

'Listening to History': British Studies Gathering Music.

The British Studies Gathering Music consists of a series of recordings designed to complement the chronological and thematic trajectory of the lecture series. Music is played in the Great Hall on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8.00 to 8.30am. Several of the recordings used are available in the College library.

The selection is a highly subjective survey of music history in Britain, though the intention has been to provide a balance between sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental, and classical and popular styles; attention has also been made to use recordings of classic or iconic performances where possible. The notes below provide brief biographical and historical details to set the music in context and outline connections with the lecture topics. For more information contact Dr Phil Taylor.

The principal source of reference is Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press, 2007–10)
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

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Lecture 2 Britain before the Norman Conquest Christmas in Royal Anglo-Saxon Winchester

The Winchester Troper is a collection of liturgical music associated with Winchester Cathedral, copied in the early 11th century and considered the single most important surviving source of Anglo-Saxon music. It is particularly important for its extensive collection of two-part organum (an early form of vocal harmony), not preserved anywhere else in Europe until the 13th century. At major church feasts such as Christmas and Easter the formal plainchant for the Propers and Ordinary of the Mass were expanded with the addition of extra verses known as ‘Tropes’. Although the notation was long considered to be indecipherable, scholarship in the 1990s allowed this repertoire to be performed, giving us an insight into the possible sounds of an early Christian service at an English provincial town.

Recording: *Christmas in Royal Anglo-Saxon Winchester: 10th century Chant from the Winchester Troper*, Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge, dir. Mary Berry (Herald, 1992).

Lecture 3 England, Normandy and the Angevin Empire (1066–1272) Secular songs and instrumental dances from the 12th and 13th Centuries

Ballads associated with the legend of Robin Hood became increasingly popular during the Middle Ages, invoking imagery of the greenwood as a location for romance and mystery as well as celebrating the coming of summer-time and May-day festivities. Whilst many ballads only survive with their lyrics intact, the survival of instrumental dance forms and songs associated with the North French Trouvère tradition allows the creative reconstruction of this repertoire. The ensemble Estampie use a range of period instruments, including shawm, sackbut, curtal, crumhorn, lute, viol and early flute and recorder to present a vibrant picture of secular music-making during this period.

Recording: *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Estampie, dir. Graham Derrick (Naxos, 1995).

Lecture 4 The Three Edwards (1272–1377) Sarum Plainchant: *Missa in gallicantu*

From the 7th century onwards, the liturgical music associated with the Roman Catholic Church diversified into local variations or ‘Uses’ throughout Western Europe, and the more well-established of these regional traditions were allowed to retain their independence from the central Roman liturgy. In England, the dominant Use throughout the middle ages was that associated with the church of Salisbury, or ‘Sarum’ (from the Latin for Salisbury, *Sarisburia*). The *Missa in gallicantu* (‘Mass at Cockcrow’) was the first Mass to be celebrated in the early hours of Christmas Day, and is taken here from several 16th-century printed sources.

‘The Church of Salisbury shines as the sun its orb among the Churches of the whole world in its divine service and those who minister it, and by spreading its rays everywhere makes up for the defects of others.’ – Giles de Bridport, Bishop of Salisbury, c.1256.

Recording: Sarum Chant: *Missa in gallicantu*, The Tallis Scholars, dir. Peter Phillips (Gimell, 1988).

Lecture 5 The Wars of the Roses (1377-1485)
John Dunstaple, extracts from Masses and Motets

John Dunstaple (c.1390–1453) was the most influential English musician of the early 15th century, and can lay claim to being the first ‘great’ English composer. Dunstaple is acknowledged by several 15th-century commentators as heralding a sweet new English style of polyphony that was to have a profound effect on the next generation of continental composers. In 1477 the influential theorist Joanne de Tinctoris claimed that his lifetime had witnessed the birth of a ‘new art’, specifically naming Dunstaple as the man who was responsible as its ‘wellspring and origin’ (*ut ita dicam, novae artis fons et origo*). The harmonic innovation for which Dunstaple is credited was the addition of the third of the scale to create full triads, and a rich resonant sound that today we associate with major tonal harmony. Although it is likely that these stylistic developments were features of a broader school of English composition, Dunstaple’s surviving compositions afford a fascinating glimpse into the soundworld he was believed to have inspired. After his death in 1453 a monument was erected in St Stephen’s Church, Walbrook, London, which was later destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666. Reconstruction began in 1672, led by one of the church’s own parishioners, Christopher Wren, who used St Stephen’s as an architectural model for his later masterpiece at St Paul’s Cathedral. Fortunately Dunstaple’s Latin epitaph had been recorded by early 17th century antiquarians, and it was finally restored to the church in 1904:

Is enclosed in this tomb he who enclosed Heaven in his breast, John Dunstable, the confederate of the stars. In his judgement Urania knew how to unfold the secrets of the heavens. This man was thy glory, thy light, thy chief, O Music; and one who had scattered thy sweet arts through the world... (extract from translation of the Latin epitaph)

Recording: *John Dunstable: Sweet Harmony: Masses and Motets*, Tonus Peregrinus, dir. Antony Pitts (Naxos, 2004).

Lecture 6 The Reformation and the Rise of Protestant Nationalism
Thomas Tallis, English Anthems and service music

Thomas Tallis’s (c.1505–85) long career as a church musician spanned the reigns of four successive Tudor monarchs (Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I) and the institutions of Dover Priory, Waltham Abbey, Canterbury Cathedral and the Chapel Royal. His music is representative of both the complex liturgical changes associated with the English Reformation and the array of stylistic developments that permeated English music during the 16th century. Tallis’s surviving works range from large-scale Latin votive antiphons composed for the pre-Reformation church in the 1530s to short and concise English-texted music produced for the new Protestant service under Edward VI in the early 1550s. During the Elizabethan period he continued to compose Latin motets, free from liturgical constraints, including what is perhaps his crowning intellectual achievement, the 40-part motet *Spem in alium*. Listening to Tallis’s music provides a sense of the aesthetic impact of the Reformation and of the ways in which vocal polyphony endured into the late 16th century.

Recording: *Thomas Tallis, Latin sacred music; English Anthems and service music* (Chappelle du Roi & Alistair Dixon, Signum Records, 1997 & 2003).

Lecture 7 The Tudor State
William Byrd, Motets from *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575)

William Byrd (c.1540–1623) represents the generation of composers succeeding Tallis in the late Tudor period, and may have been the pupil of the older musician. Applying his artistry to a wide range of genres, Byrd's legacy of sacred and secular song, instrumental and keyboard music marks the highpoint of the so-called 'High Renaissance' style that characterises music in Western Europe during this period. A Londoner by birth, Byrd spent time at Lincoln Cathedral in the 1560s before taking up a post in the Chapel Royal, which he retained until his death. In 1575 Elizabeth I granted Byrd and Tallis a joint patent giving them complete control over the printing of music and lined music paper in England, a move that was marked later that year by the publication of a collection of motets dedicated to the Queen, the *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur Sacrae* (songs which by their argument are called sacred). After his older colleague's death Byrd went on to revolutionise music printing in Elizabethan London, issuing several collections of his own work, both Latin motets and English-texted song. He remained a committed Catholic, and his family suffered harassment from the authorities as a result of his refusal to conform. First and foremost, however, Byrd was a musician, as revealed by the prefatory comments to his *Psalmes, songs and sonnets* (1611):

First, [singing] is a knowledge easily taught, and quickly learned, where there is a good master and an apt scholar.

The exercise of singing is delightful to nature, and good to preserve the health of man.

It doth strengthen all parts of the breast, and doth open the pipes.

It is a singular good remedy for stuttering and stammering in speech.

It is the best means to procure a perfect pronounciation, and to make a good orator...

Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing.

Recording: *The Byrd Edition vol. 4, Cantiones Sacrae 1575*, The Cardinal's Musicke, dir. Andrew Carwood (ASV, 1999).

Lecture 8 Culture and Society in the Age of Shakespeare
Elizabethan and Jacobean secular vocal songs

Partly as a result of William Byrd's efforts in energising the trade for printed music in London, the years around the turn of the 17th century witnessed an astonishing flowering of secular song based on Italian models, most famous of which are the madrigal and its lesser cousins the canzonet and ballet. These light, unaccompanied, settings of vernacular poetry are representative of the music enjoyed by amateur singers during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Often referred to as the 'English Madrigal School', composers such as Thomas Morley, Thomas Weelkes and Orlando Gibbons collectively produced some of the finest music ever produced in England, much of which remains popular with amateur choral singers today.

Recording: *The Golden Age: Music from the Elizabethan Era*, The King's Singers (EMI Records, 1995).

Lecture 9 The Early Stuarts
John Dowland, lute songs

John Dowland (1563–1626) is credited with single-handedly creating the genre of English lute song, and stands as one of the most important song-writers in the history of British music. His songs for solo voice and lute fuse stylistic elements of the madrigal, consort song and instrumental dance, demonstrating an innovative approach to melody, rhythm, form and phrasing. Dowland remained Catholic throughout his life, like Tallis and Byrd before him, but unlike his predecessors the composer's career seems to have suffered as a result, being continually passed over for positions at the English court despite his reputation as one of the most prominent musicians in Europe. From 1598 to 1606 he was in the service of King Christian IV of Denmark, where he was evidently valued as one of the highest paid court servants. Recognition in England finally came in 1612 when a special post was created for him as court lutenist. In addition to his composing career, one of Dowland's most significant achievements was the introduction of the table-book printing format, which allowed lute tablature and staff notation to be printed alongside each other in a format that would allow singers and instrumentalists sitting around a table to read from the same book. His music is often characterised as expressing feelings of intense melancholy, something the composer himself acknowledged in the title of one of his lute pavans: *Semper Dowland, semper dolens* – always Dowland, always doleful.

Recording: *Awake, sweet love: English Lute Songs by Purcell and Dowland*, Rufus Muller & Christopher Wilson (Brilliant Classics, 1993).

Lecture 10 Three Kingdoms without a King
William Lawes, consort setts for viol & organ

William Lawes's (1602–45) promising early career as church musician and composer led him to a role at the court of King Charles I in the 1630s, where he was involved in the production of court masques in praise of the monarch, such as *The Triumph of Peace* (1634). This success was cut short by the outbreak of civil war in 1639, however, which interfered with regular court routine as the King and his forces migrated around the country during the military campaigns of the next few years. Lawes enlisted as a soldier for the Royalist cause, and was eventually killed in 1645 during the siege of Chester: contemporary accounts suggest he was caught in cross-fire during a poorly executed raid to the north of the city. Charles honoured Lawes by instigating a special period of mourning for the composer, naming him 'Father of Musicke'. Several posthumous tributes, including some by the king's opponents, also attest to his celebrated reputation. Lawes's greatest musical legacy are perhaps his sets of chamber music for viols and organ, including groups of five- and six-part instrumental fantasies known as the 'consort setts'. Building on the stylistic advances of earlier Jacobean composers, these powerfully expressive works incorporate a range of harmonic effect and dissonance, providing a fitting tribute to the short but turbulent career of the composer.

Recording: *Lawes: The Consort Setts for 5 & 6 viols and organ*, Fretwork and Paul Nicholson (Veritas, 2002).

Lecture 11 The Restoration and the Later Stuarts
Henry Purcell, Chapel Royal Anthems & excerpts from *Dido & Aeneas*

Henry Purcell (1659–95) is accredited with forging a distinctive English Baroque style of composition during the 1680s and 90s, and his achievements rank him alongside Byrd, Elgar and Britten as one of Britain's greatest composers. Purcell's career was divided between responsibilities as organist at the Chapel Royal and as a composer of music for secular entertainments at the courts of both Charles II and James II, until the latter's exile in 1688. After 1689 Purcell remained associated with the new monarchs, William and Mary, but music took on a lesser role at court and consequently the composer turned his attention to music for the London theatre. He provided incidental songs and instrumental interludes for dramas such as *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*, known as semi-operas for the way in which they combine music and spoken word. Stylistically, Purcell's music exhibits an awareness of contemporary trends in Italy and France, absorbing these continental influences and combining them with his knowledge of the native polyphonic tradition to produce a characteristically English sound. His most famous work is *Dido & Aeneas*, a genuine all-sung opera and the first such work in England, setting a story of deep pathos to music of heart-rending beauty, particularly in the climactic scene of 'Dido's Lament'.

Recordings: Purcell, *Full Anthems & Organ Music*, Oxford Camerata dir. Jeremy Summerly (Naxos, 1994); Purcell, *Dido & Aeneas*, The Academy of Ancient Music dir. Christopher Hogwood (L'Oiseau Lyre, 2004).

Lecture 12 Politics, Empire, and the Creation of Great Britain
Thomas Arne, excerpts from *Alfred*

Thomas Arne (1710–78) was the most successful English composer of the 18th century, and a leading musical figure in London as one of the founding members of the Royal Society of Musicians. As a Catholic he was denied official patronage or employment in the Anglican Church, and instead forged a career in London's theatres. His most influential work was in music for the stage, where his innovative approaches to melody, word-setting and orchestration secured the status of the new Italian-style opera in England. In 1759 he produced a successful revival of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Arne's most well-known work is the song 'Rule Britannia', composed in 1740 as the concluding 'Ode' to his masque *Alfred*, a dramatic work based on the life of King Alfred the Great. The masque was composed for a garden party given by Frederick, Prince of Wales, a patron of the arts who was politically opposed to his father, King George II. The libretto is distinctly patriotic, employing national history as an allegory to promote Prince Frederick's political ambitions. The recurring theme of Britain's naval dominance, evident in 'Rule Britannia', resonates both with Alfred's resistance of the Vikings and in the contemporary context of England's ongoing war with Spain. *Alfred* was reworked a number of times by Arne, becoming an all-sung opera by 1753, but it was no longer performed by the end of the 18th century. The 'Ode', however, grew a life of its own as an independent song, and is still performed today, most notably at the annual *Last Night of the Proms* concert at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Recording: *Thomas Arne's Alfred*, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment & Nicholas Kraemer (BBC Music, 1997).

Lecture 13 The Economic Transformation of 18th-Century Britain
G. F. Handel, excerpts from *Messiah*

Born in Germany, George Frederick Handel (1685–1759) enjoyed a successful career as an opera composer in his native country and in Italy, before moving to London permanently in 1712, partly as a result of his association with George, elector of Hanover, later King George I of Great Britain. In London he composed music for several Royal occasions, including the *Water Music* in 1717, and four coronation anthems for George II in 1727, one of which, *Zadok the Priest*, has since been performed at every coronation in Britain. He also enabled the production of Italian opera through his role in the founding of the Royal Academy of Music in 1719, as well as companies at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket and the Covent Garden Theatre. In 1727 an Act of Parliament was passed making Handel a naturalised British subject. In the 1730s Handel increasingly turned his attention to the oratorio form: large-scale concert works for orchestra, chorus and soloists with a sacred libretto and none of the extravagant costume, scenery or dramatisation associated with opera. The oratorio *Messiah*, premiered in Dublin in 1741, has remained one of the most frequently performed choral works in Britain from the 18th century to the present day, particularly during the Christmas season. The most famous of its exuberant choral passages is the Hallelujah chorus: tradition dictates that King George II stood up for this movement at the first London performance of *Messiah*, initiating a convention that is still followed in concert halls today.

Recording: Handel: *Messiah*, London Musici & Chamber Choir dir. Mark Stephenson (Conifer, 1989).

Lecture 14 Social and Cultural Change in the 18th Century
Excerpts from John Gay, *Beggar's Opera*

With his *Beggar's Opera* (1728), the playwright John Gay (1685-1732) created a new form of ballad opera, in which the spoken dialogue is interspersed with songs taken from a range of sources including the folk traditions of England, Ireland, Scotland and France as well as the music of composers such as Purcell and Handel. Part of the genius of Gay's immensely popular work relied on the way in which the music's referential qualities – associations made by contemporary audiences familiar with the tunes – added to the drama, providing an additional layer of musical satire. One particular target for parody was Italian opera, embodied in the work of Handel; Gay was well positioned to mock the conventions of high opera, having provided the libretto for Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in 1718. Contemporary editions of *Beggar's Opera* included only the melody and bass line for the songs, meaning the instrumental and continuo parts have to be reconstructed; this recording, made in 1955, is of an arrangement made by the baritone Frederic Austin for a production at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, which ran for a record 1463 performances between 1920 and 1923.

Gay must be viewed as a clever, minor writer with one stupendous and virtually inexplicable success to his credit. How he got the idea for *The Beggar's Opera* no-one has ever been able satisfactorily to explain: it is one of the most genuinely original works in the history of the theatre, and it is still revived regularly with great success. - Robert D. Hume, *New Grove*.

Recording: John Gay, *Beggar's Opera*, dir. Sir Malcom Sargent (Classics for Pleasure, 2003).

Lecture 15 Enlightenment, Romanticism and Radicalism
William Boyce, extracts from Symphonies 1–8, Opus 2.

William Boyce (1711–79) developed a successful career as organist and composer at various institutions in London, holding the prestigious posts of composer to the Chapel Royal (1736), Master of the King’s Musicke (1755) and Organist to the Chapel Royal (1758). As with Purcell and Handel before him, his role included the composition of music for state occasions: Boyce declined to set the text ‘Zadok the Priest’, however, claiming that Handel’s version could be unsurpassed, instead instigating the tradition of using his predecessor’s anthem at coronations. Boyce also developed considerable expertise in music history and theory and was active as a teacher and editor, publishing a three volume set of *Cathedral Music* from 1760 to 73 that was to exert considerable influence on church music practice in Britain until the early 20th century. Boyce’s eight symphonies are outstanding examples of late Baroque instrumental music, combining a range of continental stylistic models such as the so-called ‘French Overture’ that Handel had used to great effect in his operas, in which a slow, stately introductory section is followed by more lively dance-like movements.

Recording: *William Boyce, Symphonies, Op. 2*, The Academy of Ancient Music, dir. Christopher Hogwood (Decca, 1993).

Lecture 16 Victorian Britain
Victorian Ballads & Glees

One of the most widespread sites of musical performance in the 19th century was in the home: domestic singing with piano accompaniment was a popular form of leisure activity, giving rise to a whole repertoire of ballads composed to sentimental or romantic poetry. Social and sexual norms in middle-class Victorian Britain meant that gathering around the piano was one of the few occasions at which it was acceptable for men and women to mix, allowing couples to literally perform their feelings for each other through the medium of song. This can clearly be seen in the literature of the period, particularly the novels of Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot, in which allusions to music and musical performance often form integral narrative devices. The songs encompass a wide range of styles, including pieces written specifically for a drawing-room context, adaptations of traditional songs and those that were adopted from operas or musical dramas.

Recording: *A Victorian Gentleman’s Songbook*, James Griffet & Pro Cantione Antiqua (Regis, 2000).

Lecture 17 The Industrial Revolution Songs of Industrial Protest

Cultural responses to industrial and urban development came in many forms in the 19th century, including the use of song to comment on and critique the rapid social and demographic changes affecting many parts of Britain. The longer term political and economic impact of the industrial revolution can obscure attempts to understand individual reactions to the way change was perceived and understood at the time; revisiting these popular responses is therefore one way of understanding the industrial revolution as a social phenomenon. This selection of songs covers a range of themes including Chartism, the Corn Laws, factory work, the Luddites and Workhouses. Often only the words of these ballads survive, offering the opportunity for creative re-interpretation by contemporary musicians. This process of re-imagining music passed down through oral tradition is one way in which we can bring to life the voices of people from the past and evoke their thoughts and experiences in a historical context.

Recordings: *English Rebel Songs 1381–1914*, Chumbawamba (One Little Indian, 1994);
Sackcloth & Silk, The Out of Silence Choir, dir. Sally Brown (Out of Silence Records, 2005)
The Iron Muse: A panorama of Industrial folk music, Various Artists (Topic, 2008).

Lecture 18 Political Culture in the 19th Century Songs from the Victorian Music Hall

The Music Hall was an important institution in Victorian Britain, offering a venue for accessible popular entertainment including song and dance as well as more niche acts such as ventriloquism, knife-throwing and fire-eating. The theatres were often attached to ale-houses, particularly in London, and many entertainers became renowned celebrities as they developed their act. As a musical genre, the label ‘music hall’ applies to a diverse range of popular song often influenced by folk tradition or musical theatre; songs usually consist of a verse delivered by the performer and a repeated refrain with which the audience were encouraged to join in. The subjects covered include current affairs, humorous everyday themes and popular patriotism, such as ‘Macdermott’s War Song’, composed in response to British involvement in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 and responsible for adding the term ‘jingoism’ to the English language. The tradition of music hall persisted until the mid-20th century before competition from radio and television, together with new forms of popular music such as jazz and rock & roll, contributed to its gradual decline.

Recording: *A Night at the Music Hall*, Various Artists (JSP, 2006).

Lecture 19 Sex, Gender and the Women’s Movement Dame Ethel Smyth, extracts from *Mass in D* and *The March of the Women*.

The history of Western music is dominated by men. Though woman have always been involved in musical performance and composition, the patriarchal nature of the dominant social and institutional structures in Europe (church, court and concert hall) has been instrumental in denying equality of opportunity and in ensuring that modern musicological research – traditionally reliant on the records produced by these institutions – has tended to obscure women’s role in history. Since

the 1980s, extensive research has been undertaken to recover women's musical history and to construct analytical and interpretative models appropriate to female musical experience. One of the beneficiaries of this feminist musicology has been the composer, writer and Suffragette campaigner Ethel Smyth (1858–1944).

As a young woman Smyth refused the Victorian social obligation of marriage, instead winning a place at the Leipzig conservatory, Germany, to study composition. Her subsequent composing career encompassed a range of chamber, orchestral and operatic works, supported by her acquaintance with prominent members of German musical society together with intimate relationships with a number of influential women in England. Her friendships with Mary Ponsonby, maid in Queen Victoria's bedchamber, and with Empress Eugénie (widow of Napoleon III) helped to secure royal patronage for the *Mass in D*, premiered by the Royal Choral Society in 1891. This large-scale choral work, which the composer herself considered her best work, develops the central European tradition of mass composition established by her predecessors Beethoven and Brahms. From 1911 to 1913 she devoted her time to working for the Women's Social and Political Union, founded by her close friend Emmeline Pankhurst, composing the movement's hymn *The March of the Women* and being imprisoned at Holloway for a few weeks for smashing a window. In his autobiography, the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham described visiting Smyth during her stay in prison and witnessing an impromptu performance of *The March of the Women* in the courtyard: 'the noble company of martyrs marching round it and singing lustily their war-chant while the composer, beaming approbation from an over-looking upper window, beat time in an almost Bacchic frenzy with a toothbrush'.

Recording: Dame Ethel Smyth, *Mass in D*, *The March of the Women*, The Plymouth Festival Chorus and Orchestra, dir. Philip Brunelle (Virgin Classics, 1991).

Lecture 20 Britain and Victorian Imperialism Gilbert & Sullivan, extracts from *HMS Pinafore*

Librettist William Gilbert (1836–1911) and composer Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) formed a creative partnership that has come to define Victorian comic or light opera, producing 14 such works in the period 1871 to 1896 including *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *HMS Pinafore*. The establishment of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company by the producer Richard D'Oyly, and the founding of the Savoy Theatre in 1881 brought Gilbert and Sullivan's operas to an appreciative audience in London. Many of these works remain popular throughout English-speaking countries today, their relatively simplistic style lending itself to performance by amateur groups of enthusiasts as well as professional productions. Though often the subject of parody and criticism, these light and witty works offer an important window into popular entertainment in Victorian Britain.

The first major international success was *HMS Pinafore*, premiered in 1878, the plot of which concerns a complicated love affair set upon the ship of the same name. The story revolves around the intricacies of the British class system and the conventions of the Royal Navy, particularly the love of the captain's daughter, Josephine, for Ralph, a sailor from the lower classes. As in the other

operas, the genius of Gilbert's writing lies in his ability to celebrate the rigid conventions of British society whilst at the same time subverting and satirising the behaviour they engender, although critics today are still divided over where the librettist's real sympathies lay. Much of the humour involves references to party politics and popular patriotism, seen for example in the supposedly patriotic song 'For he is an Englishman'. On Sullivan's part, his ability to provide effective musical settings involved the skilful parody of a wide range of styles and genres, from the recitative and chorus forms of serious opera to the mock-sea shanty style of 'We sail the ocean blue', providing the work with genuine musical satire and continuous melodic interest. In the longer term, *HMS Pinafore* and the genre of comic opera it represents was to have a lasting worldwide impact on modern commercial music theatre, particularly in the U.S.A.

Recording: Gilbert & Sullivan, *H.M.S.Pinafore*, The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company (Decca, 2003).

Lecture 21 Edwardian and Pre-War Britain

Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* & *The Lark Ascending*

Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) is perhaps Britain's favourite classical composer, with his two sublime orchestral works (*The Lark Ascending* & *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*) regularly featuring at the top of popular classical charts. Much is often made of the composer's distinctive English style, forged from an interest in traditional folksong, pastoral themes and Tudor music, though this often obscures the extent to which he stands alongside other European modernist composers of the same period such as Debussy and Ravel. The *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910) can be seen as part of an early 20th-century trend of delving into the past for artistic inspiration: the 'theme' in question is the melody of 'Why fum'th in fight', composed by Tallis in 1567 for the Psalter compiled by Archbishop Parker. Here Tallis's tune is reworked into a monumental orchestral tapestry involving three groups of strings (string quartet, small and large-scale string orchestra), combining folk-tinged modal harmonies with innovative spatial effects to produce a work of great beauty and grandeur. *The Lark Ascending* (1914), for solo violin and orchestra, was composed at the outbreak of World War One, with Vaughan Williams completing early sketches whilst observing naval ships crossing the English Channel. The piece was inspired by a George Meredith poem of the same name, and features extended solo passages for the violin that portray the song and flight of the skylark. The impressionistic style is often interpreted as wistfully reflecting upon the supposed peaceful tranquillity of the Edwardian period.

...deep down in the consciousness of our country there exists a beautiful and characteristic art, which has defied the indifference of our fashionable audiences, the snobbery of our intelligentsia, and the neglect of those in high places. ...Elizabethan music is still a living force both for today and tomorrow, because it means something to us still, both for its own sake and for what it presages for us both for the present and for the future.

– Vaughan Williams, 'Elizabeth Music and the Modern World' (1933).

Recording: Vaughan Williams, *Symphony no. 6, The Lark Ascending & Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*, BBC Symphony Orchestra, dir. Andrew Davis (Teldec, 1991).

Lecture 22 Britain and the First World War
Edward Elgar, *Cello Concerto*

The composer first responsible for contributing to the so-called second Renaissance in British music was Edward Elgar (1857–1934), whose reputation developed around the turn of the 20th century through several choral and instrumental works, including the *Enigma variations* (1899), *Dream of Gerontius* (1900) and the first of five *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* (1900). The latter work contains the tune that was used in his Coronation Ode, ‘Land of Hope and Glory’, composed for the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, and which has since become a popular patriotic anthem in England. Elgar’s *Cello Concerto* was completed in the summer of 1919 and premiered later in the year, with the composer conducting the London Symphony Orchestra at Queen’s Hall, London. The concerto was inspired by his reactions to the scale of the human suffering of the Great War: Elgar had produced little music since 1914, disturbed by the rumblings of artillery he could hear across the English Channel from his home in Sussex. A centrepiece of the cello repertoire, the recording by Jacqueline du Pré is often described as the definitive interpretation of this lyrical masterpiece.

Recording: Edward Elgar, *Cello Concerto* (Jacqueline du Pré, Sir John Barbirolli and The London Symphony Orchestra).

Lecture 23 Britain in the Inter-War Years
The Jack Hylton band: dance music from the 1920s and 30s.

The years between the first and second world wars heralded the so-called ‘Jazz Age’ in Britain and the U.S., with an explosion in popularity of a range of popular musical styles that had a long-lasting impact on British society and culture. Forming part of the broader turn to modernism experienced in Western Europe towards the end of World War One, Jazz represented not only a fresh musical style but stood for a culture of optimism that encompassed new attitudes towards entertainment and broadcasting, dance, fashion, gender, sex and non-Western cultures. Born in Bolton, Lancashire, Jack Hylton (1892–1965) became one of Britain’s most influential bandleaders and impresarios, leading his band on successful tours throughout Europe and America. His astonishingly prolific career produced over 1000 recordings before retiring from performance in the 1940s. As an impresario, Hylton was responsible for bringing the Duke Ellington Orchestra to London in 1933, a tour which was to have momentous impact on popular music in Britain. His career in radio and television broadcasting involved the discovery and development of artists such as George Formby, Eric Morecambe and Shirley Bassey. The vintage recordings on ‘Turn on the Heat’, made in the period 1927–30, feature Hylton’s Band with the vocalist Sam Browne performing such standards as ‘You’re the cream in my coffee’, ‘Lucky day’ and ‘I want to be bad’.

Jazz had the ability to encapsulate in one form the defining, often paradoxical features of the post-war age such as aversion to tradition and the progressive experimentation, constructive and escapist approaches to reality, and the Western and the ‘primitive’.

- Catherine Parsonage, *The evolution of jazz in Britain, 1880-1935* (Ashgate, 2005) 43.

Recording: ‘Turn on the Heat’, Jack Hylton (Avid, 2002).

Lecture 24 Britain and the Second World War
Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem*

One of 20th century Britain's leading classical composers, Benjamin Britten (1913–76) blazed a unique stylistic trail across the fields of opera, orchestral and choral music. His *War Requiem* was composed for the re-consecration of Coventry Cathedral, destroyed by bombing in World War Two, and was premiered there in 1962. The work was conceived on a grand scale, utilising the spatial resources of the new Cathedral building, requiring soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists, choirs of boys and mixed adult voices, organ, chamber orchestra and full symphony orchestra. One of Britten's more noticeable innovations was to intersperse the traditional Latin Requiem Mass with settings of nine poems by the World War One poet Wilfred Owen, creating a moving meditation on the futility of war springing from the composer's own ideological commitment to pacifism. Britten had caused controversy as a conscientious objector during World War Two, and intended the *Requiem* as a public statement of his convictions: the work was designed for three soloists from Germany, Russia and Britain, symbolizing the composer's belief in the importance of reconciliation.

Britten, Benjamin, *War Requiem: Sinfonia da Requiem Op.20; Ballad of Heroes Op.14*, London Symphony Orchestra & Chamber Orchestra dir. Richard Hickox (Chandos, 1991).

Lecture 25 Britain, 1945–1979
The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*

Although the scale of the critical acclaim afforded to The Beatles' eighth album undoubtedly complicates attempts to assess its musical and cultural value, there is no doubt it remains one of the most influential documents of popular music, and indeed popular culture, in the 20th century. Having decided to take a permanent break from live performance after a disastrous tour of the U.S. in the autumn of 1966, the band turned their attention to the recording studio in a period of unprecedented experimentation and creativity that had begun with their previous album *Revolver*. The concept of inventing an imaginary band, the *Sgt. Pepper's* of the title, was attractive as it meant the recorded album could take the place of the band's live show, their fictional *alter ego* embodying a range of cultural references through the medium of extensive technical innovation. This is most obviously seen in the album's colourful cover art, designed by the artist Peter Blake. Although questions remain about the extent to which the album's musical contents fit the idea of a unifying concept, the musical and thematic implications of this development have had significant consequences for popular music beyond the 1960s. The songs cover a diverse range of lyric and musical topics, including: Edwardian music-hall parody ('When I'm 64'); psychedelic experience ('Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds'); the metaphysics of Indian philosophy ('Within You Without You'); the post-war generation gap ('She's Leaving Home') and the boundaries of perception and reality ('A Day in the Life'). Writing in *The Times*, critic Kenneth Tynan described *Sgt. Pepper's* as 'a decisive moment in the history of western civilisation', and whilst it is easy to pour scorn on such excessive hyperbole, the very idea of a broadsheet newspaper treating popular music as a serious object of cultural study was in itself revolutionary: this has been the album's real legacy.

Recording: The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Parlophone, 1967).

Lecture 26 Modern Britain, 1979 – Present

Radiohead, extracts from *OK Computer* & Mark-Anthony Turnage *Momentum*

Radiohead's third album *OK Computer* (1997) is consistently described by critics as one of the greatest rock albums of all time, propelling the progressive rock tradition into a new era of electronic soundscapes, innovative textures and ideological commitment. Dealing with issues of alienation, technology, commercialism and political stagnation, the album's 12 tracks offer a conceptual unity that has been taken to reflect broader social concerns in Britain at the end of the millennium. The singles from the album were 'Paranoid Android', 'Karma Police' and 'No Surprises'.

What really blew my head off was the fact that people got all the things, all the textures and the sounds and the atmospheres we were trying to create. – Thom Yorke, Radiohead.

Mark-Anthony Turnage (b.1960) is one of the most successful composers of modern classical music in Britain, with an output covering a range of chamber and orchestral works as well as two operas, *The Silver Tassie* and *Greek*. His unique style is strongly influenced by modern jazz, with innovative use of percussion and orchestral arrangements. Among other professional roles he is currently Research Fellow in Composition at the Royal College of Music. The 10-minute orchestral work *Momentum* (1990–1) was commissioned for the opening of the new Birmingham Symphony Hall in 1991, and exhibits Turnage's characteristic jazz-inspired rhythmic virtuosity.

Recordings: Radiohead, *OK Computer* (Parlophone, 1997);

Mark-Anthony Turnage, *Drowned Out; Momentum; Kai; Three Screaming Popes*, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra dir. Simon Rattle (EMI Classics, 1994).

Lecture 27 Britain and Ireland

The Dubliners, various

The folk music of Ireland encompasses a multitude of styles and genres and a range of historical and regional performance traditions that reflects the complex identity of the Emerald Isle. It is perhaps this flexibility that has ensured the vitality and world-wide popularity of Irish music through to the present day. One group who have been particularly successful at presenting traditional instrumental and vocal forms in a commercially viable format are The Dubliners, formed in O'Donoghue's pub in Dublin in 1962 under the name of 'the Ronnie Drew Folk Group'. With a long career including several changes in line-up and a lengthy back catalogue of recordings, the band's hits include songs such as *The Irish Rover*, *Whiskey in the Jar* and *Molly Malone*. The adaptability of the Irish traditional style is perhaps encapsulated in their popular version of *Dirty Old Town*, which many assume to be an Irish song referring to an Irish town; the song was originally written by the English folk musician Ewan MacColl, whose 'town' was Salford in Greater Manchester.

Recording: The Dubliners, *The Very Best of The Dubliners* (Decca, 2009).