannica 10, 3 vols. (London, 1956–61).

²⁹ Rannie, *The Story of Music at Winchester College*, p. 15.

adequately performed choral services upon the rank and file of the college to have been much the same at Eton and Winchester. But as time went on, the different conditions under which the boys in each college lived, the growth of violent behaviour by the boys at Eton and the consequent birchings imposed by their masters, led to an atmosphere of barely contained revolt which could not fail to spill over to affect the daily life of the whole institution. So far as the chapel was concerned, this state of affairs was seldom made the subject of formal report. After the appointment of Keate, the notorious flogger, as headmaster in 1809, the boys recorded their disapproval by an organised demonstration in chapel – a public arena where their animosity could be made known.³⁰ But this is one of the few instances where misbehaviour in chapel was widely reported.

Yet it is possible to detect echoes of past misdemeanours of the kind in even the most discreet accounts of conditions at Eton written during the nineteenth century. The following urbane, though highly romanticised, account was written by a distinguished American visitor to Eton College in 1851 for the edification of his fellow-countrymen at home:

After a sweet sleep, interrupted by hearing the clock strike and the chimes playing at Windsor, I rose to another delightful day, and soon after breakfast attended the service in the chapel. Five hundred and fifty boys were here gathered as worshippers. The service was an hour long, it being the Anniversary of the Queen's Accession. Yet, for the whole time, did those youths maintain the decorum of gentlemen, and worship with the fervour of Christians. This reverence in worship is said to have greatly increased during late years among the Eton boys, many of whom are communicants.³¹

That last sentence was clearly not added to so rosy a picture without good cause.

At Eton only the seventy King's Scholars lived in college – occupying the notorious Long Chamber that was the scene of so much bullying and infamy until its destruction in 1844. The rest of the school – by far the majority of boys – was lodged in the town. From the eighteenth century at least, their boarding houses were owned and run by writing masters, drawing masters, music masters, and teachers of fencing and dancing.³² A considerable range of extracurricular studies and pursuits was thus apparently available to every boy whose parents chose to pay for it.

But a clearer view of the situation at Eton midway through the eighteenth

³⁰ K. Gaythorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon* (London, 1977), p. 41.

³¹ A. Cleveland Cox, *Impressions of England* (New York, 2/1856), p. 244.

³² R. Ollard, *An English Education: A Perspective of Eton* (London, 1982), p. 38.

century is perhaps gained by examining the cases of two music-loving boys educated there at that time. Although both later became nationally celebrated musicians, when first sent to Eton neither Thomas Arne (1710–78) nor Joah Bates (1740–99) was intended by his father for a musical career.

Our source of information on the subject is Charles Burney, who knew both Arne and Bates personally, and later wrote the biographical notices on them for Rees's *Cyclopaedia* (1802–20), from which the following extracts are drawn:

Arne had a good school education, having been sent to Eton by his father, who intended him for the law. But we have been assured by several of his school-fellows, that his love for music operated on him too powerfully for his own peace, or that of his companions; for, with a miserable cracked common flute, he used to torment them night and day, when not obliged to attend the school.

Whatever facilities existed for teaching music in Eton boarding houses in those days, Arne's father scorned them. The boy, untaught in music till then, consequently made shift to teach himself the flute. On the other hand, when Joah Bates was sent to Eton a generation later, in 1756, he had already received musical tuition and was a competent organist. By then sixteen years old, he found himself musically isolated for a different reason. On arrival, as Burney tells us:

... his progress in music received a considerable check, and was in danger of being totally stopped, for it was contrary to the rules of that society for any of the boys on the foundation to be permitted the use of musical instruments. In this state of musical privation Bates remained some months, and had no other means of practising than by playing on imaginary keys on the table, which for a considerable time was his custom every day. At length, having by chance an opportunity of touching the college organ, his talents for music were reported to Mr George Graham, one of the assistant masters, who, having a harpsichord, invited him to his rooms, and finding what an extraordinary performer he was, obtained permission for him to pursue his musical studies, accommodated him with the use of his harpsichord, and procured him liberty to play on the college organ at his leisure hours.

Already, then, the liberalising influence of individual masters that was to become a hallmark of nineteenth-century Eton was making itself felt. Wealthier pupils often by now brought private tutors of their own with them, and soon every boy's entire school career was to be supervised by a single resident tutor.

By the following century Eton had acquired more of the atmosphere of a university than any other public school.

Under Edward Hawtrey, headmaster from 1834, several remarkable men were appointed to tutorial and teaching posts, and a tradition created whereby the influence of house and housemaster became paramount. This development helped liberalise existing educational aims. In particular W. J. Cory, appointed by Hawtrey in 1845, was a tutor who exerted profound influence in that direction. Unequalled as a teacher of classics, he also introduced a broader and more civilised tradition of education than Eton or any other school had previously known. Yet his interest in the arts did not preclude his encouraging athleticism. A poet who achieved the romantic heights of his 'Heraclitus', Cory could yet produce in 1863 the words of the jaunty Eton 'Boating Song' with no sense of anticlimax – to give the school a singing tradition of its own.

The attitude towards music developed at Eton in the 1860s is brought into focus in the case of Hubert Parry, who joined the school in 1861 at the age of thirteen. The son of an aristocratic amateur painter, linguist, archaeologist, and musician, Hubert Parry had already begun composing hymn tunes and chants as a child. But simply because he entered fully into the life of the school, his unusual musical inclinations failed to arouse the scorn they might have done had he been a more obviously withdrawn and self-conscious boy. Indeed, once his athletic prowess was recognised, there was little comment when Parry became the first boy to install a piano in his room – which promptly became a popular centre for other music-lovers. Following this lead, an Eton College Musical Society was formed. The appointment of John Foster as visiting music master to coach its choral activities was approved in 1864.³³

The organist of the college chapel at this time was John Mitchell, an elderly lay-clerk of St George's, Windsor, and 'notoriously inefficient'. At the annual celebrations on 4 June 1864, Parry was persuaded to replace him for the day in the interest of decorum. Parry's diary contains many references to Mitchell's inadequacy – as when his performance at a service in 1865 'convulsed the whole chapel, and led to his being stopped by one of the choirmen'. Yet he was allowed to hold the post of organist at Eton for some forty years until 1868. Small wonder, though, that Provost and Headmaster regularly asked Parry to demonstrate the organ to distinguished visitors.³⁴ His widely recognised musical powers – and a complete absence of conceit concerning them – justified his being permitted special coaching with Dr George Elvey, organist of St George's, Windsor, under whose guidance Parry passed the examination for Mus.B. while still a schoolboy.

³³ C. L. Graves, *Hubert Parry: his Life and Works*, 2 vols. (London, 1926), pp. 22–3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 37, 50.

The case of Hubert Parry shows clearly that at Eton during the 1860s – that magic era for music in public schools generally – an Eton boy who had earned the respect of his peers could rely upon the support of his tutors to be allowed extra-curricular musical studies. By that time W. J. Cory, for one, had long been demonstrating to less progressive colleagues that a boy went to a good school to gather something more than a knowledge of the classics. At this time, too, Eton possessed in Oscar Browning another exceptional housemaster – whose house was the most popular in the school during the 1860s, and who became a legend in his lifetime. Browning was accustomed to arrange concerts, singing competitions, and private theatricals at his own expense for his pupils and members of his house. His campaign against philistinism at Eton also extended to efforts to reform the chapel music; and when George Mitchell at last relinquished the post of organist in 1868, Browning expressed to his friend, George Grove, his hope that direction of the college's musical life would not be left in the hands of his successor. Instead, he wanted to see an energetic musician, preferably one trained in Germany, appointed to a separate post as director of music, leaving the precentor to supervise the chapel music. He was to be disappointed. The Revd L. G. Hayne was made precentor.³⁵

When Hayne left Eton after four unfruitful years, Browning and Grove plotted to have Arthur Sullivan replace him. Grove trusted that Browning's patent popularity and influence in the college would lend weight to the proposal. He was evidently unaware that Browning's unorthodoxy had attracted enemies among more conservative colleagues. More unfortunately, at a time when the cult of 'manliness' was at its early zenith in what were becoming games-ridden public schools, Browning's easy, affectionate relationship with his pupils aroused the disapprobation of Dr Hornby, the new headmaster, who looked with the darkest suspicion upon all his doings. In the event, the recommendation of Sullivan for the vacancy was ignored, and C. D. Maclean, formerly organist of Exeter College, Oxford, became precentor in 1872.³⁶

Yet more inauspiciously, Dr Hornby was to dismiss Browning from his teaching post at Eton on unspecified charges in 1875. W. J. Cory's sentimental regard for his own pupils seems to have led to his removal, equally clandestinely, three years earlier. It thus occurred that when the post of precentor again fell vacant in 1875, neither Browning nor Cory was there to support or oppose the appointment of Joseph Barnby.

Already an established national figure as composer, conductor, and

³⁵ H. E. Wortham, *Oscar Browning* (London, 1927), pp. 62–3, 236.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; but see also O. Browning, *Memories of Sixty Years at Eton* (London, 1923), pp. 132–3; and E. F. Benson, *As We Were* (Harmondsworth, 1938), p. 116.

church musician, Barnby was not required to confine himself to duties in the college chapel – as his predecessors had done. He accordingly undertook the organisation of choral performances and professional concerts on a scale not previously attempted at the college. In this way it was not only to be those boys who found themselves in the care of a progressive housemaster who were introduced to music of more than amateur status. Under Barnby, musical performances could be arranged for general audiences, and with suitably punctilious supervision and direction.

Although at this point in his career Barnby was accustomed to working with professional musicians, his experience with schoolboys and choristers was lifelong. He was not slow to detect musical shortcomings in the average Etonian. Ten years of further acquaintance with the college did nothing to change his opinion; and in an outspoken moment at that point he announced his conviction that ‘about ninety per cent of the boys at Eton College had no musical ear’.³⁷ That uncompromising public statement was promptly taken up in the musical press in 1888 and made the occasion to investigate the state of music in public schools generally, the findings to be reported in a series of articles.

Some extracts from the articles that resulted, together with a summary of background detail, provide a useful picture of the scene in a number of representative schools towards the end of the century.

³⁷ *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, Aug. 1888, p. 466.

Visits to Various Public Schools in the Late Nineteenth Century: Sherborne, Uppingham, Harrow, Rugby, Clifton, Wellington, Eton, Winchester

The series of articles contributed anonymously by John Graham to the *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* and its successor, the *Musical Herald*, between 1888 and 1892 provide the eye-witness accounts incorporated in this chapter.¹ The first school to be visited was Sherborne. [BR]

Sherborne in 1888

Tonic Sol-fa Reporter, August 1888, pp. 466–8

It is often taken for granted that, while elementary schools give music a fair share of attention, the art is neglected to a large extent in the curriculum of the great public schools of the country. The idea has got abroad that there is a lack of musical interest among high-school boys. Mr Joseph Barnby said recently that about ninety per cent of the boys at Eton College had no musical ear. This is not as it should be. It will be well to enquire the reason for this state of things. If the children of the poor can learn to sing so generally and so readily, it is evident that the youth of England have a latent talent for music, and the grand old doctrine, that singing is a universal privilege, must be preached until there is a great awakening among the schools of the upper classes. But before assuming that these schools are in a state of musical heathendom, it should be known what is their actual condition. Possibly they have some sort of music, and at least the experiences of the professors at these institutions deserve consideration. This, then, will be the text of the present series of articles. We have started the enquiry by visiting one of the finest examples of the Eton-Harrow-Rugby type of school – the King's School, at Sherborne, which holds a high position in regard to its music.

¹ Although published anonymously, all the articles in this series were written by John Graham (see the 'Discussion' section at the end of Louis N. Parker, 'Music in our Public Schools', pp. 63–4 below). Further articles on Christ's Hospital (April 1893), Mill Hill (September 1908), Marlborough (August 1909) were also published in the *Musical Herald*. [BR]

Founded by Edward VI and originally occupying former monastic buildings adjoining the ancient abbey, over the centuries life at the school remained little changed until the appointment of H. D. Harper as headmaster in 1850. It was then transformed from a local school of forty boys to become a boarding school of nearly 300 with a national reputation before Harper left to become Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, in 1877. He it was who appointed Louis N. Parker to teach music at Sherborne in 1873 immediately upon completing his training at the Royal Academy of Music.

Apart from class lessons for the boys of the lower school, music counted as an 'extra' subject, calling for an additional fee. By 1888 Parker was himself giving sixty piano lessons a week. His assistant, C. J. Regan, had twenty violin pupils, while a few other boys learnt the cello and the flute. There was also a voluntary Music Society which met each evening for half-an-hour to rehearse choral works – oratorios, cantatas, and the like – with a run-through joined by the orchestra on Sunday afternoons. This society had first been formed by one of the maths teachers, a son of Sir William Sterndale Bennett, before Parker's arrival at the school, fifteen years previously. Its existence, Parker believed, had provided an essential foundation for his own work and assured its success. Seven members of the present teaching staff were in the choral society, and the present headmaster's liking for music was a valuable additional asset.

The chapel choir comprised nearly 50 boys drawn from the best members of the choral society: 28 trebles, 4 altos, 6 tenors, and 8 basses. Balance was an insoluble problem in the circumstances. Simple music was used in the services, there were no anthems, but the canticles were sung to straightforward settings at evening service; otherwise hymns and Anglican chants made up the repertory. Especially in the hymns, the unison singing of the congregation of boys struck the visiting reporter as 'very pleasing'. [BR]

It is remarkable how strong is the musical element in the school. There are about 300 Shirburnians in all. Here is the composition of the choir and orchestra at the concert-centennial: 32 trebles, 22 altos, 8 tenors, 22 basses, 13 violins, 2 violas, 3 'cellos, double bass, 3 flutes, clarinet, bassoon, drums, piano and organ – 110 performers. These figures are a triumphant proof of the love for music among boys of a class alleged to be unmusical.

How the Boys Study Music

As a rule, in public schools music forms no part of the course of study. Even at Sherborne it is an extra subject, except that Mr Parker devotes two hours a week to class teaching of musical elements. This small amount of time is spent in separate lessons to the several 'forms' of the lower school, and is all that is recognised among the regular subjects. At these lessons a little is done in practising for concerts. Mr Parker tries to be informal; if much theory

and harmony were insisted on, the boys would regard music as a severe study instead of as at present a recreation. Occasionally a few boys write or copy on the blackboard passages that are being practised. They read the notes from the movable *doh* point of view. Mr Parker plays and sings passages to them for imitation, and they get acquaintance with oratorio, even in the elementary work. No primer or book of solfeggios is used, nor are there any exercises in voice-training, ear-tests, or rhythm, but now and then sight-singing is attempted from the blackboard.

We enquired about the orchestral work. This is under the care of a hardworking, able professor, Mr Regan, who has a constantly increasing number of pupils. About twenty take the violin, a few the 'cello and the flute. As to viola, violin-players everywhere seem to think that they can learn the viola after the violin, by inspiration, consequently there is not a proper school of viola-playing. The instrumentalists have separate practices under Mr Regan, and they provide the entire accompaniments for the concerts, with the exception of a few instruments. For these Mr Parker does not find local players reliable enough, and he engages London men.

Harmony and composition are very rarely studied by the boys. A few go in for solo-singing and organ-playing.

Competitions in singing are held at Christmas, between the six or seven boarding-houses of the school. A glee is generally selected and sung by a quartet, with an extra treble. Each house has its own practices under its own conductor, one of the boys themselves. They sing before an independent judge, and the best choir gets a prize. The award has usually been easily settled.

The choir of the chapel practises on Saturday evenings for half an hour, and on Sundays after morning service. Their work is light, except when new hymn tunes are being learnt. Mr Parker is now compiling a tune book for the special use of the choir, to supplement the tunes in 'Ancient and Modern'. For the past ten years 'The Hymn Book compiled for the use of Uppingham and Sherborne Schools', containing also canticles, responses, and a few kyries, has been in the hands of the choir. The event of the present year has been the issue of 'Hymns for the use of Sherborne School', a collection of 390 hymns, admirably adapted to the purpose, by the head master. The members of the choir have no privileges, except extra pocket money according to their form. The members of the lower school in the musical society are let off cricket-fagging during the cricket term.

Last, but not least of the studies, comes the musical society. This meets every night – one night for full rehearsal, and on other nights for practice of one voice part. The members, being on the spot, arrive promptly, and half an hour is sufficient for a practice. The conductor has the advantage of securing good attendance during term. Many of the boys remain four or five years, until

they are 17 or 18, but the numerous changes at the beginning of each term necessitate frequent fresh starts. The society has a large *repertoire*, but when a work is repeated many of the voices familiar with the music are no longer heard. There is no subscription, but the boys pay for the music provided. The funds are raised by each boy in the school subscribing a shilling for each concert, which includes admission, and all must attend. Subscription tickets at 10s for the five or six concerts of the year are issued. A small gallery is free to tradespeople, but, elsewhere, only subscribers are admitted. There is never any anxiety as to having an audience, for the performances are great occasions in the district. Once a year, on Commemoration Day, the boys go to the old minster adjoining the school, when they have their own special service. Every boy is encouraged to join the musical society. It is not a process of selection, or heartless rejection of untried voices. Mr Parker is no Calvinist in music; his young musicians are not predestined, but made. His object is to cultivate a taste for the best music, rather than the power of expression. Here he joins hands with many a Sol-faist who is trying to convince the people that they can sing if they will only learn.

Some Conclusions and Experiences

The public school boy is a peculiar animal. To acclimatise him, to win his sympathies, requires a good tactician. The teacher must never lose his temper, or the animal will take advantage of it. On the other hand, the young ape who makes himself troublesome can be withered by two words from a conductor, especially from one who wraps up a sting in a joke. Mr Parker never scolds, but his quick wit is quickly appreciated, and his boys are, consequently, on good terms with him. The teacher's personality accounts for the position of music in a public school more than in most places. Here the boys go away broken-hearted if they can't join the musical society.

Music at Uppingham in 1889

Musical Herald, January 1889, pp. 5–8

Visiting Uppingham twenty-three years after Paul David had begun teaching there, the representative of the *Musical Herald* was well placed to estimate his achievements. He found a third of the school, some 108 boys, now learning an instrument: 25 the violin, four or five the cello, three or four the flute, and the remainder the piano. Each boy had a lesson of three-quarters of an hour twice a week, out of school hours. David had five instrumental assistants. Experience had soon shown that competent musicians in England were not prepared to forsake remunerative urban teaching for life in a remote village

and modest fees. Instrumental teachers at the school were therefore brought over from Germany, where upwards of five million households had annual incomes of less than £45 at this time. Such living conditions at home made the terms of employment at Uppingham more than acceptable to them.

Music was an extra subject at Uppingham, not part of the curriculum nor an alternative to something else. Every boy was given a simple voice test on admission and a large choral society resulted. However, with the timetable so crowded there was no opportunity for systematic training in sight-singing. Instead, musical rudiments were picked up during glee-singing sessions, at choral rehearsals and choir practices.

In spite of this disadvantage David insisted on a policy of introducing boys to serious music. Singing patriotic airs in unison, he maintained (no doubt with Harrow in mind), was not enough. Every fortnight the instrumental teachers played chamber music to the school on Thursday afternoons. It was a condition of their appointment that they must play an orchestral instrument as well as the piano. Rehearsing and performing quartets for these regular recitals was good for the teachers as well as their audiences.

The chapel choir numbered more than a hundred boys, half of them trebles, the remainder altos or basses. Anthems were not sung; hymns were taken from the school's own hymnal edited by Paul David in 1874; psalms were sung to Anglican chants. Chapel services on Sundays were held in the morning and afternoon. In the evening came combined rehearsal of the cantata or oratorio being prepared in sectional rehearsals on weekdays. [BR]

Oratorios on Sunday Evenings

This is the climax of the musical work. The full rehearsal of the works of the great composers is a capital means of musically educating our future merchants, clergy, and lawyers. If all public schools were like this, the boast of the ornamental chairman (the wealthier the man, the greater is his arrogance) that he does not know the difference between A sharp and B flat would be heard less often than at present. As we sit and listen to the rehearsal of Mendelssohn's *Athalie* and *Hear my prayer*, we feel that Sunday evening in such company is a privilege and a pleasure. A number of boys have come to listen, some of them former members of the choir whose voices have failed them; others learning the art of listening which Sir Arthur Sullivan so sensibly advocates. Mr David repeatedly stops the singers for some slight weakness in attacking a lead, or failure to observe a *crescendo*, and on errors of note-reading or rhythmic irregularities he is severe and unpardoning. The slips, however, are very slight, though the work is only in the rehearsal stage.

The Musical Career of Uppingham

'If anyone had told me in my youth,' says Mr David, 'that I should spend my days in a quiet English village, I could not have believed them.' He was not

the first music-master but as he has been here twenty-three years he may claim to have given a model of high-class work in the public schools that has been of great service. Part-songs innumerable, but all of refined taste have been performed. A glance through three volumes of books of words shows that oratorios, cantatas, masses, &c. have been regularly given, including *Elijah*, *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Acis and Galatea*, *St Paul*, *Samson*, *The Creation*, *Joshua*, *Saul*, Mendelssohn's Psalms, Mozart's Seventh Mass, Bach's *God's time is the best* and *On the Feast of the Epiphany*, David's cantata, *The Widow of Nain*, and at the tercentenary festival in 1884 his *Under Two Queens*, Spohr's *God Thou art Great* and *Last Judgement*, Bennett's *May Queen*, and Haydn's 'Spring' from *The Seasons*. The lower school has performed Farmer's *Christ and his Soldiers*. A portion of the choir has given concerts in the Town Hall, Poplar, in connection with the East London Mission, which the school supports. When Sir W. S. Bennett died, the school commemorated his interest in it, by performing *The Woman of Samaria*, and other works of their old friend. In 1882 an annual concert was started in aid of the funds of the Royal College of Music, and this produces an exhibition of £20 at that College for the benefit of the school. The chief school concerts are generally given with a professional orchestra from London.

'I do not give the boys any regular orchestral work,' says Mr David. 'If it can be done in addition to the regular teaching, it is an excellent thing to do, but with the limited time given to music, I find that the pupil is fully occupied in practising his instrument. I would even give up the concerts if I could, and go in only for good and thorough teaching. But these concerts, if demonstrative, are not useless, because they interest the performers and instruct the hearers in serious and real music. We might have patriotic airs in unison, but they would not lay a foundation and taste for the musical art.'

A pleasant walk with Mr David in the country lanes brought out many recollections of men he had met; of his student days at Leipzig when Arthur Sullivan, Dannreuther, J. Francis Barnett, Carl Rosa, Franklin Taylor, and others were at the Conservatoire; we heard of Mr David's father, Herr Ferdinand David, and his celebrated *Violin School*; of the great pupil Herr Joachim; stories of Sir W. Sterndale Bennett; of Mr David's days as a violin player; of interesting impressions on German music; comparisons between Swedes, Russians, French, English, and Welsh, and many other things that we would like to have recorded. Above all, we are impressed with Mr David as a conscientious, careful, and most able musician. The work in this secluded spot has been done with great modesty and zeal; and many hundreds of the youth of England will always speak with respect and admiration of their music master.