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LITERATURE INTO MUSIC: MUSIC INSPIRED BY THE WORKS OF THOMAS HARDY

Part One: Music composed during Hardy's lifetime

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Many of the most notable British composers of Hardy's later years wrote music inspired by his writings. This article concentrates on music by those composers who wrote operatic and orchestral works during Hardy's lifetime, and only mentions song settings of poems, and music in dramatisations for radio and other media, when they were written by featured composers. An article to be published in the next issue of *The Hardy Review* will consider more recent compositions. Detailed consideration is given to three major works: Frederic d'Erlanger's *Tess*, Rutland Boughton's *The Queen of Cornwall* and Gustav Holst's *Egdon Heath*. Shorter evaluations follow of Hardy-influenced works by Patrick Hadley, H. Balfour Gardiner, Ralph Vaughan Williams and John Ireland. There is a note on a projected collaboration with Sir Edward Elgar that never came to fruition. In conclusion there is a brief appraisal of why Hardy's works should have had such an appeal to composers of that era.

Keywords: Thomas Hardy, Music, Frederic d'Erlanger, Rutland Boughton, Gustav Holst, Patrick Hadley, H. Balfour Gardiner, Ralph Vaughan Williams, John Ireland, Sir Edward Elgar

Studies of Hardy and music have tended, understandably enough, to concentrate on the music that influenced Hardy or the part played by music in Hardy's works, rather than on the music that Hardy inspired.¹ Yet the list of composers in Hardy's later years who were inspired by his work reads like a roll-call of many of the most notable British composers of the time: Arnold Bax, Arthur Bliss, Rutland Boughton, H. Balfour Gardiner, Gustav Holst, John Ireland, Ralph Vaughan Williams. There were numerous others who were little-known then and who have virtually disappeared from sight since. It has recently been revealed that Hardy even set one of his own poems to music, though he set it to an existing tune rather than one of his composition.² Many of these composers set Hardy's poems to music (his poems were set by some 25 composers during his lifetime), while other composers produced opera or orchestral works. Far from declining after the author's death, Hardy-inspired compositions have continued to flow ever since. By 1976 there were some 300 Hardy songs by over 100 composers, with many more written since that date, one of the most notable recent pieces being James Burton's striking setting of "The Convergence of the Twain" for

¹ John Hughes, in his "'Tune' and 'Thought': The Uses of Music in Hardy's Poetry" *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. Rosemarie Morgan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) 269-81 lists the most significant such studies in his note 3 (270) while his chapter is in itself another good example.

² The manuscript of the musical setting of "O I Won't Lead a Homely Life", in Hardy's hand, was sold by auction at Bonhams, London on 10 April 2013. The poem (from *Late Lyrics and Earlier*) is annotated "(To an old air)" and one imagines that the tune is the air referred to.

baritone, chorus and orchestra.³ There have also been numbers of operas and musicals.

A book-length study would be required to do justice to all of this Hardy-inspired music, and therefore I have had to be selective. With some reluctance, I have excluded song settings, on the grounds that they form a large body of work by themselves,⁴ which would unbalance treatment of other works. Also, the justly celebrated settings by Gerald Finzi and Benjamin Britten have generated a number of assessments, mainly by music scholars but to some extent in Hardy studies as well. Song settings are however mentioned where they are written by a composer I am covering for other reasons, e.g. Holst.

The intention of this paper is to survey the wide range of music inspired by the remainder of Hardy's work, primarily his fiction but including *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*. This first paper covers works composed during Hardy's lifetime, where there were fascinating interactions between author and composer. A second paper will survey how Hardy's fiction continues to inspire composers right up to the present day.⁵

Writing any sort of technical analysis of the music would require a professional musician or musicologist, neither of which I have any claim to be, and it would also be inappropriate in a journal whose readership is of a literary rather than a musical bent. Therefore there are no musical examples, and publication details of scores are not given; those interested in tracking down scores will be able to do so readily enough from the information provided. However one of the main motivators to writing this piece was an awareness of the unrivalled opportunities we have today to listen to recordings and to attend live performances of so much of this music, so some information on recordings is included. In order to keep this survey within manageable bounds I have had to restrict coverage to musical works such as operas, musicals and orchestral pieces, i.e. compositions where the music is to the fore (with the exception again of pieces by composers I am treating for other reasons). This is not to denigrate in any way the often excellent music that has been composed for film, TV and radio adaptations and that (usually based on folk music) forms part of many stage dramatisations, but consideration of that music belongs more properly in studies of Hardy on film and Hardy in the theatre.

Opera may perhaps be considered the most natural musical form for much of Hardy's work, bearing in mind Hardy's predilection for strong characters and dramatic

³ This 17 minute piece was premiered at the St Endellion Easter Festival on 6 April 2012.

⁴ The song settings composed during Hardy's lifetime have formed the subject of a PhD thesis: Susan Bell, *Verse into Song: Composers and their Settings of Poems by Thomas Hardy: 1893-1928* (Loughborough University, 2007).

⁵ The only previous survey in Hardy scholarship of which I am aware is Gordon Pullin's "Hardy in Music", *The Thomas Hardy Society Review*, 1.10 (1984) 318-323. While this is an excellent brief survey, it concentrates largely on vocal settings and in particular those composed during Hardy's lifetime. In any case the passage of nearly 30 years would appear to justify an updated review of the subject. Philip L Scowcroft's 2001 "Music and Thomas Hardy" in *Music Web International* is a useful modern survey, but does not go into detail about the pieces listed: www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2001/may01/Hardy.htm

events.⁶ Indeed, Hardy's well-known maxim that "A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling"⁷ is a view that one feels would be shared by many opera composers / librettists, and it is therefore not surprising that there were two full-scale Hardy opera projects during his later years, in both of which Hardy himself showed a keen interest. The first was d'Erlanger's *Tess*⁸ and the second Rutland Boughton's *The Queen of Cornwall*.

Baron Frédéric d'Erlanger's 1906 opera *Tess* has to date been little more than a footnote both in Hardy studies and in the world of opera. Desmond Hawkins' informative 23-page monograph of 1984 (the culmination of 10 years of research)⁹ remains by far the most substantial piece so far published on it, and the opera has not received the sort of attention devoted for example to the Hardy Players' dramatisations of many of Hardy's novels or to film adaptations of them. D'Erlanger's opera has fared no better in the world of music, having more or less disappeared from view after some initial success. The *Tess* opera has not been performed in its entirety since a radio broadcast in 1929, and there has never been a complete recording; indeed there have been few recent performances or recordings of any of d'Erlanger's varied musical output. You will search in vain for any of d'Erlanger's four operas in *The New Kobbé's Opera Book*, and d'Erlanger's place in music studies is indicated by the bibliography attached to the short piece about him in *Grove Music Online*, which contains but one item: the Hawkins monograph! Indeed, to most Hardy enthusiasts probably the most memorable thing about the opera is that its first performance, in Naples, was marked by an eruption of Vesuvius, an event that was, in Hardy's words, "all of a piece with *Tess*'s catastrophic career"¹⁰.

Baron Freddy, as he was known,¹¹ was a member of an illustrious banking family of very cosmopolitan character. Baron Freddy's father was German and his mother was American, while he himself was born in Paris and became a naturalised British subject. Combining a banking career with a love of music, d'Erlanger (1868-1943) composed four operas, music for ballet, orchestral and chamber music, a requiem and a violin concerto. He was also fascinated by the then very new recording technology, and founded a company called Fonotopia to record the opera stars of the day; it was

⁶ Joan Grundy perceptively suggests that "Hardy's experience of opera, particularly during the early, impressionable period of his life when he attended performances at Covent Garden and His Majesty's several times a week, had undoubtedly a marked formative influence on his work"; this in turn would tend to make Hardy's works particularly suitable for operatic treatment. (Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), 150.) See her entire Chapter 5 for the full development of her argument.

⁷ Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 268.

⁸ An opera based on *Tess* had earlier been proposed in 1900, by two Americans: Charlotte Pendleton was to write the libretto, with music by Elliott Schenck. See Hawkins, 3. Hardy was typically supportive, offering to waive his royalties for one year from the date of its first performance "in order to assist its production". Hardy's letter of 23 October 1900 is in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, vol. 8, ed. Michael Millgate and Keith Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), 56. Whether or not the opera was completed, it appears never to have been performed.

⁹ Desmond Hawkins, *The Tess Opera* (Creech St. Michael: Thomas Hardy Society, 1984).

¹⁰ Letter to d'Erlanger of 28 April 1906, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88) vol. 3, 204.

¹¹ His father, Frederic Emile D'Erlanger (1832-1911) had been awarded the title of baron in 1864 as a reward for successfully bringing out a loan on behalf of the government of Sweden to finance railway construction. Both Frederic and his brother Emile assumed the title of baron on the death of their father in 1911. (*Oxford DNB*, online ed.)

for this company that extracts from the *Tess* opera were first recorded. His music was highly regarded, so that for the first London performance of *Tess*, he was able to secure one of the top sopranos of the day, Emmy Destinn, to sing the title role, while for a recording of one of Angel Clare's arias he was able to obtain Alessandro Bonci, second only in reputation at the time to the legendary Caruso. Yet despite successful productions both at Covent Garden and at a number of European opera houses, *Tess* never did make it into opera's standard repertoire. Much the same neglect has befallen the rest of d'Erlanger's musical output, though there have been a couple of recent recordings,¹² and his Requiem was revived in 2001. So perhaps the tide is turning, but Richard Morrison probably sums up the prevailing view by describing d'Erlanger as 'a decent second-rate composer'.¹³

Hardy made a very real contribution to the work of d'Erlanger and his librettist Luigi Illica, the (co-)librettist of no less an opera than Puccini's *La Bohème*. Hardy's positive view of creating an opera based on his novel was shown from his very first letter to d'Erlanger following the latter's initial enquiry: "That Tess of the d'Urbervilles would furnish good action for an opera has occurred to me more than once", wrote Hardy on 24 August 1902, inviting d'Erlanger to Max Gate to talk through the project. Following that successful meeting, Hardy sent his formal sanction that October. So long as the libretto was "serious & sincere in intention, & not of a comic or burlesque nature" and "follow[ed] the novel as nearly as circumstances permit"¹⁴ Hardy appeared content to allow the librettist a free hand. In the event Illica did make some quite significant changes to the narrative. For example the opera ended with the wedding night confession and Tess's suicide by drowning, and it was Tess's father who was charged with telling Angel about Tess's past, so that the wedding night confession was precipitated by Tess's realisation that her father had said nothing rather than by any omission on Tess's own part. The opera was first performed in Naples on 10 April 1906, but the audience was small, thanks to Mount Vesuvius erupting, and the next day the theatre had to be closed. Nevertheless the reports of those who did attend were evidently positive, as Puccini himself sent his congratulations to d'Erlanger after the première. There was a less dramatic performance in Milan in 1908, with the London premiere at Covent Garden taking place on 14 July 1909. Hardy attended some rehearsals as well as the first night in London, which was a great success, and led to further performances both that year and the next, though the death of King Edward VII put a damper on the latter year's London season and in Hardy's mind was a major cause for the opera never having become part of the repertoire.¹⁵ Hardy's public comments on the adaptation were guarded. In some letters he tended to distance himself from the opera, writing that while it had been a great success, it was really quite separate from his novel, while in the *Life* he even stated that it had been "Italianized to such an extent that Hardy scarcely recognised it as his novel". Yet his letters to d'Erlanger were supportive throughout, and he even called it a "beautiful opera": "The music was very haunting

¹² Volume 10 of Hyperion's "The Romantic Violin Concerto" (2011) includes d'Erlanger's Violin Concerto and "Poème" (CDA67838), while in 2013 Dutton Epoch issued a full CD of d'Erlanger world premiere recordings, including his Piano Concerto (CDLX 7300).

¹³ *The Times*, 2 September 2011 (*Times* 2, Features, 3).

¹⁴ *Collected Letters*, vol. 8, 63-6.

¹⁵ Hawkins notes a production sung in German in 1911 in Chemnitz, with a performance in Budapest later the same year. The last known complete performance was transmitted on BBC Radio on 2 March 1929. Full details are in Hawkins, 19-20.

& I for one should like to hear it again” he wrote to d’Erlanger in 1925¹⁶, many years after he had last heard it.

For many decades the opera remained unperformed, and still remains unrecorded as a whole, so it may be helpful to include here some comments on Barry Ferguson’s “illustrated talk” “The Sound of Tess: Discovering Baron Frédéric d’Erlanger and his Opera” held at Dorset County Museum on 17 September 2011. While Ferguson¹⁷ ably presented the history of the opera, what made the evening so memorable was the first opportunity for virtually the entire audience to listen to extracts from it. Ferguson on the piano and Rachel Gough on the violin between them managed to convey an astonishing amount of the colour and texture of a full orchestra, while all three singers were equally outstanding.¹⁸ There were some 40 minutes of extracts from *Tess*, with a bonus of d’Erlanger’s Sonata for Violin and Piano (of which Ferguson was unaware of any recent performance) and finally some songs. Opera of course has its own conventions, which may require some audience readjustment, and it was initially somewhat disconcerting to hear this very English novel sung mainly in Italian with music that was clearly in the late 19th / early 20th century Italian operatic tradition. However, the music was both enjoyable in itself and effective in conveying the emotion of the characters and the drama of the situations. The opera’s final scene, in which Tess left Angel for ever, walking out of the room after her confession to drown herself, was semi-staged and very moving. The audience evidently caught Ferguson’s infectious enthusiasm for d’Erlanger’s music, and one certainly came away wondering how such splendid and approachable music should so long have been neglected.¹⁹

Later that same year, David Owen Norris featured a short extract from d’Erlanger’s opera in his Radio 4 programme “Thomas Hardy’s iPod”,²⁰ the first radio broadcast of music from the opera since 1929.

It is to be hoped that the Dorchester evening and the radio broadcast may between them give a real impetus to a revival of interest in d’Erlanger that may result in a full production and / or a recording of *Tess*.

The second major Hardy-inspired operatic production of Hardy’s lifetime, **Rutland Boughton’s *The Queen of Cornwall*** was very different from d’Erlanger’s *Tess*: musically Boughton’s score is a far cry from the Italian operatic tradition exemplified by Puccini; while rather than being an adaptation of a major, well-established Hardy novel it was based on Hardy’s only just published “play for mummers in one act” *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* (1923). What is similar is the pattern of Hardy’s personal involvement in the project, culminating again in his attendance at an

¹⁶ *Collected Letters*, vol. 6, 350.

¹⁷ Ferguson is former organist of Rochester Cathedral and co-creator of the 1996 CD “Lost Love at Max Gate: Song Settings of Thomas Hardy”.

¹⁸ Dorset-based soprano Abbi Temple sang Tess, Clement Hetherington (tenor) sang Angel, while Jonathan Prentice’s powerful baritone performed both Jack Durbeyfield and Alec. All sang superbly, and conveyed an astonishing amount of emotion in the short extracts.

¹⁹ The evening was recorded (albeit for archive purposes rather than for commercial sale, due to licensing restrictions). The programme was repeated at the 2012 Thomas Hardy Conference & Festival in Dorchester, on 19 August, with Mark Wilde taking the place of Hetherington as tenor.

²⁰ Broadcast on 10 December 2011.

early performance; there is also the same mixture of public distance and apparent private enjoyment.

To a modern-day reader the term “Glastonbury Festival” will almost certainly bring to mind the large-scale annual open air rock festival held in fact some miles from Glastonbury, at Pilton. Almost forgotten today are the original Glastonbury Festivals co-founded by Rutland Boughton (1878-1960) and held in the town from 1914 to 1926.²¹ Yet in their day they were enormously successful, with some 350 staged performances and over 100 chamber concerts, plus plays, lectures and so on; some productions were also taken on tour. Boughton himself was key to their success over more than ten years. Moreover, *The Immortal Hour*, an opera by Boughton premiered at the first Festival, was later put on in London and ran to 376 performances during 1922 and 1923, with revivals in 1926 and 1932; it still holds the world record for a continuous run of any serious opera written by an English composer²². As an impressionable 18 year old, the future composer of many Hardy song settings Gerald Finzi enthusiastically attended the 1919 Glastonbury Festival, and visited Boughton as late as 1956 in the last year of his (Finzi’s) life. Had Hardy himself accepted Boughton’s invitation to attend the same Festival, Finzi might at least have been in the same auditorium as the poet who was so greatly to influence his composing life - but Hardy did not go.

So when Boughton contacted Hardy in 1923, he already had an impressive track record, and Hardy readily acknowledged that he knew him by reputation. What is perhaps most striking is the speed of the whole project. Galvanised perhaps by the need to produce a new opera for the following summer’s festival, Boughton wrote to Hardy within a very few days of the publication of *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* on 15 November 1923, asking for permission to use it as the basis of a music-drama.²³ Hardy agreed in principle on the 25th. Bearing in mind perhaps the four years that d’Erlanger’s *Tess* had taken between initial discussion and first performance, Hardy pleaded with Boughton: “please don’t let it take you two or three years, for I may be dead”!²⁴ In fact, the first performance took place only nine months later, in August 1924.

As with d’Erlanger, a series of letters resolved the details of the formal agreement, while the correspondence was supplemented by an early meeting on 4 February 1924 and a later one in June, when Boughton stayed for a couple of days at Max Gate, played some of his new music on the piano and had a drive with the Hardys across

²¹ The Glastonbury Festival Players were wound up abruptly in July 1927 following Boughton’s winter 1926 London production that made clear his support for that year’s General Strike, with the scandal surrounding his politics perhaps exacerbated by his extra-marital affairs. Hurd describes how in *Bethlehem* Boughton decided to “drop the traditional costumes and décor ... and substitute a contemporary setting. Christ was to be born in a miner’s cottage, and Herod, supported by uniformed police, was to appear as the cigar-smoking, evening-dressed embodiment of capitalism”. Michael Hurd, *Rutland Boughton and the Glastonbury Festivals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 180. It is worth noting that the Rutland Boughton Music Trust has outline plans to hold a Centenary Festival at Glastonbury in 2014. Regrettably it is not planned to include *The Queen of Cornwall*.

²² The Rutland Boughton Music Trust website: <http://rutland-boughton-music-trust.blogspot.co.uk/>

²³ Hurd considers that Hardy’s verse-drama partly appealed to Boughton “on purely personal grounds in that the story mirrored his own emotional problems – torn, like Tristram, between the love of two women”. Hurd, 287-9.

²⁴ *Collected Letters*, vol. 6, 225.

part of Egdon Heath, purple with rhododendrons in full bloom. It is clear that the two men got on well. The normally reticent *Life* says that Hardy “found Mr Boughton a stimulating companion, and was interested in his [communist] political views, though he could not share them”.²⁵ Florence Hardy more dramatically informed Cockerell that Hardy had declared that he liked Boughton better than anyone he had ever met.²⁶

Hardy was supportive of Boughton throughout. He sent him tickets for the production of the play in London by the Hardy Players, refused permission to anyone else who wished to set any part of the work to music, and ensured that Boughton had early sight of the changes he was making for the 1924 second edition. In fact, Boughton remembered that Hardy personally “copied into my volume of *The Queen* those passages which he added, subsequent to its first publication, in case they might be found suitable for the musical version also”.²⁷ While Hardy occasionally queried Boughton’s suggestions for changes, his underlying stance was that “I quite approve of your doing what is best for the music”, and he was content to allow Boughton to remove the Prologue completely. On one point he jocularly remarked “As to the Messenger: he is so impersonal that if he is not wanted, slay him”.²⁸ Perhaps most significantly, he agreed that Boughton could include in his opera a number of freestanding poems: “Bereft, She Thinks She Dreams”, “When I Set Out for Lyonesse”, “Beeny Cliff”, “If It’s Ever Spring Again”, “The End of the Episode” and “A Spot”.²⁹ For Boughton these songs were essential to ameliorate the “unrelieved grimness of the tragedy”, since “when set to music the emotional expression of the bulk of the work would be nearly doubled” and “actual weakness ... would result from continuously playing on a single series of emotions”.³⁰ Initially doubtful that he would be able to find appropriate existing Hardy poems, “I read again his poems from cover to cover, and discovered six poems which might have been written for *The Queen of Cornwall* itself.”³¹

The opera was first performed at the Glastonbury Festival on 21 August 1924, with only piano accompaniment (as was usual at Glastonbury). Hardy himself attended a performance on the 28th, though Boughton notes that Hardy only arrived at the last minute and then kept a low profile by sitting in one of the dressing rooms that gave on to the back of the auditorium.³² It is difficult to be quite sure of Hardy’s own reaction to the opera. In public he determined to keep a clear line between his work and Boughton’s adaptation, so that for instance before he attended the concert performance in Bournemouth in April 1925 he wrote that “We should prefer to come quite privately, like any other people in the audience, particularly as the musical work is Mr Rutland Boughton’s & not mine”, and making clear that he would certainly not

²⁵ *Life and Work*, 458.

²⁶ *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 208n.

²⁷ Boughton’s recollections of his collaboration with Hardy were originally published in *The Musical News and Herald* shortly after Hardy’s death (15 February 1928, 33-4). Quoted in Gibson, *Thomas Hardy: Interviews and Recollections* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 205-7.

²⁸ *Collected Letters*, vol. 6, 250.

²⁹ Hardy even suggested some other extracts from his poems that might be helpful at particular points in the drama, for which Boughton had evidently sought his help, though the suggestions made in his letter of 18 June 1924 were not in fact adopted. *Collected Letters*, vol. 6, 257.

³⁰ Hurd, 161-3.

³¹ Quoted in Gibson, 205.

³² Quoted in Gibson, 207.

speak at the end of the broadcast performance.³³ In the *Life* he made clear that he had heard “no modern compositions, not even the immensely popular ‘Faerie Song’ from [Boughton’s] *The Immortal Hour*: “‘The Blue Danube’, ‘The Morgenblätter Waltz’, and the ‘Overture to *William Tell*’ interested him more strongly, also church music, mainly on account of the association with his early days”. Yet in the same passage he states that he was “greatly interested” in Boughton’s plans for *The Queen of Cornwall*³⁴, and his constant support for the project has already been noted. One cannot be sure whether Florence was being diplomatic or was reflecting her and Hardy’s true feelings when she wrote to Boughton after his June 1924 visit that they both “loved hearing the music”, which he had played on “the horrible piano” at Max Gate.³⁵ On balance it is probable that Hardy really did appreciate at least parts of the music. Certainly, Boughton himself notes perceptively that Hardy’s “musical tastes were folkish, so he felt near enough to my own work to enjoy the lyrical parts”.³⁶

While Boughton’s *The Queen of Cornwall* never rivalled the popularity of *The Immortal Hour*, it was revived at Glastonbury in 1925, was produced in Liverpool in 1927 (by which time Boughton had added an overture³⁷) and London in 1963³⁸. It was also broadcast in full on BBC radio in 1935 and 1950 (twice in both years), with substantial excerpts aired in 1978. Nevertheless, though not having disappeared from sight as completely as d’Erlanger’s *Tess*, the opera has again never become part of the core repertoire, and was unperformed for many decades. However, thanks to The Rutland Boughton Music Trust the full opera has now been recorded for the first time (2010)³⁹, and was released on CD to some critical acclaim, having been selected as one of the *Gramophone* “Editor’s Choices” of the month and as “Disc of the Month” in *Opera* magazine, while it was awarded 5 stars by the *BBC Music Magazine*. For Jeremy Dibble, the *Gramophone* reviewer, the opera “was quite a revelation” and he describes how Boughton “had moved on to a full and productive assimilation of Wagner’s instrumental conception of opera and flexible vocal declamation ... clothed in gorgeous orchestration”.⁴⁰ The influence of folksong is also clear in a number of places, for example in the setting of “When I set out for Lyonesse”, one of the six additional Hardy poems Boughton inserted into the work, and which he later published separately.

For Bernard Jones, *The Queen of Cornwall* is “a masterpiece that any other country would have regularly in its opera houses” and which “must be among the very best of English operas before [Britten’s] *Peter Grimes*”.⁴¹ Similarly, for Michael Hurd, *The*

³³ *Collected Letters*, vol. 6, 321; vol. 8, 249.

³⁴ *Life and Work*, 458.

³⁵ *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, 208.

³⁶ Quoted in Hurd, 162.

³⁷ Boughton wrote to Hardy about the overture on 25 February 1926. See *Thomas Hardy’s Correspondence at Max Gate: A Descriptive Check List*, compiled by Carl J. Weber and Clara Carter Weber (Waterville (Maine): Colby College Press, 1968), 190.

³⁸ This, the most recent “full-stage production”, with orchestra and chorus, was presented by the Rutland Boughton Trust at the Town Hall, St Pancras on 29 and 30 October 1963. Advertised in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 104, no. 1448 (October 1963), 685.

³⁹ Dutton Epoch 2CDLX 7256. New London Orchestra and Members of The London Chorus, conducted by Ronald Corp. Singers: Philip Tebb, Patricia Orr, Neal Davies, Heather Shipp, Peter Wilman, Jacques Imbrailo, Joan Rodgers, Elizabeth Weisberg.

⁴⁰ *Gramophone*, Vol. 89 (Sept. 2011), 80.

⁴¹ Bernard Jones, “A Note on Rutland Boughton and Thomas Hardy”, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 10.2 (1994), 69.

Queen of Cornwall is “perhaps his finest work”, in which Boughton has discovered “an apt and convincing way in which to set dramatic words without sacrificing melodic charm”, though unlike Dibble he believes that Boughton’s “system of representative themes woven together and developed in a quasi-symphonic manner, [is] more nearly akin to Puccini’s ‘mosaic’ technique than anything Wagnerian”,⁴² even though Boughton had started his career as a Wagnerian. So perhaps there may be more in common between d’Erlanger and Boughton than at first hearing appears.

The third and final major piece of music inspired by Hardy during his lifetime was not an opera, indeed not vocal music at all, but a wonderful piece of “programme” music, **Gustav Holst’s *Egdon Heath***. To most people Gustav Holst (1874-1934) is best known as the composer of *The Planets*, a work that captured the public imagination from its very first performance in 1918. Yet to Holst himself, his best work was *Egdon Heath* (Op.47), an astonishing orchestral piece composed in “Homage to Hardy”,⁴³ as stated on its title-page, and inspired specifically by *The Return of the Native* and by Holst’s own visit to the Dorset heath on one of his typically energetic walking tours in Easter 1926. In Holst’s own words, it is “the result of memories of ‘Egdon’ as it exists in nature and in Hardy’s writing, particularly in the first chapter of *The Return of the Native*”.⁴⁴

Holst had first visited Hardy at Max Gate at Easter 1922, when, thanks to his old panama hat and his usual thick-lensed spectacles, he had initially been refused entrance by Florence Hardy on the grounds that “Mr Hardy never sees photographers”! Fortunately Holst was able to produce his invitation, and enjoyed looking with Hardy at some old music books that had belonged to Hardy’s father in his days as a church musician (though he found that Hardy was not apparently knowledgeable about music).⁴⁵ So when *Egdon Heath* was half-written he had a ready opening to contact Hardy, who happily accepted the dedication of the music and offered him lunch at Max Gate. Having walked from Bristol via the Mendips, Wells and Sherborne (quite a walk!), Holst arrived at Max Gate on 9 August 1927 and after an “unforgettable” lunch with Hardy they headed off by car to “Mellstock, Rainbarrow and Egdon in general”, including Puddletown Church. In a letter to an American friend, Austin Lidbury, written from the Phoenix Hotel in Dorchester, Holst makes clear Hardy’s understanding of the composer’s approach: “I’ve promised him to go up Rainbarrow by night. He is sorry I’m seeing it in summer weather, and wants me to come again in November”,⁴⁶ i.e. when it would be in keeping with the atmospheric first chapter of *The Return of the Native*, an extract from which Holst would use on his title-page, rather than “purple with heather”⁴⁷ as it was on that August day. Holst was able to follow up Hardy’s first suggestion, that he should see

⁴² Hurd, 161; Hurd, “*The Queen of Cornwall*”, *Musical Times*, vol. 104, no. 1448 (October 1963), 700-01.

⁴³ Dedicated in the manuscript “To Thomas Hardy”, Hardy’s death led to the amendment to “Homage to Thomas Hardy”.

⁴⁴ Holst’s programme note for the UK premiere at Cheltenham, quoted in the Introduction by Colin Matthews to the orchestral score (London: Faber Music, 1985).

⁴⁵ Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music* (Oxford: OUP, 1990). Gibson was evidently unaware of this source when stating (208) that although there was a letter believed to be from about 1922 from Holst to Hardy asking if he might visit “there appears to be no record of a visit at that time”.

⁴⁶ Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*. Second edition (London: OUP, 1969), 126-7.

⁴⁷ *Life and Work*, 473.

the heath by night, and walked to Rainbarrow on the night of 11th August. Evidently Holst retained a very special memory of this visit: “There was a wealth of experience of town and country, deep and controlled emotion, wisdom and humour, all clotted in perfect courtesy and kindness”.⁴⁸

The music is spare, yet haunting and powerful, reflecting very effectively the mood of a novel in which the attractions of “the sort of beauty called charming and fair” appear insignificant compared with “the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea or a mountain”. From that same opening chapter, Holst takes the quotation for his title-page: “A place perfectly accordant with man’s nature – neither ghastly, hateful nor ugly: neither common-place unmeaning nor tame, but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony”. The composer’s daughter Imogen (her father’s biographer, a writer on music and an accomplished conductor and composer in her own right) makes clear the strength of Holst’s reaction to, even identification with, Egdon Heath: “This was Holst’s idea of beauty. Its uncompromising denial of ease and charm was perfectly in accordance with his own nature: he was by rights a native of that sparsely populated country of the mind. In his search for this rare beauty he had been driven further and further into solitude, but there is no hint of exile in the loneliness of *Egdon Heath*: it is a homecoming”.⁴⁹

Unsurprisingly, Imogen Holst’s description of the music cannot be bettered: “The work is in one movement. It is written for full orchestra, but it is seldom that the slowly moving music rises above the hush of its pianissimo. Divided strings, half of them muted and the rest unmuted, suggest the vast emptiness of the heath; the woodwind’s remote chords convey the solitude of ‘Rainbarrow by night’, and the brass play one of the last of those sad processions that were so often passing through Holst’s mind during the whole of his life”.⁵⁰

Hardy unfortunately never heard the piece. Having been commissioned by the New York Symphony Orchestra, the music received its world premiere in New York on 12 February 1928, just a few weeks after Hardy’s death. The UK premiere took place the following day at Cheltenham Town Hall, performed by the City of Birmingham Orchestra and conducted by the composer. Florence Hardy went up to London for the afternoon rehearsal for the London premiere on 23 February, performed by the Royal Philharmonic Society. She wrote to Siegfried Sassoon the next day to say that the rehearsal had been “wonderful, but it was almost too much for me - & afterwards Gustav Holst took my arm & walked up & down the empty corridors with me. The music was *his* tribute to T.H. & a beautiful one”.⁵¹ However, the public reception of the new work was lukewarm. In some cases this may have been attributable to objections in principle to “programme” music: some people felt strongly that music should not be indebted to anything outside itself, such as a book or a place. Perhaps in

⁴⁸ This reminiscence occurs in a lecture on Haydn that Holst gave at Harvard in 1932. Printed in: *Heirs and Rebels: Letters Written to Each Other and Occasional Writings on Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst*, ed. Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst (London: OUP, 1959), 89.

⁴⁹ Imogen Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst* Third revised edition and *Holst’s Music Reconsidered* (Oxford: OUP, 1986), 80.

⁵⁰ Imogen Holst, record sleeve of Decca SXL 6006, 1962. Performed by London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

⁵¹ *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 273.

many cases the audience was looking for another *The Planets* - a piece that Hardy himself knew from listening to a record on T. E. Lawrence's gramophone! However, in the same way as Hardy "had not the slightest intention of writing for ever about sheepfarming, as the reading public was apparently expecting him to do" after the popular success of *Far from the Madding Crowd*,⁵² so Holst had no intention of tailoring his compositions to achieve popular appeal, and consistently pushed musical boundaries and explored new ideas.⁵³ Richard Greene points to the very varied critical reactions to the first European performance of the piece: "Did these critics hear the same piece? Certainly they attended the same performance, but just as clearly they listened – and heard – differently".⁵⁴ Imogen Holst tells us that her father "as usual, was unmoved by the opinions of his listeners. This time he knew that it was the best thing he had ever written. It was still his favourite work at the time of his death".⁵⁵

The impact of around twelve minutes of music is remarkable, and *Egdon Heath* remains arguably the single most significant piece of music to have been inspired by Hardy. While, like the rest of Holst's music, it has never achieved the enormous popularity of *The Planets*, many of those with a love for Holst's music consider his "Homage to Hardy" to be a masterpiece. It is currently available in some half-dozen recordings, so is readily obtainable, even though the choice is limited compared with the nearly 50 available recordings of *The Planets*!

While *Egdon Heath*, late in the lives of both Hardy and Holst, is the most extended and significant manifestation of Hardy's influence on Holst, it is worth noting that Holst had been one of the earliest composers to set Hardy poems to music, and they had been in touch via the music's publisher as early as 1903 about "The Sergeant's Song".⁵⁶ The two men were later in direct correspondence about Holst's "Six Songs for Baritone and Piano" (1909), which included three Hardy settings. Regrettably, the collection as a whole was never published, and "The Sergeant's Song" remained the only one of these Holst settings to have been published until Gordon Pullin included "In a Wood" in his 1994 *A Thomas Hardy Songbook*.⁵⁷ The third setting, "Between us now", remains unpublished. Hardy's letter of 3 January 1910 to Holst thanking him for "the music" he had sent him regrettably does not specify what the music was,⁵⁸ but that Hardy had received and had kept the score of at least one of Holst's settings is evident from Sassoon's account of having "tried out some settings of H.'s poems by Gustav Holst and Armstrong Gibbs" on the "old 'heavily-haunted' piano" at Max

⁵² *Life and Work*, 105.

⁵³ It is interesting to note that even Holst's friend Vaughan Williams initially expressed some doubts about *Egdon Heath*, though he later wrote that "I've come to the conclusion that E.H. is beautiful ... I now see that a less clear melody would have softened and thereby impaired the bleak grandeur of its outline." Letter dated 25 February 1928, quoted in *Heirs and Rebels*, 64.

⁵⁴ Richard Greene, "A musico-rhetorical outline of Holst's 'Egdon Heath'", *Music & Letters*, 73. 2 (May 1992) 244-67.

⁵⁵ Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*, 131.

⁵⁶ The score of "The Sergeant's Song" gives the composer as Gustav von Holst. Holst was later (1918) to drop the "von", having already chosen "Gustav" rather than the full "Gustavus Theodore" for professional purposes. (*Oxford DNB*, online ed.)

⁵⁷ *A Thomas Hardy Songbook*, selected and introduced by Gordon Pullin (Thames Publishing, 1994).

⁵⁸ *Collected Letters* vol. 3, 73; vol. 4, 52, 69. The editors consider that the music sent was "The Sergeant's Song", though it is not entirely clear why this 1903 publication would not have been sent until 1910, unless up to that point Holst had been hoping to send instead a copy of the "Six Songs", the projected publication of which had now been abandoned.

Gate during a visit in June 1922.⁵⁹ On his side, Holst towards the end of his life still had “half a dozen Hardy novels” on the only two shelves Holst reserved for books in his room at St. Paul’s Girls’ School (where he was Director of Music from 1905 until his death) among the stacks of music there.⁶⁰ In a nice link to a later composer inspired by Hardy, Holst’s copy of *The Return of the Native* was later given by his daughter Imogen to Benjamin Britten, inscribed “To Ben with love; a thank you for having written the Hardy songs”, the Hardy songs being Britten’s just completed *Winter Words*, comprising settings of eight Hardy poems.⁶¹ Holst also set Hardy’s poem “The Homecoming” in 1913, though this time for male chorus. Interesting though these four settings are, and indicative of an enthusiasm for Hardy’s works continued over many years, they should be seen in the context of the total of over 70 songs written by Holst.

Moving on from the three major works written in Hardy’s own day there are two smaller-scale compositions directly inspired by his fiction: **Patrick Hadley’s *Scene from “The Woodlanders”***, and **Henry Balfour Gardiner’s *Shepherd Fennel’s Dance***.

Hadley (1899-1973) was a composer, conductor and academic who became Professor of Music at Cambridge. He set Marty South’s words that form the final paragraph of *The Woodlanders*, for soprano voice and flute, violin, viola and piano. For Hadley, these words were “one of the finest pieces of poetic peasant prose in English” and he said that “as he read it a melodic line seemed to be already there, needing merely to be written down”.⁶² Composed in Hadley’s last days as a student, the piece was first performed at a Royal College of Music chamber concert in July 1925⁶³. There was a more high-profile performance in 1929 at the Three Choirs Festival, when *The Times* described it as “a lovely and sensitive piece of writing, which is completely successful in capturing the mood of Hardy’s words”.⁶⁴ Despite its early composition date it was included in a 1960 concert of Hadley’s works by the Caius College Musical Society, and it was broadcast on Radio 3 in September 1972. Nevertheless, it is one of those pieces that never attains great popularity despite an enthusiastic response from many of those who have heard it. In a programme note for the 1960 concert Ursula Vaughan Williams wrote that her late husband Ralph had spoken of the “meltingly beautiful setting of Marty South’s exequy” as one of Hadley’s works “which he felt had never had the recognition they deserve”.⁶⁵ Whether or not Hadley contacted Hardy about his piece is not certain (the apparent lack of any surviving letter is not of course proof

⁵⁹ Gibson, 208-9. It is possible that Holst had delivered a score to Hardy on his Easter 1922 visit, though it may be doubted whether he would have carried such a bulky item with him on a walking tour.

⁶⁰ Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst*, 164.

⁶¹ Imogen Holst, *A Life in Music* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 257. Imogen Holst’s gift was made in September 1953.

⁶² Christopher Palmer, “Patrick Hadley: The Man and his Music”, *Music & Letters*, LV (1974), 152.

⁶³ The advert in *The Times* in its issue of 18 July gives the date of the concert as 20 July, and this date is supported by the date of Child’s letter to Hardy (21 July). Eric Wetherell, in “Paddy”: *The Life and Music of Patrick Hadley* (London: Thames Publishing, 1997), 20, gives the concert date as 25 July, but this would appear to be an error.

⁶⁴ Hadley’s setting is included in Gordon Pullin’s *A Thomas Hardy Songbook*. The review is from *The Times*, 13 September 1929, 10. (*Times Digital Archive*, web)

⁶⁵ The programme note is quoted in Wetherell, 119.

that there were none)⁶⁶ but Hardy was certainly made aware of it by Harold Child who wrote to him in July 1925 mentioning a performance (presumably the one at the Royal College of Music). Hardy's comment to Child (which perhaps tends to imply that he had not heard of the piece in advance of its performance) was "I am much pleased that Marty South's words have been found appropriate to music"⁶⁷, a remark that typifies his positive attitude to musical adaptations of his works. Regrettably, Hadley did not write any other Hardy-inspired pieces himself, though he did enthusiastically support his Cambridge colleague Peter Tranchell's 1951 opera *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.⁶⁸

Gardiner's *Shepherd Fennel's Dance* comes from his planned but uncompleted opera based on Hardy's short story "The Three Strangers". Gardiner (1877-1950) first contacted Hardy in 1903, to say that he had arranged for him to be sent a copy of his just published setting of the poem "The Stranger's Song", his first published work, and of course taken from Hardy's short story. Gardiner's enthusiasm for Hardy's work is very clear from his letter: "I feel a sense of personal indebtedness towards you ... Many of your novels (and I have read *all*) have not merely given me the temporary amusement which most readers derive from most novels, but have made on me a deep & lasting impression, such as I cannot describe but you perhaps will understand... I live in Wessex myself, halfway between Winchester & Andover."⁶⁹ Hardy in turn was appreciative of Gardiner's setting, calling it "highly successful", with "such a catching melody".⁷⁰ However he also suggested that Gardiner might better have "melodised one of the songs of a tender kind in my two vols. of Poems"! Gardiner ignored this hint, but preferred instead to see what else he could make out of "The Three Strangers". He wrote to Hardy in November 1908 asking for Hardy's approval and also perhaps his assistance in turning the short story into a one-act opera, as Gardiner could see a number of problems to be surmounted. Hardy pointed out that there was already "an acting version" in existence (i.e. *The Three Wayfarers*, Hardy's own 1893 dramatisation)⁷¹, and this time tried to steer Gardiner towards an episode from *The Dynasts* as "more worthy of music".⁷² Gardiner however was again undeterred, and so Hardy loaned him a copy of the dramatised version, from which Gardiner could see that most of the difficulties he had earlier identified in turning a short story into a one-act dramatisation had been successfully resolved. In January 1909 Hardy not only gave formal permission for the story to be made into an opera, but despite his earlier reservations about the choice of subject even let Gardiner know

⁶⁶ There are no letters from Hardy to Hadley in the *Collected Letters*; none from Hadley to Hardy are listed in *Thomas Hardy's Correspondence at Max Gate* and there is no mention of any correspondence in any of the material on Hadley I have seen.

⁶⁷ *Collected Letters*, vol. 6, 338. Hardy's letter is dated 23 July 1925.

⁶⁸ See Walter Todds, *Patrick Hadley: A Memoir* (London: Triad Press, 1974), 2-3. Tranchell's opera will be covered in my second paper.

⁶⁹ Gardiner's letter to Hardy, sent from Paris on Boxing Day 1903, is quoted in Stephen Lloyd, *H. Balfour Gardiner* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), 62-3.

⁷⁰ *Collected Letters*, vol. 3, 99. Letter dated 21 January 1904.

⁷¹ Evidently, Gardiner was more familiar with Hardy's prose than his poetry, as indeed most readers would have been at that time. Had he read the poem in *Wessex Poems*, he would have seen Hardy's note "As sung by Mr Charles Carrington in the play of 'The Three Wayfarers'" and so been aware of the play.

⁷² *Collected Letters*, vol. 3, 358. Letter dated 29 November 1908. Intriguingly, Hardy wrote to Vaughan Williams on the same day, approving his entitling the soldiers' song from *The Dynasts* "Buonaparty" but in his case attempting to steer the composer away from *The Dynasts* towards "one of my lyrics of more general application".

“privately” that the d’Erlanger *Tess* opera would probably be produced at Covent Garden, which might smooth the way for a production of Gardiner’s opera. All the omens looked propitious, but regrettably no opera appeared and no more letters were exchanged between the two men. Some surviving sketches indicate that Gardiner did at least some work on the opera,⁷³ but Gardiner (like Hardy) destroyed many manuscripts in his later years, so there is no way of knowing how much of the opera was ever composed.

What does remain is *Shepherd Fennel’s Dance*. Although little heard today, this jolly five and a half minutes of dance music, composed around Christmas 1910, and probably intended as an interlude in the opera, was an immediate success right from its first performance at the Proms on 6 September 1911 and remained for many years a staple of orchestral “light music”; it was Gardiner’s most popular orchestral work, though his *Evening Hymn* is perhaps his main claim to fame today.⁷⁴ In his forties Gardiner stopped composing, and in 1927 he moved to Dorset and devoted himself to afforestation. As there had been no continuing correspondence between the two men there is no evidence that Hardy was aware of his move to the same county.

In some cases Hardy’s influence can be inferred even when not made explicit. For example, another major composer of the day, **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958), was a keen enough reader of Hardy to try to retrace Tess’s walk from Flintcomb-Ash to Emminster. Surprisingly, perhaps, he produced very little Hardy-related music: there is one separate song setting;⁷⁵ his vocal work *Hodie (On this Day)*, which uses words from a number of literary sources includes “The Oxen”; and he produced music for a 1950 radio dramatisation of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. There appear to have been just two short musical contributions in this dramatisation, the first entitled “bold music” and the second one “sad music”. However, Alain Frogley has suggested that “the few short musical homages to Hardy emerge as tokens of something much deeper, a vital current of attachment to the author’s works that ran throughout Vaughan Williams’s long life”. Frogley also revealed that the composer’s sketches and other manuscripts for his Ninth Symphony show that Hardy was behind the inspiration for this originally programmatic work: the first movement was originally called “Wessex Prelude” while “Tess” is at the heart of the second movement.⁷⁶ So Hardy’s influence is there, even if not immediately apparent.⁷⁷

Similarly Hardy must be part of the inspiration for **John Ireland’s (1879-1962) “orchestral poem” *Mai-Dun*** (1921), bearing in mind not just Ireland’s use of Hardy’s name for Maiden Castle but also his familiarity with Hardy’s work that was to lead to two cycles of Hardy song-settings for voice and piano, also written in the 1920s. Interestingly, Benjamin Britten described Ireland’s *Mai-Dun* as ‘magnificent’

⁷³ One manuscript page is reproduced in Lloyd, 66.

⁷⁴ *Shepherd Fennel’s Dance* is currently available on Hyperion’s *British Light Music Classics*, volume 4. New London Orchestra, Ronald Corp conductor. CDS44261-4 for set of 4 CDs; single track available as download.

⁷⁵ “Buonaparty”, 1909. This is a setting of the song sung by the soldiers in *The Dynasts*, Part First, Act First, Scene 1: “We be the King’s men, hale and hearty ...”.

⁷⁶ For further detail on Hardy’s influence on Vaughan Williams see the special Thomas Hardy Edition of the *Journal of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society*, 15 (June 1999).

⁷⁷ Alain Frogley, “Hardy in the Music of Vaughan Williams”, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 2.3 (Oct 1986), 50-55.

even though in general he was not particularly impressed by the music of his then composition teacher at the Royal College of Music.⁷⁸

There are of course a few composers active at that time who for whatever reason did not write any Hardy-related music. The most eminent of these by far is **Sir Edward Elgar** (1857-1934). It was not that Elgar did not find literature a stimulus to writing music: as well as his symphonic study *Falstaff*, inspired of course by Shakespeare, he set some 70 poems to music. In fact he did discuss with Hardy the possibility of collaboration on an opera, and Hardy responded enthusiastically: Sir Sidney Colvin (who had visited Hardy on Elgar's behalf) reported back to Elgar that "I find the old man not only willing but *keen* to co-operate in an opera with you".⁷⁹ As F. B. Pinion notes, Hardy's initial ideas were for either "a light and whimsical peasant opera" from *the Trumpet-Major*, a tragic one, with striking picturesque and dramatic scenes from *The Return of the Native*, or another drawn from a section of *The Dynasts*.⁸⁰ When he followed up his initial discussion with Colvin in a letter to Elgar of 28 July 1913 Hardy suggested either "a production in the grand style based on 'The Dynasts' or a romantic or tragic Wessex opera based on one of my best known stories....I have thought 'A pair of Blue Eyes' (*sic*) would be good for music, as it would furnish all the voices, & has a distinct and central heroine, with a wild background of cliffs & sea".⁸¹ Elgar replied that he would re-read Hardy's books "with a view to music",⁸² but regrettably, the idea was not pursued, perhaps because "the war put paid to the idea",⁸³ and it remains an intriguing "might have been". The lack of any Elgar song setting of any of Hardy's poems is perhaps less of a loss: Trevor Hold, an authority on English song, judged that "Not even the most fervent Elgarian would lay high claims for Elgar as a songwriter".⁸⁴ while Basil Maine, although more enthusiastic about Elgar's song-settings than Hold, still describes the composer's "sublime disregard of the natural quantities and emphases of verse".⁸⁵ For an illuminating assessment of the striking similarities and equally dramatic differences between Hardy and Elgar in terms of character and their art, see Joanna Cullen Brown's "Variations on Two Enigmas: Hardy, Elgar and the Muses".⁸⁶

However, with the notable exception of Elgar, it is fair to say that Hardy was an influence, often a major influence, on a large number of British composers in his later years. In some cases this may simply be attributable to Hardy's status as the "Grand Old Man of English letters" in his last two decades. For other composers it was more than that: Hardy's depiction of his Wessex world, and his belief that his depiction of that world was in no way limiting but was a means of showing universal truths, parallels the move by many English composers in the early decades of the 20th century to reconnect with the English countryside and country people through the re-

⁷⁸ Paul Kildea, *Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 64.

⁷⁹ Colvin's letter to Elgar of 29 July 1913 is quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: a Creative Life* (Oxford: OUP, 1984; 1999 reissue), 649.

⁸⁰ F.B. Pinion, *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Friends* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 320. Pinion is quoting from Colvin.

⁸¹ *Collected Letters*, vol. 4, 291.

⁸² Postcard postmarked 31 July 1913, in Dorset County Museum.

⁸³ Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987; pbk. Ed. 1993), 325.

⁸⁴ Trevor Hold, *Parry to Finzi: Twenty English Song-Composers* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005 repr.), 71.

⁸⁵ Basil Maine, *Elgar: His Life and Works* (Bath: Chivers, 1973) Book 2, *The Works*, 218.

⁸⁶ In *Reading Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles P. C. Pettit (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), 188-208.

discovery of folk music which in turn would revitalise their music. It is likely that these composers recognised in Hardy a forerunner and fellow-spirit, who from his earliest novels had adopted in literature the approach the composers were to use in their music.⁸⁷

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Notes on Contributors

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⁸⁷ This point is made persuasively by Em Marshall in her *Music in the Landscape: How the British Countryside Inspired our Greatest Composers* (London: Robert Hale, 2011), 264.