

CHANDOS

THE CENTRAL BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

BRITISH CLASSICS



WING COMMANDER
DUNCAN STUBBS



The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, on the Mall in front of Buckingham Palace



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Gustav Holst, c. 1914

British Classics

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

English Folk Song Suite (1923) **10:51**
for Military Band

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 1 | March 'Seventeen come Sunday'. Allegro | 3:21 |
| 2 | 2 | Intermezzo 'My Bonny Boy'. Andantino –
Poco allegro (Scherzando) – Tempo I | 3:38 |
| 3 | 3 | March 'Folk Songs from Somerset'. Allegro – Trio – D.C. al Fine | 3:44 |

Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934)

First Suite, Op. 28 No. 1, H 105 (1909) **11:16**
in E flat major
for Military Band
Revised full score based on the autograph manuscript
Edited by Colin Matthews

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|------|
| 4 | 1 | Chaconne. Allegro moderato – Brillante – Maestoso | 5:14 |
| 5 | 2 | Intermezzo. Vivace – L'istesso tempo – L'istesso tempo | 2:54 |
| 6 | 3 | March. Tempo di Marcia – Meno mosso – Più mosso | 3:01 |

	Second Suite, Op. 28 No. 2, H 106 (1911)	11:36
	in F major	
	for Military Band	
	Revised full score based on the autograph manuscript	
	Edited by Colin Matthews	
	Dedicated to James Causley Windram	
7	1 March. Allegro. 'Morris Dance' – 'Swansea Town' – 'Claudy Banks' – D.C. al Fine	4:43
8	2 Song without Words 'I'll love my love'. Andante	2:15
9	3 Song of the Blacksmith. Moderato e maestoso	1:16
10	4 Fantasia on the 'Dargason'. Allegro moderato	3:14

	Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882 – 1961)	
	Lincolnshire Posy (1937)	16:09
	Based on English Folksongs gathered in Lincolnshire, England	
	by Lucy E. Broadwood and Percy Aldridge Grainger	
	and set for Wind Band (Military Band)	
11	1 'Lisbon' (Sailor's Song [Dublin Bay]). Brisk, with plenty of lilt	1:23
12	2 'Horkstow Grange' (The Miser and His Man: A Local Tragedy). Slowly flowing; singingly – Slightly slower – Slightly slower still	2:51

13	3	'Rufford Park Poachers' (Poaching Song). Flowingly – Somewhat faster – Second speed, but waywardly – First speed	4:05
14	4	'The Brisk Young Sailor' (who returned to wed his True Love). Sprightly	1:42
15	5	'Lord Melbourne' (War Song). Heavy, fierce – Lively – Lively, playful – Lingeringly – [First time] – [Slower] – [First time] – [Lingeringly]	3:30
16	6	'The Lost Lady Found' (Dance Song). Fast, but sturdily	2:24

Ernest Tomlinson (b. 1924)

Suite of English Folk Dances (1951) **13:52**
for Orchestra
Arranged by the Composer for Wind Band (1999)

17	1	'Jenny Pluck Pears'. Allegretto grazioso	2:59
18	2	'Ten Pound Lass'. Allegro vivace	1:13
19	3	'Dick's Maggot'. Moderato	2:29
20	4	'Nonesuch'. Allegro moderato	1:44
21	5	'Hunt the Squirrel'. Allegretto grazioso – Poco meno mosso	3:39
22	6	'Woodcock'. Allegro vivace – Presto	1:35

23

Gordon Langford (b. 1930)

Rhapsody (1975)*

12:48

for Trombone and Brass Band

Allegro comodo – Poco meno mosso – Andante con moto –
Lento – Più mosso – Cadenza – Tempo di Valse – Lento tranquillo –
Tempo I – Allegro giocoso – Andante maestoso – Allegro moderato

TT 77:07

Wing Commander Duncan Stubbs

The Central Band of the Royal Air Force

with

SAC Jonathan Hill trombone*

The Central Band of the Royal Air Force

Wg Cdr Duncan Stubbs MMus FRSM ARCM LGSM RAF

Principal Director of Music

flute / piccolo

Sgt Neslihan Jordan BA(Hons) LGSM LTCM DipABRSM

SAC Anna Jordan BSc(Hons)

SAC Rachel Fairclough BMus(Hons)

oboe

Chf Tech Georgina Morrell GGSM LLCM LRSM

Cpl Alison Rogers BMus(Hons) PGDip(Adv) RCM LTCL

cor anglais

SAC Hannah Lewin BMus(Hons)

E flat clarinet

Cpl Christine Ebrey B Mus(Hons) PGDip LLCM

B flat clarinet

Cpl Graham Jones BMus(Hons) PGDip(Dist) LLCM DipABRSM ATCL

Sgt Thomas Rodda BMus(Hons) DipABRSM LRSM LRAM

Sgt George Martin BMus(Hons) LTCL DipABRSM

Cpl Louise Bonneywell BMus(Hons) LLCM DipABRSM

Cpl Dominique Thistleton

SAC Timothy Ieraci BMus(Hons) DipABRSM

SAC Beckie-Claire Dillel DipABRSM

SAC Emma Taylor BMus MMus

SAC Kathryn Walker BA(Hons)

SAC Jonathan Read BA(Hons) MMus ATCL

alto clarinet

Cpl Dominique Thistleton

bass clarinet

Cpl Laura Campbell

bassoon

Cpl Neil Chapman BA(Hons) MA DipABRSM LRSM

SAC Rebecca Worthington BMus(Hons)

soprano saxophone

Cpl Mike Hearman DipABRSM

alto saxophone

Cpl Andrew Mears MA LTCL(Dist) Assoc. CIPD

Cpl Mike Hearman DipABRSM

tenor saxophone

Chf Tech Gary Cooney LLCM

baritone saxophone

Chf Tech David Cox BA(Hons) DipMus(Open) LLCM

trumpet / cornet

Sgt Paul Sutton AGSM LTCL

Cpl Michael McGowan BMus LLCM DipABRSM LRSM

Cpl Ben Godfrey PGDipRAM LRAM

SAC Andrew Lofthouse BMus(Hons) DipABRSM

SAC Ben Murray BMus(Hons) DipABRSM

SAC Jerry Clack BMus LRAM

SAC Edward Carpenter BMus(Hons)

French horn

Sgt Paul Phelan BMus(Hons) LLCM

Sgt Caroline Gardner

Cpl Ellen Driscoll LTCL BMus(Hons)
SAC Edward Bolton King LLCM
SAC Shona Brownlee BMus(Hons)
Pte Christopher Howlings

trombone soloist

SAC Jonathan Hill BMus(Hons)

trombone

Sgt Hamish Dean BMus(Hons) LTCL DipABRSM
Cpl Jonathan Phippen BAMus ARCM(Hons) ATCL Dist
SAC Matthew Edwardson BMus(Hons) DipABRSM

bass trombone

SAC Jonathan Hayward BMus(Hons) PGDip DipABRSM LLCM

euphonium

SAC Lewis Musson BMus(Hons)
Chf Tech Andrew Keegan GRNCM PPRNCM LRSM LTCL LLCM

tuba

SAC Jonathan Gawn MMus BMus(Hons) DipABRSM
Sgt Jonathan Truscott MA(Dist) LTCL ALCM

double-bass

SAC Simon Lloyd RWCMD ABRM

percussion

SAC Dan Floyd ATCL
FS Paul Craggs DipABRSM
Cpl Matt Walker BA(Hons)
SAC Nathan Lewin



The Central Band of the Royal Air Force,
with Wg Cdr Duncan Stubbs, in Cadogan Hall, London

British Classics

Introduction

'Always go for the best composer you can', was the advice given at a commissioning panel during a wind conference which I attended some time in the 1980s. The speaker, from the floor, was none other than Frederick Fennell for whom pursuing anything but the best was a waste of time, effort, and resources. To some he was almost God, a saviour and redeemer of American wind music as a force for artistic expression; to others Satan, the man who betrayed the true soul and purpose of wind bands as vehicles for community bonding, friendship, and entertainment. 'You stand a better chance', he went on, 'of getting a great composer to write good wind music than to teach good bandsmen to write great music.'

His aim was not to destroy concert bands but to provide a medium for which no composer would be ashamed of writing, and a repertoire which no musician would be ashamed to be caught playing – always 'the best he could get'. What inspired his mission to give pride and dignity to American wind music was what he called the

British Wind Classics for military band
by Holst, Vaughan Williams and their

contemporaries with their clarity,
sensitivity of scoring and high artistic
content.

In a repertoire dominated by overscored trifles they outclass the field because their composers were original creative imaginations of a high order. It is largely thanks to Fennell that their folk heritage of tunes and dances, whose echoes resonate in the repertoire to this day, has infiltrated a global medium.

If the US Concert Band evolved from one popular tradition, and Grainger, Holst, and Vaughan Williams are products of another, they are traditions that developed side by side, born of the same mother. A good starting point is the calamitous 1840s, the 'years of revolutions', of the European famine driving destitute thousands, specially the wind-playing Bohemians, across the Atlantic in search of survival and a better life, and of political and social instability stirring the desire to reconnect with cultural identities, which grew into an unstoppable seminal artistic force. It is precisely when creative writers breathe that air that they can communicate even challenging art because

they deal in things that mean something in human terms. On an individual level, how and why composers such as Dvořák and Janáček in the Czech lands, Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Grainger in Britain came to embrace and use it – its significance to them personally – is just as fascinating.

In Britain the impetus for collection and preservation of our folk music heritage was archival, and the pebble that set off the avalanche was probably John Broadwood's sixteen *Old English Songs, as now sung by the Peasantry of the Weald of Surrey and Sussex* (1843), a volume insisting on accuracy over the musically pleasing. For the next half century collectors scoured the realm, gathering and publishing several hundred country songs, popular airs, ballads, and dance tunes. Qualms over authenticity were ignored in the rush to build a comprehensive resource over which others could argue or which they could use as they saw fit, to preserve and publish the shared cultural heritage which largely defines national identity. To get some sort of grip, The Folk Song Society was formed in 1898 with a starry cast of vice presidents, Parry and Stanford among them; the adoption of its first report, in 1899, was moved by one Mr Edward Elgar (whatever happened to him?). The realisation that a generation of folk singers born in the 1840s and '50s must be

caught or forever lost added urgency, and a rescue mission began. With *Sussex Songs* (1899) by Lucy Broadwood (an expanded reprint of her uncle's classic) as a marker, with Cecil Sharp as the powerhouse, and with the new recording machines (Edison 'Standard' and 'Home' were the phonographs of choice, though the compact 'Gem' would serve at a pinch) adding a facility that did not require conventional musical expertise, collecting reached almost industrial levels. Over a dozen years Vaughan Williams amassed nearly 800 songs, carols, and dances, some from cylinder recordings made by colleagues, the first appearing in the Society's journal of 1902. Grainger collected and transcribed more than 300, made 216 field recordings, and, amazingly, in 1908 persuaded The Gramophone Co. (formerly the Gramophone & Typewriter Co., subsequently HMV) to issue commercially seven studio-made sides by the seventy-five-year-old 'Genuine Peasant Folksinger' Joseph Taylor. Aesthetic patriotism was a cultural force; it helped two individuals in particular to find themselves and to influence British music for nearly half a century; wind music longer than that.

Holst: Suites, Op. 28

Born a couple of years – and half a day's

cycle ride – apart, they met in 1895 as students at the Royal College of Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958) steeped in Stainer's *Harmony*, string player by inclination, but an organist against his will; Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934) a Grieg devotee, talented pianist forced by neuritis to abandon it as a career, playing the trombone in pier bands to augment his scholarship and as asthma therapy. Shy, late developers pooh-poohed as composers by contemporaries, both were Wagner addicts unknowingly needing to break the addiction. In a close friendship between two country-born city-dwellers who would discuss and criticise each other's work and ideas, Grieg's endorsement of folk material in legitimate concert music cannot have passed Vaughan Williams by, nor would that of Bruch, with whom he studied in Berlin in 1897, have failed to water the seed. Holst was twenty-nine and a professional trombonist when in 1903 he made the trip to Berlin that determined him to earn a living as a composer despite creative identity worries. 'I have been trying to think where we (you and I) are', he wrote to Vaughan Williams, 'and what we ought to do.' Vaughan Williams, now a fervent folksong convert, told him. The effect was liberating and transformative. The years up to 1913 were critical to Holst, a period

of self-discovery, which he spent utilising and absorbing influences and 'settling old scores' (such as the opera *Sita* which had been hanging around for ten years) before he could go forward as his own man. The folk tunes, plainsong, hymns, and psalms he encountered while working with Vaughan Williams on the *English Hymnal* completed the exorcism of Wagner which had begun with his excursions into oriental cultures. In a decade he pressed more than seventy folksongs and folk tunes into service for vocal, orchestral, chamber, and wind band scores.

Why Holst embraced wind bands is not clear. He knew that every park and pier had its bandstand, where ordinary people heard whatever a plethora of military bands dished up for them; given his deep concern for his fellow man, did he feel the public deserved better? Maybe being director of music at Morley College, with an 'orchestra' consisting mostly of wind, brass, and a piano to fill in the gaps, awakened an interest in the possibilities of real music for wind bands, and as there was not any he must write it himself: a struggling composer might even earn income from it. Whatever the reason, by 1911 Holst had written twelve of thirty-six projected morris dance transcriptions (band and orchestra) and, straddling them, the

Op. 28 suites; also an oddment, the March on three folk tunes, H 106A, having links with both suites but not identified in his own list of compositions. A plausible suggestion is that it was intended for a then embryonic Suite (No. 2), either where parts of it actually ended up, as the opening movement, or possibly for the finale. It may, like the aborted Serenade movement by Max Reger (1904), have served to perfect his wind craftsmanship: twenty years later he undertook just such a task, transcribing *Marching Song* and (to brush up on fugal technique) Bach's *Fugue à la Gigue* before tackling *Hammersmith*.

In whatever order they were actually composed, the Suites live on a cusp, No. 1 looking forward, No. 2 back, probably conceived together but separated to make space for the dance arrangements (paid work) and two suites for orchestra, Op. 29: the startling *Beni Mora*, and *Phantastes* (later withdrawn). Things with actual performances arranged, or that help pay the rent, claim priority over speculative scores with no premiere fixed.

Holst dates Suite No. 1 1909, so it was definitely completed, even if not started, first; manuscript parts bearing the name Gustav von Holst – Holst had the sense to ditch 'von' during the war – tell us that it had at least a run-through before the documented

premiere; with little time or money you do not copy performing material, still less pay someone else to do it, unless you expect to use it. Runs-through were not uncommon; Grainger certainly presented *Hill Song No. 2* to a bewildered London public in 1911. Holst's daughter, Imogen, wonders if the Suite was written for the People's Palace Festival, Mile End Road, London, in May 1909; a run-through, whatever the occasion, would have offered opportunities to assess and maybe adjust scoring before approaching publishers, who were not queuing up to take it on – understandably maybe, as serious extended concert works for military band were a totally unknown quantity and, anyway, it is not what Holst was known for, if he was known at all.

In fact, it waited over a decade. By then, things were very different. *The Planets*, with two high-profile partial performances behind it and a complete one looming, was taking London by storm. Holst was now hot news; promoters and publishers looked to see how they could benefit. The first documented performance of Suite No. 1 took place at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, in June 1920, the work available for sale the next year as a set of parts and piano-conductor. Suite No. 2 appeared in the same format in 1922, the very year of its premiere (and the

same year as the *St Paul's Suite*). Within three years HMV had released recordings of both wind suites in uncut versions – and excerpts of Gordon Jacob's *William Byrd Suite* – by the Coldstream Guards. Holst himself had meanwhile recorded *Marching Song, Beni Mora*, and a complete *Planets* with the London Symphony Orchestra on Columbia, a case of astonishing enterprise in acoustic recording days. It was not just Holst who had arrived, but the military band as a bona fide medium for serious music. Yet, he had been dead for fourteen years before full scores of the suites were printed – edited, alas, for enlarged forces to endear them to a wider market – and for fifty before material appeared that respected the lucid, vibrant, uncluttered soundworld of his original concept. The 1984 editions by Colin Matthews, with advice from Frederick Fennell, used in these recordings are based on the parts in the original 1920s publication, prepared presumably with Holst's input, shedding the extra instruments and gratuitous doublings of the 1948 score and solving many ambiguities in the original autographs.

First Suite

From the first few bars the E flat Suite we know that we are listening not to orchestral or abstract ideas grafted onto the medium

but to something conceived entirely in terms of wind band colour and sonority. Versions for brass band, orchestra, and (the first section) organ do not have that integration of medium, material, and form that give the original its vibrancy and character. Its subsuming of earlier influences is a landmark in Holst's development of a mature individual musical voice, and a coming of age of the medium – its first great original work by a British composer. A kinship with the earlier March, apart from sharing its key of E flat, is incidental but not absent. Holst tells us only two things about the suite, one hard to overlook and one often ignored: that each movement is founded on the same phrase and that movements must follow without a break. The phrase is stated sonorously at the outset of the opening Chaconne and seems to show more an absorption of work on old hymn tunes than folk references; the latter we meet fleetingly only in the trio section of the finale, which uses a variant on 'The Sons of Levi' that forms the trio of the earlier March. The form of the suite is subtle, simple, but satisfying: an unfolding narrative in which the Chaconne motif recurs with different treatments, variation, and successively faster tempi in a jaunty Intermezzo and a brisk March – so, an introduction, allegro, and presto. Add an epilogue and you have a

blueprint for that greatest of his wind scores: *Hammersmith*.

Second Suite

Judging by its manuscript, composition of the Suite in F was not straightforward despite the adoption of the folk anthology form in which Holst was so much at home. Strong internal evidence – such as style, content, and handling – supports the idea that it was started before No. 1 to develop the little March into a fully fledged concert item, but reservations made him set it aside to revisit later. You can see why he might put No. 2 aside to write No. 1, but not why he would move 'backward' in style for No. 2 after the originality of No. 1. If it was just unfinished business he wanted to put to bed, he lavished enormous efforts on far-reaching revisions, composing a new first movement and almost completely rewriting the (eventual) finale. The counter-proposal is that making a round of bands with the score of the E flat Suite, Holst met a blank wall, which was tempered by the suggestion that he, and they, might consider something with 'popular appeal', and that he duly obliged; composers are as much prey to self-deception as directors are masters of the diplomatic brush-off. Certainly, in July 1917 Holst wrote to his friend W.G. Whittaker, then organising a band concert in Newcastle,

asking, 'Does W want the full score of the military Suite?' He does not specify which suite, but 'W' is J. Causley Windram, the dedicatee of the Second. The answer was clearly 'no', as a note by Holst for what is certainly the premiere, at the Royal Albert Hall in June 1922, again by the Band of the Royal Military School of Music, under Lt. H.E. Adkins, states that it was

originally written in 1911 and then put aside
and forgotten until recently when the
composer was appealed to for a work for
military band, and its existence recalled...

The signs of haste in the autograph suggest that he really had just remembered the original Suite, was not happy with it, and struggled frantically against a deadline to revise and polish something written ten years earlier into a score with which he was happy.

Suite No. 2 has a satisfying four-movement symphonic shape (with the scherzo third) but without the developmental element. It is based entirely on straight versions of traditional tunes, done with such masterly scoring and sympathetic harmonisation that, though Holst uses them all elsewhere at least once, material and medium go together so perfectly that in even a half-good performance you never think that any other setting could match them – which is possibly true – or that writing it had caused any

problem – which certainly is not. What dates from 1911, what earlier, and what maybe even later, is something for future research.

Holst began his revisions at the first movement. The (alleged) 1911 autograph shows that it was to be a version of a gentle Hampshire folk song, 'Young Reilly is my true love's name', for voice and piano, which Holst had published in 1909 (so made before that date). Realising that this would not make a strong enough opener, he opted to revisit his earlier thoughts. What we actually hear is the ideal opener, the striking *Allegro* March, combining two tunes, the morris dance 'Glorishears', looted from the opening of the H 106A March, followed, not as in that March by 'He-back, she-back' but, by another Hampshire song, 'Swansea Town' ('Farewell to you my Nancy') – which we also meet in the unaccompanied *Choral Folk Songs*, Op. 36 (1916), as we do the tunes in the second and third movements.

Holst first arranged 'I'll love my love' ('Abroad as I was walking'), if not here, in a group of nine folksongs for voice and piano (1906–14) or in the seven orchestral settings made at about the same time. Entitled 'Song without Words', this is the slow movement, twice presenting the wistful Cornish air in simple, restrained harmonisation, first on clarinet joined later by oboe (or on oboe

throughout – the manuscript is not absolutely clear: perhaps both, though I doubt it), secondly on cornet. The custom is to play the movement on single instruments throughout, more because it sounds better than because Holst expresses a preference, which he does not.

The 'Song of the Blacksmith' ('For the blacksmith courted me'), with its constantly changing metres, uses another tune collected in Hampshire (also used as No. 4 in the Op. 36 set). It is marked *Moderato e maestoso* but usually taken at a good lick. A syncopated staccato brass figure, *ff*, introduces the tune, which is heard twice, then combined *fff* with the opening figure underpinned by strokes on an anvil, recalling recent (and perhaps still smouldering) passions for *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* – outgrowing Wagner as a primary influence on creative thinking does not mean you cannot use a few of his tips. Colin Matthews suggests that this movement may have been rewritten or added later, but later than what? The evidence surrounding the gestation and chronology of the whole Suite is a mess.

We can at least be pretty sure of the sequence of events in 'Fantasia on the "Dargason"', famously using Henry VIII's song 'Greensleeves', which had escaped the court, gone feral, and just survived Cromwell's Puritan

purges as a morris dance. The autograph – twenty-three out of its twenty-seven pages rewritten – shows that what has been played since 1922 is clearly a revision; the parallel passage in the 1913 autograph of the *St Paul's Suite*, which abounds in wind band markings, tells us that the version in the Second Suite is a transcription of the piece for strings, not the other way round: so, it was finalised after 1913 and in all probability at speed for the premiere, which can itself be seen as a kind of fond farewell to the folk music which had served him so well, had dominated his work for so long, but was now a landscape of imagination where he no longer lived.

Vaughan Williams: English Folk Song Suite

If we have Vaughan Williams to thank for Holst's folk music immersion, we probably have Holst to thank for Vaughan Williams's discovery of the military band.

The origins of the *English Folk Song Suite* go back to the year of the *Tallis Fantasia*, 1910. Vaughan Williams had *A Sea Symphony*, *The English Hymnal*, *On Wenlock Edge*, a string quartet, and study with Ravel under his belt; he had also collected more than 650 of the folksongs that dominated so much of his musical thinking. Having made several straight if beautiful arrangements, and smuggled a few into small works, he

had not so far attempted an extended form serving his mission to integrate folksong arrangements powerfully into a broader public consciousness. That, he decided, would be a stage work, and set about it systematically. The first and perhaps only fruits of this particular venture were an orchestral *Fantasia on English Folk Songs: Studies for an English Ballad Opera*, something to road-test essential ingredients, serve as a promotional tool for the larger work, and maybe have a life of its own in the concert hall. Its premiere took place at a Queen's Hall Prom under Henry Wood in September 1910, whereupon it was withdrawn and entirely disappeared. What we know from an original programme note is that two tunes were taken from collections by Lucy Broadwood and Cecil Sharp and that it had two brisk outer sections flanking a slow longer middle section; a review in *The Times* reports that it opened with 'Seventeen come Sunday'. A good potted account of the *English Folk Song Suite* leaves little doubt that the original operatic idea, superseded by *Hugh the Drover* (on which Vaughan Williams worked from 1910 to 1914 – whereafter other events occupied his mind), was abandoned, put aside, or just forgotten – till 1922 or '23 that is.

Whether Holst, or his Suite, reminded Vaughan Williams that he himself had such

a work, which might be reworked effectively for band, is not recorded: Holst will have heard the original *Fantasia* and we can almost hear him say, 'I think that would work better for military band'. Vaughan Williams, having the greatest respect for Holst's surefooted sensitivity in matters of colour and instrumental sonority, and a redundant work on the shelf, would have agreed. It was certainly requested by Kneller Hall, and premiered there in July 1923. If he saw it as a way to promote a commission for something better, in a more major context, it certainly worked, resulting in the pungently ironic *Toccata Marziale* of 1924, which may have come as a surprise after this simple unassuming score.

The composer's biographer, the late Michael Kennedy, is rather lukewarm about the Suite, dismissing it for 'making no attempt to develop the tunes or rhapsodise upon them' – perfectly acceptable in an unambitious work the original purpose of which had been to present thematic ideas for a putative opera, and for which a secondary purpose probably had been to achieve familiarity with an untried medium. 'It is merely', he adds, 'a series of good tunes strung together with art and artifice', which is perfectly true unless you dispute the use of the word 'merely'.

The Suite incorporates nine tunes, all but one collected and used elsewhere at least once – often more – by Vaughan Williams himself. It opens with a vigorous *Allegro* March in F minor using 'Seventeen come Sunday', which gives it its title, 'Dives and Lazarus' (in the bass), and 'Pretty Caroline'. This is followed by an Intermezzo, again in F minor; *Andantino* with a *Poco allegro* (*Scherzando*) middle section. The tunes that Vaughan Williams here used are 'My Bonny Boy' and 'Green Bushes'. The finale, entitled 'Folk Songs from Somerset', is another bracing March, again *Allegro* but this time in B flat, and using four tunes. The first, 'Blow away the Mountain Dew', is the one for which I have traced no record that the composer ever collected it himself, though it is traditional and so well known that he probably did not need to. The others, which he certainly did collect, are 'High Germany', 'The Trees so High', and 'John Barleycorn'. Unassuming the Suite is, yes, but totally true to his manifesto commitment that a composer must 'live with his fellows, make his art an expression of the whole life of the community'.

Grainger: Lincolnshire Posy

If the Suite by Vaughan Williams wears a flower in the buttonhole, *Lincolnshire Posy*

by Percy Grainger (1882–1961) definitely has mud on its boots; it perfectly illustrates the different significance folk music had for him compared with his two fellow composers, and the contrasting ways in which the three of them drew on it. All were men on a mission, each just on a different mission. For Vaughan Williams the engagement was part rescue operation, but mostly, as in the case of Cecil Sharp, to get a native tradition back into the bloodstream of national consciousness, as a rejuvenating force at every level from schoolroom to opera house. For Holst, after its function as a Wagner purgative and as his route to an individual voice, folk music became subsumed as part of his vivid expressive armoury. For Grainger it was a reality in the lives of irreplaceable unique people, an imminently threatened heritage still living, but only just, to be preserved with total fidelity. For Ernest Tomlinson, in his turn, it would be a matter of tribute and affectionate homage: using inherited cultural material as a means of producing pleasing and meaningful works, thereby helping it live on for future generations.

Grainger was both a force and a child of nature, possessing limitless energy and unquenchable enthusiasms. A galvanic motivator and staunch, loyal, generous supporter of friends and fellow composers,

he was also a meticulous annotator, prolific letter writer, and compulsive archivist; we know exactly where he was and what he was doing at any given time. And unlike Holst and Vaughan Williams in their suites, he knew exactly which singer's unique account of a song he had collected, and in *Lincolnshire Posy* rendered that particular account of it. We even often know the names of the 'old folk singers who sang so sweetly to me', portrayed musically in each movement, and to whom this bunch of wild flowers (as he subtitled it) is dedicated. In band circles it is simply a 'blockbuster', a towering masterpiece, an immense technical challenge, highlighting the need to balance vertical precision and horizontal freedom, and a rite of passage for band directors.

With it Grainger also composed his masterpiece, doing justice in a single complete statement to the twin passions which dominated much of his creative life: wind ensembles and folk music. Written in 1937, at the height of his powers, it traces its roots back much further, certainly past 1906 when he and Lucy Broadwood prowled the Lincolnshire countryside with notebook and phonograph to record the singers whose songs, transcribed with great precision, form the substance of *Lincolnshire Posy*, maybe to 1899 and his settings of twenty-six *English*

Folksongs and Popular Tunes – maybe even to when as a ten-year-old he planted his own tiny patch in the family garden not with seeds he had been given but with things he had found in vacant lots and nearby fields. 'What's the difference?' he is reported as having said. 'I think they're just as pretty as proper flowers.' As a pianist in his teens he developed an abiding love of Grieg and his message that 'art music' can be found in the lives of ordinary country people, which Grainger expressed in 1926: '...in folk-song there is to be found the complete history of a people recorded by the race itself...' His love affair with winds began in 1900 with the rustic oboes (*piffari*) heard in Italy and the Egyptian double-reed instruments at the Paris Exhibition. Arriving in Britain in 1901, he made a walking tour of Scotland and encountered bagpipes for the first time, the result being that improbable masterpiece *Hill Song No. 1* for two piccolos and nineteen double-reed instruments. By 1904 he had extended his knowledge of the wind practicalities through a deal with Boosey to borrow different wind instruments each week, had arranged at least thirty folk tunes and folksongs, and had become involved – often acrimoniously – with the English Folksong Society. Under the spell of Lucy Broadwood and her research and enthusiasm

in the pursuit of authenticity, he began field work himself, collecting in Lincolnshire, first with pen and notebook, then with his newly acquired phonograph, bent on fidelity to song and singer. Their simplicity and peculiarities are reflected in every movement of *Lincolnshire Posy*.

The work uses a 'normal large' band, including cor anglais, and calls for (but seldom gets) the full saxophone family, including soprano and bass, though the grudging realist in him makes provision for a certain flexibility of scoring. With two exceptions the seven songs heard in the six movements were collected in Lincolnshire on wax cylinder by Grainger himself.

The first movement, 'Lisbon', or 'Dublin Bay', is in (if anything) the Mixolydian mode and based on a song sung to him in 1905 by Mr Dean of Hibbaldstowe, a dialogue between a sailor, William, and his pregnant sweetheart, Nancy, who will endure anything to be with him at sea. He is not keen and, we deduce, leaves her behind. Near the end Grainger interpolates the song 'The Duke of Marlborough' – catalogued by Lucy Broadwood in 1895 from Henry Burstow of Horsham ('the finest folksinger of his time') – celebrating the Duke's victory over the French at Ramillies. The A flat ending leads nicely into the D flat of 'Horkstow Grange'

(The Miser and his Man: A Local Tragedy). Here Grainger juxtaposes a portrait of his singer, George Gouldthorpe of Goxhill, and his sonorous, dignified, but often highly decorated delivery, with the events that he recounts, a bitter, dramatic, probably fatal feud between John Steeleye Span, waggoner at Horkstow Grange Farm, and his foreman, John Bowlin. The score offers alternative versions of the middle section to cater for the availability of a (reliable) soprano saxophone, which may be – and often is – replaced by flugelhorn, or even cornet. The composer tactfully puts a case for either though his preference is clear. The main theme, collected in Hampshire as 'There was a Tree', was also used by Holst in his *Choral Folk Songs*, Op. 36, illustrating a frequent observation that while texts are usually local, tunes occur nationally. Next comes 'Rufford Park Poachers', a poacher's song sung to him in 1906 by the famous Joseph Taylor of Saxby-all-Saints. It recounts how thirty poachers (who clearly have the singer's sympathy) are ambushed by a group of gamekeepers. The Head-keeper, Roberts, is killed; four poachers are convicted of his murder. This is the movement in which Grainger makes his most extreme use of the multi-metre irregularities that spook so many conductors, such as the tricky opening canon between bass and E flat clarinets;

while hard to bring off, it is easy to understand. 'The Brisk Young Sailor' ('A Fair Maid walking'), sung by Mrs Thompson of Barton-on-Humber, provides much-needed respite from the sombre density of the surrounding movements. The love-token shared by two sweethearts, and divided when the military service of the title character separates them, is rejoined on his return as evidence of their faithfulness. 'Lord Melbourne' (War Song) was provided, clearly under the influence, by George Wray, also of Barton-on-Humber, and portrays the same Duke of Marlborough whom we met earlier, now elevated to the peerage. Wray's unique rendition is wonderfully caught by the stuttering, hopefully co-ordinated chords of the emphatic free-time opening and their repetitions in the otherwise gracefully flowing underlying melody of this movement, as well as by the rhythmic eccentricities even of fully metred sections. The tune of 'The Lost Lady Found' (Dance Song) turns up all over the country, with a variety of texts and titles (including 'Green Bushes'), and was – is – used by countless composers, including Grainger himself at least twice. This version, in the Dorian mode and notated by Lucy Broadwood from the singing of Mrs Hill, her Lincolnshire nurse, tells of the abduction by three gypsies of a young lady and of its consequences: her uncle

thrown in gaol on accusation of murder and her sweetheart's almost global search for her. She is finally found in Dublin, her return to England narrowly averting the execution by hanging of her uncle; the lovers are reunited and all live happily ever after. Grainger superimposes continuous variations in what is a basic passacaglia form, adds (as far as I know) a totally original countersubject, and, in the triumphal final verse, makes full and extravagant use of his beloved 'tuneful percussion'. (For the avoidance of doubt: Grainger does not use 'I'm Seventeen come Sunday' in *Lincolnshire Posy*, whatever the catalogues may tell you, though he does elsewhere.)

Tomlinson: Suite of English Folk Dances

As in the case of most of these works, apart perhaps from Grainger's, it is more the background than the foreground of Tomlinson's gem that needs explaining. Two centuries before the 'years of revolutions', England was experiencing just such a period of social, political, religious, and cultural strife: civil war, the execution of a King, the abolition of monarchy, and the establishment of a republic. During the so-called Commonwealth (1649–60), Oliver Cromwell, de facto Stalinist dictator presiding over a notional parliamentary democracy,

conducted purges of all forms of religious life other than austere Protestantism and of pretty well any display of public (and, if possible, private) entertainment such as theatre. He even eventually outlawed maypole dancing, though he himself allegedly danced all night 'with great show of pleasure' at his daughter's wedding. Thought police were everywhere to correct or punish wicked activity. It was a nation in flux, a nation of fear and undercover dissent. Not so amazing, then, that 1651 should see the appearance of two major volumes against Cromwell's ethos: the socio-political philosophical exegesis *Leviathan* by the arch monarchist Thomas Hobbes, written in exile in France, and, less profound but published in London and arguably with even longer-term influence – on things cultural anyway – *The English Dancing Master* by John Playford. In view of the fact that public dancing was all but illegal, and with no prospect of change, it is hard to think that Playford saw his publication as a commercial venture. The subtitle, 'Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances with the Tune to each Dance', may be a ruse to distance it from court dances – which they clearly are – at a time when there was no court, even on the horizon; so if a protest, the volume was not an overt one. If it and its sequel, *Court Ayres* (1655), were rescue bids to save

a threatened species for posterity, Playford would have been delighted to find them still used as the basis of twentieth-century scores, not least the *Suite of English Folk Dances* by Ernest Tomlinson MBE (b. 1924). If the acknowledgement by Britten of Grainger as 'his master' is reflected in his Suite on English Folk Tunes: 'A time there was...', the master looking over Tomlinson's shoulder is probably the Peter Warlock of *Capriol Suite*.

A one-time chorister, student at the Royal Manchester College of Music, organist, conductor, and administrator, Tomlinson, Lancastrian by birth, is still, at ninety, highly active. A career as an arranger (sometimes signing himself 'Alan Perry') and a composer blossomed in the golden age of classical light music, of which he is a supreme example and which he never ceases to champion. Whether as a composer or conductor, he values melody above all other virtues, in music of whatever genre. You can see why Playford's dances, reflecting and possibly pirating masters such as Lawes and Locke, attracted Tomlinson, but, more, Playford's endless supply of memorable tunes.

The *Suite of English Folk Dances* – No. 1 as it now is; a Second followed in 1977 – written for smallish ('Light') orchestra in 1951, the year after Malcolm Arnold's first set of *English Dances* and two years before Britten's *Gloriana*,

is still the best-known, best-loved, and most frequently played work in Tomlinson's extensive and varied catalogue, for it treats good, ear-catching tunes in a warm-hearted way, in simple terms but with the most polished craftsmanship.

Like Vaughan Williams, Tomlinson does not elaborate, develop, or rhapsodise over material, he lets Playford speak for himself in settings that are expressive to contemporary ears. This is not the place to argue, as Lord Dunsany does, whether court dances are country dances 'civilised' for the nobility, or whether folk dances are feral evolutions from courtly cousins; Tomlinson keeps an open mind, balancing elegant grace with a drop of rustic charm. There is no suggestion of rough yeomanry, though, but a depiction in sound of a cultivated assembly showing off the skills they are seen learning in Playford's fanciful book illustration.

The wind version not only introduces the Suite to a new audience; its clarity and bite capture the essence of dance to the extent that you could, well, dance to the tunes: you can picture people actually dancing to them. It was not Tomlinson's first excursion into writing for wind ensemble, so given the way in which the music fits the medium it is strange that Tomlinson took till 1999 to prepare this version, and then only

reluctantly, after protracted urgings from Tim Reynish. If I, as the long-time publisher of the original, had a small part in it then I am very pleased. Scored for what has come to be standard symphonic wind ensemble (plus alto clarinet), the suite works best one-per-part and can mostly (movements may be, and are, played independently) be performed effectively by quite small groups thanks to the masterly economy of Tomlinson's deft reworking of the already transparent textures of the original. Its six accessible movements need no commentary except to say that all follow the pattern of Playford's actual dances, a melodious or rhythmic figure repeated several times in binary form, maybe with a short middle section. Only one lasts more than three minutes, all exhibit Tomlinson's hallmark sensitivity and wit, and we feel as though we have known them all our life.

First, 'Jenny Pluck Pears', *Allegretto grazioso*, using a very courtly two-strand 6/8 melody heard first on unaccompanied oboe. Then, from A minor to B flat major for 'Ten Pound Lass', *Allegro vivace*, a short, rhythmically accented branle, in 4/4, a round dance with lots of partner lifting and lewd hilarity reflected in rude brass interjections. If ever it was true, the notion that 'Country Dance' derives from 'Contra Dance', in

which partners stand opposite each other, was clearly forgotten by Playford's day. Next, 'Dick's Maggot'. Often used in titles of country dances, 'Maggot' is an old word for a pleasant fleeting fancy, usually about a particular person as a compliment, but it is sometimes meant ironically. Whoever the long-dead Dick may have been, the music tells us that he was either a sedate, proper person with prim ways or a lubricious sot: the jury is still out, if indeed it ever sat. To people of a certain age, and some of an uncertain one, this will be forever associated with Steve Race's *Invitation to Music* on BBC radio. 'Nonesuch', marked *Allegro moderato*, with the emphasis usually on the 'Allegro', is a short, energetic, but light-footed dance that you would not want to perform too long wearing heavy finery. It is possible that the title is a reference to goings-on at Henry VIII's magnificent but ill-fated Nonesuch Palace at Ewell, destroyed by fire in 1683 but very much still standing in Playford's day. 'Hunt the Squirrel' is the longest, *Allegretto grazioso* and in 6/8, but, perhaps surprisingly, wistful and slightly solemn. One suggestion (the one I like) is that the dance is a stylised equivalent of a not quite innocent version of hide-and-seek, popular in court entertainments. For those listening after the nine o'clock watershed: 'squirrel' is a euphemism.

'Woodcock', of a type still danced today, is a very lively *Allegro vivace*, fully scored after a quiet opening. Appropriately for a finale to a dance suite, it brings the work to a brilliant high-spirited close, in brisk triple time, something associated in early dance with requited love and joyfulness – the squirrel uncovered, presumably.

Langford: Rhapsody

Tomlinson and his junior by six years, Gordon Langford (b. 1930), are, sadly, among the last die-hard, multi-skilled masters of a vanishing era of consummately crafted British light music that has given pleasure to generations of grateful listeners, and they are unashamedly passionate about it. Born in Middlesex, composer, arranger, orchestrator of film music, pianist, and, let us not forget, trombonist for many years in the Royal Artillery Band, Langford was a student at the Royal Academy of Music, who had given his first public concerto performance (of Mozart's KV 488) at the age of eleven. Despite having produced an extensive catalogue of orchestral music, it is for band scores that he is best known to an appreciative public. The Rhapsody for Trombone and Brass Band is a prime example and a real gift to soloists in a world not exactly overflowing with distinguished works for concertante trombone.

Written for performance at the 1975 National Brass Band Championships at the Royal Albert Hall, it is almost (I will not press the point) a Grainger-like portrait of the 'singer who sang so sweetly' to him, its dedicatee and inspiration, the legendary Don Lusher. When you are asked for a piece for an instrument you know well and love, for an artist and man of that calibre, in that setting, you jump at it. Lusher repaid the compliment, playing the Rhapsody countless times, and famously recording it with the John Foster Black Dyke Mills Band (CHAN 4533). Like any sensible and practical composer, Langford treats the brass band's wonderful homogeneity of sound as a strength, not a limitation, and it is this virtue which he carries over to the wind ensemble, in which almost nothing goes outside the range of the original formation. There is, for instance, no piccolo or E flat clarinet, but there is a cor anglais. Percussion, used with great effect and resource, calls for none of the exotic stuff you find in many a wind band in search of extra brilliance; even the relationship of the solo line with the band is one of happy integration, not confrontation, avoiding all those tired trombone clichés, effects, or gratuitous displays that tend to disrupt the narrative. The Rhapsody is no sort of traditional concerto but a genial meeting

of friends. The clue is in the title, it is an unbroken twelve or so rhapsodic minutes in which the band dances and the soloist sings to such splendid directions as *Molto cantabile e lusherioso* (!), through three linked sections of continuous melody, containing, at the heart, one of those characteristic big tunes with which Langford gladdens so many hearts. The soloist needs technical virtuosity, yes, but, more importantly, a vast expressive range of tone, colour, dynamic control, and ability to sustain and 'sing through' a line in long-breathed lyrical passages. He also needs stamina to play pretty much continuously throughout, the band often almost incidental, supplying support, comment, contrast, occasional interruptions, or covering fire while the soloist draws breath, gets his lip back, or de-spitals the instrument. Technical demands for the ensemble should place it well within the abilities of even modest wind bands; the soloist, as we see, has a more strenuous time!

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Note by the conductor

In the late 1980s I was a bassoonist in The Central Band, performing on a previous recording of music by Holst, Vaughan Williams,

and Grainger. To be the Principal Director of Music and conductor on this new recording marks the culmination of a musical ambition and a significant high point in my Royal Air Force career. The music represents some of the most iconic wind band repertoire, Holst's Suites in particular having close links to our military heritage. Including Langford's Rhapsody also continues our record of 'firsts' achieved by a British military band, similar events having been the first radio broadcast and the first LP recording. I am hopeful that this disc will continue the proud tradition of musical excellence that is synonymous with The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, the band that it is my immense privilege to conduct.

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Having studied trombone and classical guitar at the Royal College of Music in London, **Jonathan Hill** is the Principal Trombonist for The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, with which he has performed in major concert venues across the UK, been featured as a soloist on both trombone and classical guitar at the Royal Albert Hall, and performed on tours to India, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Cyprus, Switzerland, Poland, and Germany. While still a student, he played under such conductors

as Bernard Haitink, Marin Alsop, and Sir Charles Mackerras, and spent five years as a member of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. As a freelance trombonist he has performed with the English Chamber Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, and commercially alongside singers such as Cliff Richards, Buddy Greco, Martin Shaw, Hayley Westenra, Russell Watson, Carol Kidd, and Claire Martin. He has also played at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club with the late great trumpeter Derek Watkins and with the Royal Air Force Squadronnaires. Jonathan Hill performed *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, for classical guitar, by Francisco Tárrega at Tewkesbury Abbey in March 2014, participated at the Basel Tattoo in Switzerland in July that year, and played in the Opening Ceremony of the first Invictus Games, at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, in September.

Widely regarded as one of the finest military bands in the United Kingdom, **The Central Band of the Royal Air Force** has earned a worldwide reputation for musical excellence, on the concert platform and in the recording studio. Music has been integral to the flying element of the military since 1912, when the Service existed as the Royal Flying Corps. In 1918 the Royal Air Force was formed and by 1920 The Central Band of the Royal Air Force

had been established. In 1922 it was the first military band to broadcast on BBC radio, and it was the first military band to make a long-playing record. In 1955, the Band released a recording of what remains the most requested piece in its repertoire, *The Dambusters March* by Eric Coates. Since 2010 the Central Band and the RAF Squadronnaires Big Band have sold more than 170,000 albums; *Reach for the Skies* was nominated for the *Classic FM* Album of the Year at the 2012 Classic Brit Awards. Collaborative efforts with the composer Nigel Hess, on *New London Pictures* (Chandos), and the euphonium soloist Steven Mead, on *Diamonds and Pearls*, stand as firm testament to the ongoing commitment of the bands to musical excellence and diversity. The Central Band was the first outside the USA to receive the John Philip Sousa Citation for Musical Excellence and it has given highly acclaimed concerts with both the British and the World Associations of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles. The Central Band of the Royal Air Force continues to work closely with BBC Radio 2 and Classic FM, broadcasting major concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in 2014, and continues to support service charities worldwide. Most notable are its partnership with the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust, with which it undertakes an annual concert tour, and its support of

'Help for Heroes', in the form of a spectacular annual gala evening at the Dominion Theatre in London's West End. Central Band personnel also give direct military support to operational activities both at home and abroad. In their conduct and performance, RAF musicians display the excellence for which the Royal Air Force has become renowned during its illustrious history.

Born in Stoke on Trent, Wing Commander **Duncan Stubbs** MMus FRSM ARCM LGSM RAF began his musical career at an early age, playing bassoon in local orchestras and shows and, from the age of fourteen, organising concerts and arranging music for his friends. He received his music degree at York University, having specialised in performance, and undertook a year's postgraduate study in Birmingham, specialising in music education. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1983 as a member of The Central Band and was commissioned as a Director of Music in 1990, one of the youngest ever in all three Services. As Director of Music of the Western Band and later of the Band of the Royal Air Force College, he achieved an unprecedented six consecutive wins in the Boosey & Hawkes

RAF inter-band competitions. He held the post of Director of Music of The Central Band of the Royal Air Force for five years, giving several national and international premieres and also the first ever performance, with the Royal Air Force Squadronaires, by any military group at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. He has completed two tours in the Headquarters Music Services where he was responsible for all aspects of training, administration, and manpower planning. Continuing his own musical studies, he became the first musician to achieve a Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music (Directing, Wind Band). He recently completed a Master of Music Degree, receiving both the William Primrose and Albert Thomas Howard composition prizes; as an arranger and a composer he has successful works in the catalogues of two international publishers. He regularly conducts civilian wind bands, many of which have achieved national status, and he is frequently asked to coach and adjudicate at wind band festivals. As Principal Director of Music, Royal Air Force, Wing Commander Duncan Stubbs will continue the challenge of maintaining the musical reputation enjoyed by Royal Air Force Music Services throughout the world.



The Central Band of the Royal Air Force



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Recording producer Peter Newble

Sound engineer Jonathan Cooper

Editor Peter Newble

A & R administrator Sue Shortridge

Recording venue RAF Music Studios, Northolt, London; 3, 6, and 7 October 2014

Front cover Photograph of The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, with Wg Cdr Duncan Stubbs, in Cadogan Hall, London (Crown Copyright)

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Design and typesetting Cap & Anchor Design Co. (www.capandanchor.com)

Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen

Publishers Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd, London (Vaughan Williams, Holst),

Ludwig Music Publishing Co., Inc., Cleveland, Ohio (Grainger), Novello & Co. Ltd, London (Tomlinson),

Chandos Music Ltd, Colchester (Langford)

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Country of origin UK



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|-------|---|----------|
| 1-3 | RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)
English Folk Song Suite (1923)
for Military Band | 10:51 |
| 4-6 | GUSTAV HOLST (1874–1934)
First Suite, Op. 28 No. 1, H 105 (1909)
in E flat major
for Military Band | 11:16 |
| 7-10 | Second Suite, Op. 28 No. 2, H 106 (1911)
in F major
for Military Band | 11:36 |
| 11-16 | PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER (1882–1961)
Lincolnshire Posy (1937)
Based on English Folksongs gathered in Lincolnshire, England
by Lucy E. Broadwood and Percy Aldridge Grainger
and set for Wind Band (Military Band) | 16:09 |
| 17-22 | ERNEST TOMLINSON (b. 1924)
Suite of English Folk Dances (1951)
for Orchestra
Arranged by the Composer for Wind Band (1999) | 13:52 |
| 23 | GORDON LANGFORD (b. 1930)
Rhapsody (1975)*
for Trombone and Brass Band | 12:48 |
| | | TT 77:07 |

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Wing Commander
Duncan Stubbs
**THE CENTRAL BAND OF
THE ROYAL AIR FORCE**
with
SAC Jonathan Hill trombone*