

Rally Against the Forces of Decadence

by **David Hamilton** (June 2012)

The Neglect of English Classical Music," Raymond Walker, Chairman Victorian Opera NW wrote:
(4)

May I say how strongly we at Victorian Opera endorse what you are saying. I agree with all you say about the composers mentioned. How could it be that the Cheltenham Festival did not give the premiere of Holst's Cotswold Symphony and that a Danish CD label Classico provided the first hearing of this symphony. And how dare a director Michael Berkeley promote his own work when he should be acting as an impartial director of the Festival. 2008 saw Balfe's bi-centenary yet nothing was given by R3. When last September RTE broadcasted a rare performance of Balfe's Falstaff 1838 the BBC wouldn't relay it even though it would have cost them nothing in royalties. We have just recorded W V Wallace's 'Lurline' 1860, a superb work, in readiness for his bi-centenary in 2012. Will Wexford or Buxton pick up a Wallace opera to perform? I doubt it without a deliberate shake up. I am disheartened by the fact that licence payers cannot get R3 to promote a wider coverage of classical music instead of pushing atonal and serial music that very few enjoy listening to.

It is important to save English Music that is stuck in attics and garages and record it. The Daily Telegraph of 26 April 2004 had a feature on John Foulds as Birmingham Symphony Orchestra released "Dynamic Tryptich." Malcolm MacDonald, editor of music magazine Tempo: "There's no question he was a genius and one of the most significant English composers of the last century MacDonald, found some scores in the British Library:

I got out a dozen pieces, and the first thing I opened was the Dynamic Triptych. I was blown away by it. This was music unlike any British composer of the time. I was amazed it was lying around, and no one was playing it.

“Foulds's daughter ” took me to the garage, where there were two coffin-sized boxes full of sketches and manuscripts she's been left by her mother.” Unfortunately, many of the manuscripts were damaged by rats and ants. In his book “Music Today” Foulds's, explained how, by strict diet and meditation, he had developed his clairvoyant and clairaudiant abilities. Much of his music, he claimed, was dictated to him by spirits.

Some of the greatest modern English music has been popular like Elgar, Tippett and Britten.

One who is keen to promote traditional music is Em Marshall founder of The English Music Festival and EM Records. I asked her why so many guardians of classical music looked inwards rather than outwards to a wider audience: She told me: