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WILLIAM WALTON: A THEMATIC CATALOGUE OF HIS MUSICAL WORKS, by Stewart R. Craggs  
Oxford University Press, 1977 (£12.50)

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In a review<sup>1</sup> of the second edition of *The Music of William Walton* issued by Oxford University Press to coincide with the Walton 70th birthday celebrations in 1972, I remarked upon the limitations of the late Frank Howes' comprehensive but rather superficial discussion of the music. Now, as a 75th anniversary tribute, OUP have published the first of two full-length studies.

A substantial part of this thematic catalogue was originally prepared in 1973 by Stewart Craggs as a thesis for his Fellowship of the Library Association. He subsequently revised and expanded it to include works written after 1972 and further revisions of some earlier works (including the 1976 revision of *Troilus and Cressida* and the revival of the suppressed *Facade* numbers). Like Imogen Holst in the superb thematic catalogue of her father's music,<sup>2</sup> Craggs has adopted a chronological format, with each work systematically documented as follows: (1) title, (2) incipit (for the published works), (3) instrumentation, (4) length or duration, (5) first performance, (6) dedicatees, (7) publication details, (8) manuscript sources, (9) bibliography and discography, (10) commentary and further information (similarly treated in cases of alternative versions or revisions). A cross-referenced, classified list of works is printed at the end of the main sequence, followed by a chronologically-organised general bibliography.

The wealth of scrupulous research, compiled from a multitude of sources, is certainly impressive, the entries for *Facade* and some of the little-known film and incidental music being especially worthy of praise. For the first time in any study of Walton's music, source material and important biographical information have been obtained from his closest friends and colleagues. In particular, source material from the late Sir Hubert Foss, from Roy Douglas and from the pianist Angus Morrison (a veritable mine of information who also contributed a great deal to the recent book on Constant Lambert)<sup>3</sup> has supplied Craggs with many hitherto unknown facts. Walton himself has given permission for extracts from his correspondence to be printed in Michael Kennedy's introductory essay.

Inevitably, comparisons can be made between the Holst and Walton thematic catalogues. In a number of respects it is the former composer that is better served: each entry is numbered (facilitating easy cross-reference) and dates of completion of works are supplied where available. Occasionally Craggs will use some rather awkward turns of phrase, whereas Imogen Holst's literary style is impeccable throughout.

A thematic catalogue is particularly useful when it gives musical incipits for lesser known and unpublished works. The Holst catalogue provides incipits for all works except those that are lost. The Walton catalogue is impaired by having no incipits except for well known and published works. Music examples for the discarded numbers from *Facade*, the recently discovered incidental music for *Macbeth* and the ill-fated *Battle of Britain* music would have been especially welcome.

Faber, publisher of the Holst catalogue, went to considerable lengths to ensure a clear and easily readable format. Unfortunately, OUP appear to have sacrificed clarity of presentation for the sake of cost. The print is somewhat cramped and difficult to refer to quickly.

As a preface to the catalogue, Michael Kennedy has written a critical appreciation of Walton's life and work. Kennedy, with his depth of knowledge of British music, his

access to interesting new source material and his succinct and eloquent literary style, has placed Walton's musical achievements over the past 50 years in their proper perspective. He traces Walton's development from enfant terrible (1920s), through respectability and critical acclaim (1930s and 40s), followed by something of a backlash of critical rejection despite general popularity (1950s), to a final period of veneration as the doyen of British composers (1970s). Walton's relationship with the Sitwells and with the Lambert—Warlock—van Dieren clique is dispassionately retold, providing a sharp contrast to the comparison Kennedy draws between Elgar and Walton. The crucial post-war years, with the so-called 'falling off' in musical vitality and inventiveness, are dealt with in a positive yet sympathetic way. Kennedy prefers to label these later years as ones of retirement and relaxation of style, with Walton not bending to the fashions of the moment. He sees him as a victim of circumstance, a composer who has been left behind stylistically. Could this fact itself not have led Walton towards a more mannered and clichéd approach?

It would have been interesting to read Kennedy's opinions on the possible influence of Prokofiev on Walton's early style (Walton's painstaking study of Prokofiev's piano concertos is well known; their influence is to be heard in the main themes in all four of his own concertos); also on the possible connection between his marriage (his new-found emotional security in Ischia) and the relaxation in musical utterance in the 1950s. Little is mentioned of the relationship between Walton and his patroness, Lady Wimborne.

These criticisms and comments on the essay and catalogue are, however, of small importance compared with the overall excellence of the book. It will, I feel sure, prove an invaluable compilation of source material and critical commentary, and will make a more than suitable companion to Gillian Widdicombe's eagerly-awaited full-length evaluation of Walton's life and works.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> *Contact* 9 (Autumn 1974), pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Imogen Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Shead, *Constant Lambert* (London: Simon, 1973).