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*The
Pre-Raphaelite
Cello*

Adrian Bradbury *cello*

Andrew West *piano*

The Pre-Raphaelite Cello

Beatrice Harrison (1892–1965) and The Frankfurt Gang

For a few years in the first half of the 20th century Beatrice Harrison could be seen as the leading British woman cellist, notable for presenting solo works by British composers from Elgar and Delius to Bax, John Ireland and Cyril Scott. Arnold Bax remarked: "I know she must be kept in order about rubatos, but I do believe she puts the stuff over better than any English cellist". The distinguished accompanist Gerald Moore wrote: "No woman cellist I have ever heard had, at once, a tone so powerful and sweet". It is difficult to verify how good she actually was at her peak in comparison with a later

generation, as she was only caught on disc in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, chosen by Elgar for it, her surviving electrical recording of Elgar's Cello Concerto fixes her in time and reminds us that Delius, John Ireland and Bax all wrote with her in mind. Coming from a well-off Indian Army family, enjoying strong social connections and surrounded by servants and loving family support, her life at her peak was very much one devoted to her art, often playing with her sister the violinist May Harrison.

Her links to the members of the so-called Frankfurt Gang, although she was of a slightly younger generation, meant that Roger Quilter, Cyril Scott and Percy Grainger featured in her repertoire in an age when instrumental soloists wanted short, attractive encores that might fit one side of a 12" 78rpm record. (So around 4 minutes.)

Beatrice Harrison with cello and microphone
in the garden at the Harrison family home,
Foyle Riding.



It was Grainger who first characterised the group at Frankfurt as “Pre-Raphaelite composers”. He explained, “I think the answer is the CHORD [a major triad on the flattened mediant, or on the submediant, which] has a heartrending power we musical Pre-Raphaelites needed”. Scott added, “My ideal was to invent a species of Pre-Raphaelite music”.

Iwan Knorr (1853–1916)

At a time when the reputation of the Leipzig Conservatoire was declining in the eyes of overseas students, Das Hoch’sche Konservatorium attracted a range of British composers to study at Frankfurt am Main. Quilter, Scott and Grainger were all composition students there of Iwan Knorr in the 1890s. Scott initially hoped to become a concert pianist but changed to composition after he encountered Knorr at Frankfurt, although in fact much of his later career depended on his phenomenal pianism.

Born in Germany, Knorr had lived in Russia where he had known Tchaikovsky. He was familiar with Ukrainian folk music and had written a set of *Ukrainische Liebeslieder* and *Variations on a Ukrainian Folksong*, the latter admired by Brahms. He had been successively professor of music at the Imperial Institute for Noble Ladies in Kharkiv in Ukraine and then director of the Kharkiv division of the Russian Imperial Music Society. His **Variationen über ein Thema von K. Klimsch, Op.4** is a gentle set of eight variations for cello and piano published in 1888, though it is not known if Beatrice played them. The point of interest to us is that the theme is by Karl Klimsch, friend and mentor to Percy Grainger, and his informal composition teacher. In fact, although not professionally trained, Klimsch later became a board member of the Frankfurt Konservatorium, and remained a long-time friend of Knorr.



Iwan Knorr in 1901

Hugo Becker (1863–1941)

Hugo Becker, cello professor at the Frankfurt Konservatorium from 1885 to 1909, began teaching 15-year-old student Beatrice Harrison on 15 August 1908. Cyril Scott remembered how, when staying at Tremezzo in the Italian Lakes, “Beatrice was having a few finishing lessons with her eminent professor, Hugo Becker, who owned a villa on the lake-side”. He described Becker as “a smartly-dressed, pointed-bearded man, looking more like a diplomat than a musician”. It had been decided that Beatrice should study with such a celebrated player, and it was remarked that he had “a lovely house outside Frankfurt”. When subsequently Becker was appointed Robert Hausmann’s successor at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, the whole Harrison family decamped and followed him there. His six short cello pieces tracing the development of a love affair, ***Liebesleben***, **Op.7**, date from 1894. We hear No.5 “Frage” (Question) and No.6 “Antwort” (Answer). (The earlier movements had been “First Sight”, “Doubt”, “Dreaming”, “Dalliance” or “Flirting”). They were dedicated to Becker’s own teacher, Alfredo Piatti. While most of Piatti’s playing career had been in London, he had taught Becker from his own villa at the same lakeside spot.



Hugo Becker c.1901

Roger Quilter (1877–1953)

Four of the tracks by Roger Quilter are instrumental arrangements of his very popular songs (one taken from his incidental music to the popular stage play *Where the Rainbow Ends*), the other two being fashioned on French songs: a medieval chanson and an aria from the Baroque. Quilter was at Frankfurt between 1896 and 1899, years when Scott and Grainger were also there (Scott on his second visit). But his meeting with Beatrice came later, during the First World War.

From a privileged background, after prep school and Eton he had been sent to Frankfurt to study music, possibly organised by his mother who recognised his artistic personality. Cyril Scott remembered him as “one of the most original and entertaining characters I have ever met. ... With his gestures and humour ... he had a type of wit entirely his own. ... he exuded refinement and charm.” His composition teacher, Knorr, remarked: “He will never be a great composer. But his compositions will be as charming as he is himself.” He quickly achieved a popular reputation for his songs. Quilter’s cycle of six settings of Robert Herrick, *To Julia*, Op.8, dates from 1906 and was quickly published and widely sung. The cycle’s third and fifth songs, “**To Daisies**” and “**Julia’s Hair**”, became attractive cello encores. Beatrice remarked: “It was always such a delight to play his divine songs accompanied by him on the piano”. In fact these arrangements date from 1918. Also from wartime concerts date the then recently composed Blake setting “**Dream Valley**” (1917) and the 15th-century French chanson *L’Amour de moy* (undated, likely also 1917). The latter was always a favourite work of Beatrice, and we might savour its reference to “Happy the nightingale”. She played it in her last recital at the Coventry Cathedral Festival in 1958. It was orchestrated for her BBC broadcast in 1933. Quilter’s arrangement for voice and piano, known as “My Lady’s Garden” from the English translation by Rodney Bennett, was only published in 1947.

Also looking back to an earlier time, “**Bois épais**” (known in English as “Sombre Woods” from an 1892 translation by Theo Marzials) is an arrangement by Quilter of a lyrical, quiet monologue from Act II of Jean-Baptiste Lully’s *tragédie de musique* of 1684 *Amadis*.

We have largely forgotten the longstanding success of the children’s play *Where the Rainbow Ends*, appealing very much to the same audience as *Peter Pan*. As a stage show it was first produced in 1911, and in various incarnations it lasted until 1959. Quilter’s score for this escapist tale perfectly caught its mood and was variously recorded. The Lullaby, “Rock-a-Bye Slumber”, when arranged as a song and transcribed as an instrumental encore for piano solo, and with violin or cello, became known as **Slumber Song**. Its gentle 6/8, as Valerie Langfield has pointed out, “serves to reinforce the wistful mood”.

Cyril Scott (1879–1970)

In the early years of the 20th century Cyril Scott, a composer much of whose music was delivered from the keyboard, was viewed very much as an *avant-gardiste* celebrated for his unusual harmonies, but also as the composer of many popular piano solos including *Lotus Land*, *Water-Wagtail* and **Vesperale**. The latter dates from 1904 and is numbered Op.40, No.2 (No.1 was *Solitude*, No.3 *Chimes*). It was arranged for cello by the cellist Boris Hambourg (another ex-Frankfurt Becker student) and published by Elkin in 1921. “Vesperale” signals the liturgy at Vespers, but with its easy, graceful flow, its slightly religious atmosphere does not suggest any actual hymns. The three piano pieces that appeared as Op.57 were all after poetic quotations. Dating from 1908, **Lullaby** references Christina Rossetti’s children’s poem “Lullaby, oh, lullaby!/Flowers are closed and lambs are sleeping”). Arranged by Charles Warwick Evans, the cellist of the London String Quartet and formerly leading cello in the Queen’s Hall Orchestra, it was published by Elkin in 1918.

Beatrice Harrison is celebrated for her broadcast of 19 May 1924, playing late at night with the sound of nightingales in her Surrey garden. Beatrice described what happened, saying “a sensitive microphone had been set up within a hundred yards of where the nightingale sang”. It was broadcast over 2LO and heard by a million people. It created her popular reputation. Later Cyril Scott celebrated the event with his 20-minute musical “Poem” *The Melodist and the Nightingales* for cello and orchestra, written for and about her.

In his various Pierrot pieces Scott gives us musical portraits of this sad *commedia dell’arte* character, of which **Pierrot amoureux** of 1904, published in 1912, is the most extended. Here, in a notably expressive piece dedicated to Beatrice Harrison, Pierrot dreams of his unrequited feelings for Columbine, but he is never challenged by Harlequin, who perhaps we should assume has won. It was first played in Copenhagen by the two Frankfurt friends Herman Sandby and Percy Grainger in 1904.

Pastoral and Reel, which dates from 1926, finds us in a new musical and political post-war world. The introductory pastoral is a singularly spooky one, its opening other-worldly pizzicatos, which dissolve with upward gliding or glissandos, creating a spectral world. This is all for solo cello, continuing into the human vigour of the ensuing reel. The piano only joins it towards the end (played by Beatrice’s sister Margaret on 13 May 1927 and on her HMV recording). One remembers how in 1924 she had given two performances of Kodály’s then new Solo Sonata for cello, and perhaps this was Cyril’s tribute to her pioneering.

The **Ballade**, first heard in 1930 and published in 1934, is a work of mystery. Premiered by the Belgian cellist Toni Close with the composer at Wigmore Hall, it was later played by Carl Fuchs, another ex-Frankfurt student. It is a substantial musical narrative running for 13½ minutes which rises to a powerful climax. But Scott does not tell us if there is a non-musical theme, nor does he identify its dedicatee: “Madeleine”. The music is sectional and comprises five clear episodes. The work starts with an introductory Adagio (con gran espress. ma piano), the piano sounding nine bars of chords which, because of Scott’s harmonising in fourths, sound cold. The cello is muted when it enters with an upward arpeggio, which introduces an extension of the opening chord on the cello before the opening piano chords return. After a transition (Etwas bewegter – Scott mixes German and Italian musical instructions, unlike his friend Grainger who uses his own version of English), a build-up (Tempo agitato) reaches the dissonant crisis before a fade down to the end. Bearing in mind Scott is writing in his later pan-modal language, the harmonic and rhythmic treatment is powerfully delivered.

Percy Grainger (1882–1961)

Percy Grainger arrived at Frankfurt from Australia in 1895 and remained until 1900. He was a student pianist with aspirations to be a composer. Henry Balfour Gardiner and Norman O’Neill were already established as students, but the other members of his immediate English-speaking circle did not arrive until the following year. Grainger was differentiated from the others in that he was accompanied by his mother.



Percy Grainger, Cyril Scott and Roger Quilter
at Harrogate, 25 July 1929

Youthful Rapture (“Rausch der Jugend” on the printed copy) is dated March 1901 and is dedicated to another companion – and Becker student – at Frankfurt, Herman Sandby, “in love and worth-prizement”. Originally drafted as “A Lot of Rot” for solo cello and elastic accompaniment of various instruments, it has the feel of a piece that was developed between like-minded students testing their friends.

The Sussex Mummers’ Christmas Carol is No.17 in Grainger’s series of British Folk-Music Settings and, like many of them, is “lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edvard Grieg”. Typical of Grainger’s process, this composition was worked on from 1905 to 1911, yet his cello and piano version was made in the first year of that gestation and dedicated to “My friend Herman Sandby, in happy memory of joys in 1905”. Grainger also acknowledges Lucy Broadwood as his source for the folksong, which she had collected at Lyne near Horsham in 1880 and 1881 from the Christmas Mummers called “Tipteers”.

Grainger’s **Variations on Handel’s “The Harmonious Blacksmith”** of 1911 comes with various forces in mind: conceived as being played by cello, it can also be vocalised to “la, la”. What became known as “The Harmonious Blacksmith” is in fact the last movement of Handel’s Suite No.5 for harpsichord. Subsequently Grainger revisited the opening bars to create one of his most popular and familiar works, *Handel in the Strand*.

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Photo: Adaq Khan



“This recording is dedicated to the memory of pianist Oliver Davies (1938–2020), who conceived and devised the programme.”



ADRIAN BRADBURY was principal cello in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain before winning scholarships to Churchill College, Cambridge (where he read Veterinary Science and Music) and then to the Royal Academy of Music. After further study in Berlin he developed an international career in chamber music as the cellist in Composers Ensemble, Jane’s Minstrels, Trio Gemelli, Touchwood Piano Quartet and Chamber Domaine, winning a Royal Philharmonic Society Chamber Award and giving world premieres of solos and chamber works by Thomas Adès, Guy Barker, Judith Bingham, Tansy Davies, Dai Fujikura, Naresh Sohal, James MacMillan, Hugh Wood and John Woolrich.

Adrian is a regular guest principal player with orchestras including BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera, Ensemble Modern, London Concert Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and Welsh National Opera, and he is Cello Tutor for the National Youth Orchestra.

His research into ensemble synchronisation, in collaboration with Professor Alan Wing, is published by the Royal Society and has led to invitations to curate a “Music and Brain” series at the Aldeburgh Festival and to appear as speaker on BBC Radio 4’s “PM” and “Today” programmes and on Radio 3. He is a trustee of the Museum of Music History, a former trustee of Help Musicians, and has held fellowships at the University of Cambridge (artistic by-fellow), University of Birmingham (honorary) and the Royal Academy of Music (honorary).

His discography includes the complete operatic fantasies of 19th-century virtuoso Alfredo Piatti, with pianist Oliver Davies, and his chamber music discs have variously won “Editor’s Choice” in *Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine*, and “CD of the Month” in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Strad*.



ANDREW WEST's eclectic career has ranged from solo tours of the United States and South Africa, to worldwide appearances as song accompanist and chamber musician. He has appeared with Adrian Bradbury in both duo recitals and as members of the acclaimed piano quartet Touchwood.

For 12 years Andrew was an Artistic Director of the Nuremberg International Chamber Music Festival, which promoted a wide range of British music alongside the core Classical and Romantic repertoire. He works extensively with Emily Beynon, principal flute of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. They will shortly finish recording a 5-CD series of repertoire from the 1930s and 1940s called *Project Paloma*.

Andrew West plays for many of today's leading singers and has established longstanding partnerships with Mark Padmore and Roderick Williams. His concerts with Mark Padmore have included staged performances of Schubert's *Winterreise* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Lincoln Center, New York and the world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's song cycle *Songs from the Same Earth*. They opened the 2016/17 recital series at the Library of Congress in Washington DC. With Roderick Williams he has given recitals at the Barbican Centre and recorded several CDs of English music for SOMM.

He and Hilary Summers have created a one-woman, 30-minute English-language version of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, which has been touring the country to widespread hilarity.

Andrew West is Chairman and Artistic Director of Kirkman Concerts, which for 60 years has auditioned exceptional young musicians and offered them debut recitals at major London venues.

He has an MA from Clare College, Cambridge, where he read English before studying under Christopher Elton and John Streets at the Royal Academy of Music, and he is now a Fellow of the RAM.

He is currently professor of ensemble piano at the RAM and teaches regularly at the University of Cambridge.

The Pre-Raphaelite Cello

Adrian Bradbury *cello*
Andrew West *piano*

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|--|-------|--|--------------|
| Iwan Knorr (1853–1916) | | Cyril Scott (1879–1970) | |
| ① Variationen über ein Thema von K. Klmsch Op.4 (1888) * | 13:37 | ⑨ Vesperale Op.40 No.2 (1904; arr. Boris Hambourg 1921) * | 2:45 |
| Hugo Becker (1863–1941) | | ⑩ Lullaby Op.57 No.2 (1908; arr. Charles Warwick Evans 1918) | 2:18 |
| ② Liebesleben Op.7 (1894) | 3:02 | ⑪ Pierrot amoureux (1912) * | 7:44 |
| 5. "Frage"* | | ⑫ Pastoral and Reel (1926) | 5:28 |
| 6. "Antwort"* | | ⑬ Ballade (1934) | 13:29 |
| Roger Quilter (1877–1953) | | Percy Grainger (1882–1961) | |
| 15th-century French chanson
arr. Roger Quilter | | ⑭ Youthful Rapture (Rausch der Jugend) (1901) | 5:02 |
| ③ L'Amour de moy (?1917) * | 3:34 | ⑮ Variations on Handel's "The Harmonious Blacksmith" (1911) * | 1:38 |
| Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687)
arr. Roger Quilter | | ⑯ The Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol (1905) * | 3:31 |
| ④ "Bois épais" from <i>Amadis</i> Act II * | 2:33 | Total duration: | 73:18 |
| To Julia Op.8 (1906) | | | |
| ⑤ 3. "To Daisies" (tr. 1918) | 2:33 | | |
| ⑥ 5. "Julia's Hair" (tr. 1918) * | 1:49 | | |
| ⑦ Slumber Song (1911; tr. 1912)
from <i>Where the Rainbow Ends</i> | 1:54 | | |
| 3 Songs of William Blake Op.20 (1917) | | | |
| ⑧ 1. "Dream Valley" (tr. 1917) * | 2:16 | | |

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