

Louis Coerne

(1870-1922)

- 1** Excalibur, Op. 180 (20:19)

Edward Burlingame Hill

(1872-1960)

- Stevensoniana Suite No. 1, Op. 24 (21:09)

Four Pieces after poems of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'A Child's Garden of Verses'

- 2** I March (Allegretto vivo) - Marching Song (4:27)
3 II Lullaby (Andante espressivo) - The Land of Nod (4:41)
4 III Scherzo (Molto vivace) - Where Go the Boats (5:58)
5 IV The Unseen Playmate (Moderato non troppo) (6:03)

Horatio Parker

(1863-1919)

- 6** A Northern Ballad, Op. 46 (14:10)

John Alden Carpenter

(1876-1951)

- 7** Sea-Drift (1933, rev. 1942) (16:40)

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Karl Krueger, conductor

LOUIS COERNE · EXCALIBUR, OP.180

EDWARD BURLINGAME HILL · STEVENSONIANA SUITE NO.1, OP.24

HORATIO PARKER · A NORTHERN BALLAD, OP.46

JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER · SEA-DRIFT

The composers represented on this disc all belonged to the generation of American composers who took their inspiration from the German and French music of their continental teachers. Their reputations were made in the early years of the 20th century – and subsequently were more or less discounted with the rise of a more aggressively ‘American’ school of composition promulgated by such various figures as Aaron Copland, Roy Harris and Virgil Thomson. Moreover the truly revolutionary music of their near-contemporary, Charles Ives, tended to make such composers as Coerne, Hill, Parker and Carpenter appear timid. Even though Hill and Carpenter made use of jazz in some of their works, Copland once described their adaptation of that resource as ‘more or less good-mannered’, suggesting they remained hidebound by obsolete canons of taste. Now that the brawling 20th century is over, it begins to be possible to see that these earlier American masters contributed a rich body of music which it is possible to enjoy for its own sake, its skill and fine culture. They need not all remain as neglected as they have been in past decades.

Of the four composers represented on these discs, it is probably true to say that **Louis Coerne** (1870-1922) is now the most thoroughly forgotten. Yet he was a very prolific composer, and there was a time when he was among the most frequently performed American composers on either side of the Atlantic. Born in Newark, New Jersey, he received his early education in France and Germany. He

studied the violin with Franz Kneisel and, from 1888 to 1890, composition with John Knowles Paine at Harvard. Like any self-respecting American composer of his day he completed his musical education with a spell in Germany – indeed in Munich, studying composition and organ with Parker's old tutor, Rheinberger – which lasted until 1893. Coerne was very attached to Rheinberger, and when his return to the USA proved unfruitful – he moved restlessly between church and conducting appointments in Buffalo and Columbus – he returned to Germany for three years, during which he completed Rheinberger's unfinished *Mass in A minor*. On his second return to the USA he taught at Smith College and Harvard, where in 1905 he gained the first PhD in music ever awarded by an American university, for a dissertation on 'The Evolution of Modern Orchestration'.

Coerne's third sojourn in Germany (1905-7) saw the production of his opera *Zenobia* in Bremen; it is said to have been the first opera by an American composer that was staged in Germany. He did not visit Germany again but held a variety of distinguished teaching posts including Music Director at Troy, NY, Director of the Conservatory at Olivet College in Michigan, and Director of the School of Music at the University of Wisconsin. In 1915 he moved from this post to become Professor at Connecticut College for Women in New London, a post he still occupied at his death at the age of 52 in Boston.

As mentioned, Coerne was highly prolific, and in a relatively short life composed over 500 works, of which about 300 were printed. Major pieces included several melodramas and operettas apart from *Zenobia*, a *Violin Concerto*, an *Organ Concerto*, a number of symphonic poems including one on *Hiawatha* which Coerne conducted in Munich and Boston in 1894, incidental music to Euripides's *The Trojan Women*, many cantatas, choruses and partsongs, a *Swedish Sonata* for violin

and piano and several piano trios, three of which are described as 'trios in canon'.

In common with many composers of his time (Goldmark in *Merlin*, Chausson in *Le Roi Arthus*, Bax in *Tintagel*, Rutland Boughton in a five-part operatic cycle) Coerne found creative stimulus in the legends of King Arthur, of which the principal result was the symphonic poem *Excalibur*. This was one of his last works, completed in September 1921 almost exactly a year before his death. It was posthumously published in 1930, and the following year the score was awarded the \$1,000 prize in a competition sponsored by the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs. Precise details of the work's premiere are lacking, but it appears it was played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, as it was in that orchestra's library that Karl Krueger discovered the set of parts which enabled him to make the recording enshrined on this disc.

Coerne's work is scored for a fairly standard late-Romantic orchestra with much percussion, two harps and an *ad libitum* organ part (omitted in the present recording). No detailed programme for *Excalibur* seems to survive, but the title alone tells us that the music alludes to the story of the magical sword of King Arthur which comes down to us from the narrative of Sir Thomas Malory and the older metrical romances on which his history of Arthur is based: the sword bestowed on the young king by the Lady of the Lake, which – after his last defeat and the death of almost all his knights – is thrown back into the lake once more by the bold Sir Bedivere. It is quite likely that Coerne had in mind Tennyson's famous poem, *Mort d'Arthur*, in which the surrender of Excalibur once more to the magical powers is a principal motif. The music of Coerne's symphonic poem reveals how deeply he was affected by the high Romantic idiom of Liszt and Wagner, and his individual handling of the orchestra in working out a large and eventful musical design.

Edward Burlingame Hill (1872-1960) had a more umbilical connection with Harvard than Coerne, for his father was Professor of Chemistry there and his grandfather was a former President of the College. Hill's music has never entirely fallen out of the repertoire. He was an influential and respected figure who taught many of the succeeding generation of composers. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in September 1872, into a milieu that was musical as well as academic: his father, who was well-known as a singer of lieder, was a friend of the influential Boston critic William F. Apthorp. Hill studied at Harvard and, like Louis Coerne, was a pupil of John Knowles Paine. After graduation in 1894 he studied the piano in New York and then went to Paris, where he received further instruction in composition from Charle-Marie Widor and rounded off his tutelage with an orchestration course under George Whitfield Chadwick at the New England Conservatory in 1912. After teaching piano and theory in Boston, Hill was offered a position as an Instructor in the music department at Harvard. Thereafter he remained at Harvard, becoming a Professor in 1928 and later head of the department until his retirement in 1940. Among his pupils at Harvard were Leonard Bernstein, Elliott Carter, Ross Lee Finney, Virgil Thomson and Randall Thompson. He spent the last two decades of his life in Francetown, New Hampshire, dying in 1960 at the age of 87.

Hill was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1916, and in addition to his teaching and composing activities he was also active as a critic, showing himself in general sympathetic to new musical trends. He was particularly attracted to the French Impressionist school, and in 1921 was invited to give a series of lectures on the subject in France itself, at Strasbourg, Lyons and the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau – lectures which became the basis for his book *Modern French Music*, published in 1924. For this among other achievements



Left to Right - Walter Piston, John Alden Carpenter, Nadia Boulanger, Roy Harris, conductor Serge Koussevitzky, violin soloist Zlatko Balokovic, Mabel Daniels, Jean Françaix, and Edward Burlingame Hill at the premiere of Piston's *Violin Concerto No. 2*, Symphony Hall, Boston, 1939

he was made a Chevalier of the Legion d'honneur.

Hill's early music shows the influence of such early American masters as Edward MacDowell, but his openness to French and other influences allowed him to forge a more distinctive idiom of his own as he matured. Though instinctively conservative in orientation he learned much from the Impressionists and also became interested in jazz, which left an imprint on his later music: in the 1920s he wrote a series of Jazz Studies for various instrumentations. His works were mainly orchestral and instrumental, including three symphonies and a violin concerto, a piano quintet and a sextet for piano and wind instruments.

Hill composed two orchestral suites of *Stevensoniana*, of which the current programme features *Suite No. 1*, Op. 24, written in 1916-17. The title is adequately explained by the subtitle 'Four Pieces after poems of Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*', alluding to the famous book of poems for and about children which the Scottish author of *Treasure Island* and many other novels published in 1885. The work might be considered comparable to Faure's *Dolly Suite* or Debussy's *Children's Corner* and, like those miniature masterpieces, the humour and the musical interest are aimed as much, if not more, at an adult audience than at younger listeners. Indeed Stevenson's verses are essentially about childhood as indulgently and slightly nostalgically recollected by the grown man.

The first movement is a March inspired by the poem 'Bring the comb and play upon it', evoking a troop of children playing at soldiers and marching round the village. A jaunty woodwind tune, with triangle and muted trumpets, sets the scene, and there is a broader trio melody that rises to quite a pompous climax before the perky little march returns. Hill makes plenty of appropriate use of the percussion in this movement. The second is a Lullaby, marked *Andante espressivo*, whose basis is the poem 'The Land of Nod' in which the child recounts his

experiences in dream-land and reflects that he can never find the way back there during the day, 'Nor can remember plain and clear / The curious music that I hear'. In contrast to the orchestral profusion of the march, this intensely expressive movement is scored for muted strings alone (with a solo string quartet emerging at one point) in a lulling berceuse rhythm that has considerable pathos as well as sweetness.

The third movement is a bustling Scherzo, *Molto vivace*. This takes its cue from 'Where go the boats?', a poem about launching model boats on a river that will carry them off to somewhere far away. A sense of excitement and adventure is conveyed by the imitative themes, and the running river by the purling figuration in the strings. Again there is a trio section, this time of nostalgic melody. The finale, *Moderato non troppo*, is entitled 'The Unseen Playmate', and is inspired by a touching poem from the section 'The Child Alone', in which the child is playing on his own (as often happened to the delicate R.L. Stevenson) and invents an imaginary playmate and competitor to have company and competition. Here there is a hint of Delius's *In a Summer Garden* as the music's gentle motion, delicate celesta writing and solos for oboe, cor anglais and horn hint at unassuaged longings and remembered pleasure, the work ending like the closing of a story-book. Altogether this charming work shows considerable delicacy of feeling and displays Hill's talents as an orchestrator.

Horatio Parker (1863-1919) is mainly remembered today only as the teacher of one of America's greatest musical geniuses, Charles Ives, who spent four years in Parker's classes when the latter was Professor at Yale. Parker also tends to be characterized as a tradition-bound academic, too steeped in the rules he imbibed from his German teachers to appreciate Ives's originality and vision. This is, to say the least, a somewhat slanted view. Ives described Parker in Memos as 'a



Horatio Parker

bright man, a good technician, but apparently willing to be limited by what Rheinberger et al and the German tradition had taught him'. But in another part of these autobiographical writings from the 1930s he noted that Parker 'was seldom mean' and declared 'I had and have great respect and admiration for Parker and most of his music. (It was seldom trivial – his choral works have a dignity and depth that many of his contemporaries ... did not have. Parker had ideals that carried him higher than the popular.)' Nevertheless it is difficult to imagine now that for a short period at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries Parker was one of the most famous and highly-estimated composers in the English-speaking world.

The son of an architect, Parker was born in Auburnsdales, Massachusetts, not far from Boston, where he studied with George W. Chadwick. He then spent three years in Europe as a pupil – reputedly, the favourite pupil – of the great organist and composer-pedagogue Josef Rheinberger in Munich. Returning (with a German wife) to America in 1884, Parker soon became a sought-after organist and choirmaster in New York, later joining the staff of the National Conservatory directed by Dvořák. In 1893 he went on to become organist of Trinity Church, Boston and in the following year was appointed Battell Professor of Music Theory at Yale, vastly expanding the curriculum and developing the music faculty there to the first rank in the USA.

Generally speaking Parker occupied something of the pivotal position in his country's music that his elder contemporary Hubert Parry did in British music, both as a choral composer and a tireless educator. Considered a 'thorough Bostonian' and respected for his ethical idealism, as a teacher Parker was thought rather fierce and sparing with praise, though some of his pupils found his personality magnetic. Among these – apart from Ives – were several who also went on to play a significant role in 20th-century American music: among them Douglas

Moore, Quincy Porter, and Roger Sessions. Parker advocated the cause of symphonic music, conducting a regular series of concerts with the student orchestra which he founded. This in time became the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, and Parker continued to conduct it until 1919, the year of his death. A workaholic despite a rather delicate constitution, he died worn out by his creative, educational and administrative labours at the early age of 56.

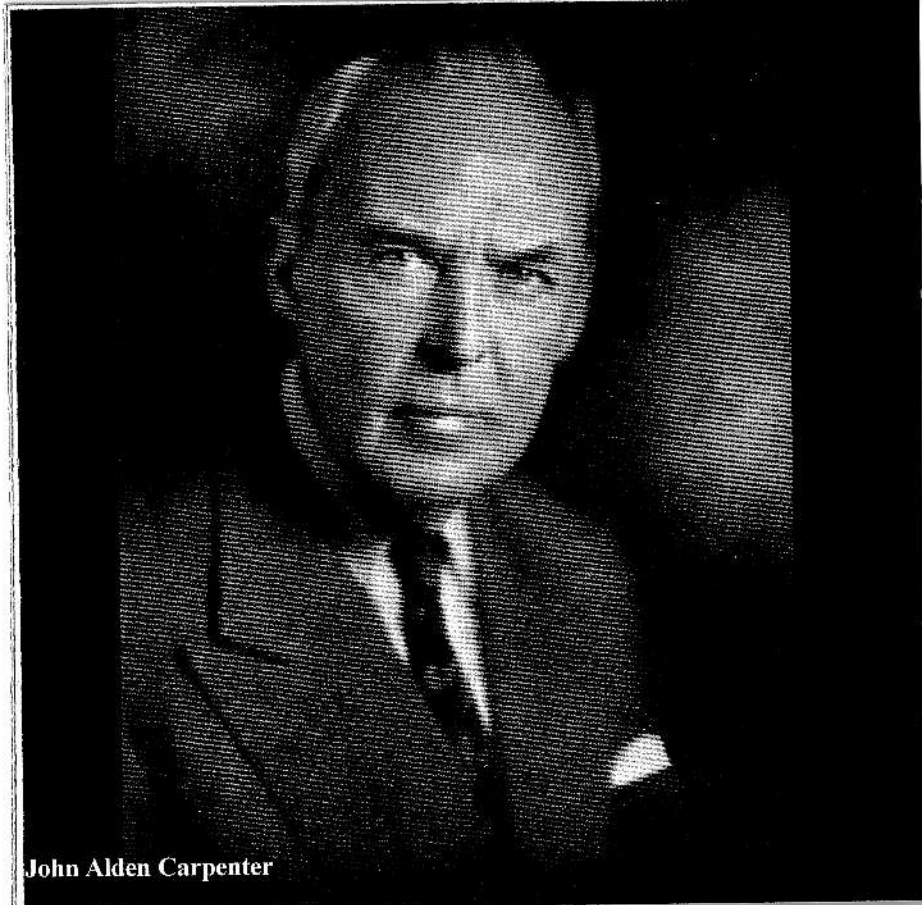
Parker was quite a prolific composer, and his output includes two operas (*Mona* was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in 1912), theatre music, a symphony (1885), an organ concerto (1902), a string quartet (1885) and string quintet (1894); but he was most celebrated for his numerous religious choral works, which include several oratorios more or less on the pattern of those then popular at the choral festivals in Victorian England. In fact, Parker visited England several times, where his music was well received and where his most famous oratorio, *Hora Novissima* (1893), received the signal honour of a performance at the 1899 Three Choirs Festival in Worcester and at the Chester Festival of 1900. He received commissions from British choral festivals and in 1902 received an honorary Doctorate of Music from Cambridge University – an unusual mark of recognition for an American composer in that era.

Parker wrote two symphonic poems, *A Northern Ballad* and *Vathek* (the latter, dating from 1903 and rather unexpectedly based on the macabre oriental fantasy by William Beckford, can be heard on Bridge 9124A/C). *A Northern Ballad* was composed four years earlier: Parker completed it on 11 March 1899, and conducted its first performance on 7 April with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. The first Boston Symphony performance followed on 29 December and within the next few months it had been heard also in Chicago, Cincinnati and New York. Indeed the work did not altogether disappear from the repertoire in the decades fol-

owing Parker's death, though the score has never been published.

Parker was attracted to Nordic and Celtic subjects, if we judge from the titles of some of his cantatas, such as *King Gorm the Grim* and *Morven and the Grail*. In *A Northern Ballad* he produced an effective and sensitively orchestrated piece whose modal harmonic colouring is redolent of the example of Edvard Grieg and could be compared with Frederick Delius's early orchestral works inspired by Norwegian legend and landscape and his friendship with Grieg. *A Northern Ballad* opens in E minor with a woodwind theme which Parker described as 'of the folk-song variety'. This forms the basis for an introduction that paves the way for a D minor *Allegro*, treated as a sonata form with two contrasting subjects, one first heard in the strings, the other introduced by flute. After the recapitulation, which appears orthodox, Parker seems to suggest that the ending is going to be in a conventionally-correct E major, but a highly expressive new development of the more lyrical materials of the work results in a calm coda in the unexpected tonality of D flat.

Probably the best known of this quartet of composers is **John Alden Carpenter** (1876-1951), whose name was sometimes bracketed with that of Hill because of their common musical interests and critical stances. Unlike the other three, Carpenter hailed from the Mid-West: he was born in Park Ridge, Illinois in 1876, the son of a wealthy industrialist active in milling, shipping supplies and the railways. His mother had trained professionally as a singer; his parents encouraged his musical studies from an early age and he had piano and theory lessons with the renowned Amy Fay, chronicler of life in the Liszt circle in the mid-19th-century. Carpenter taught himself composition until the age of 16 and then, like Coerne and Hill, went on to study with John Knowles Paine at Harvard, graduating in 1897. Unlike them, he did not proceed into the teaching profession; instead, like Charles



John Alden Carpenter

Ives, he went into business to support his composing, eventually becoming vice-president of his father's ship's chandlery firm in Chicago. Carpenter was a passionate admirer of the music of Edward Elgar, and succeeded in persuading Elgar to give him some composition lessons when they were both in Rome in 1906. Afterwards he had further instruction from Bernhard Ziehn, the 'Chicago Gothic' theorist and composer whose principles of strict invertible counterpoint had such a profound effect on Busoni when he met Ziehn in 1910. It was at just this time, and until 1912, that Carpenter was Ziehn's student. All this preparation made Carpenter a composer of wide learning and sympathies.

First becoming known as a composer of songs, such as a cycle on Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, Carpenter soon became identified with those composers who were striving to create a distinctively 'American' style. A significant influence on his development was the jazz bands he heard in Chicago, and jazz idioms both rhythmic and melodic feature in several of his most characteristic scores, including the whimsical orchestral suite *Adventures in a Perambulator* (1914), the splendid *Piano Concertino* (1915), the 'jazz pantomime' *Krazy Kat* (1921) based on a popular comic strip, the ballet *Skyscrapers* (1923-4), originally intended for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. He also wrote pieces for Paul Whiteman's Band. A taste for the Latin colouring of Spanish music can be heard also in works like the *Concertino* and the ballet *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Altogether Carpenter was a master orchestrator, and his works are often leavened with a disarming sense of humour. He was active as a critic and continued to compose and to be fairly frequently performed throughout his life. Harvard bestowed an honorary degree on him, and in 1947 he received the gold medal for distinguished achievement in music of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

In addition to his better-known jazz-oriented pieces, Carpenter composed

several important works in an idiom that derived more from his admiration of Germanic and British models, such as his First Symphony (1916, recomposed 1940), entitled *Sermons in Stone*. Indeed most of his music is programmatic to some degree. Among his other orchestral works he perhaps set most store by the tone poem *Sea-Drift*, which he completed in 1933 (and revised in 1942). He had had the ambition to compose a 'sea-piece' since 1915, but it was a long time before he found a subject that inspired him. Certainly it may claim to be one of the finest evocations of the sea in the American orchestral repertoire. Like Frederick Delius's cantata of the same title, Carpenter's *Sea-Drift* is inspired by the well-known collection of sea-poems of Walt Whitman, from *Leaves of Grass*, and especially the threnodic account of the boy Whitman's observation of two mating seabirds, their flights together over the ocean, their raising a family and the disappearance of the female for ever, leaving her mate to lament with a grief and bewilderment that seemed to him human in its intensity, revealing to him the nature of love.

All this is depicted or evoked by Carpenter's music. If the chromatic nature of his musical language in this score may recall Delius himself, or Delius's continental contemporaries, the personal harmonic refinements that Carpenter brings to that chromaticism, and his sensitive use of colour, are comparable to more radical British composers such as Frank Bridge and Gustav Holst (indeed there are pages of *Sea-Drift* that seem to owe something to Holst's *Planets*). There is a wealth of musical metaphor for the sea in its many moods, and for the cries of the birds, especially in sensitive solos for oboe and cor anglais. The main motifs of the work appear early on, in the quiet introduction for strings, and in the oboe melody that follows. Carpenter varies these in many ways throughout the work, even in retrograde or inverted forms, though the sounds of this score are far different from any serial composition. Climaxes are occasional and brief, the music proceeding more

by a sense of harmonic 'drift' and kinship of elegiac mood. Carpenter's instrumentation in the central section, combining harp, piano and celesta, lends the score an individual, phosphorescent colouring wholly appropriate to its subject-matter. The final pages return to the opening material in varied form, and the strings lead the way into a 'last wave' before the music ends in contemplative quietness.

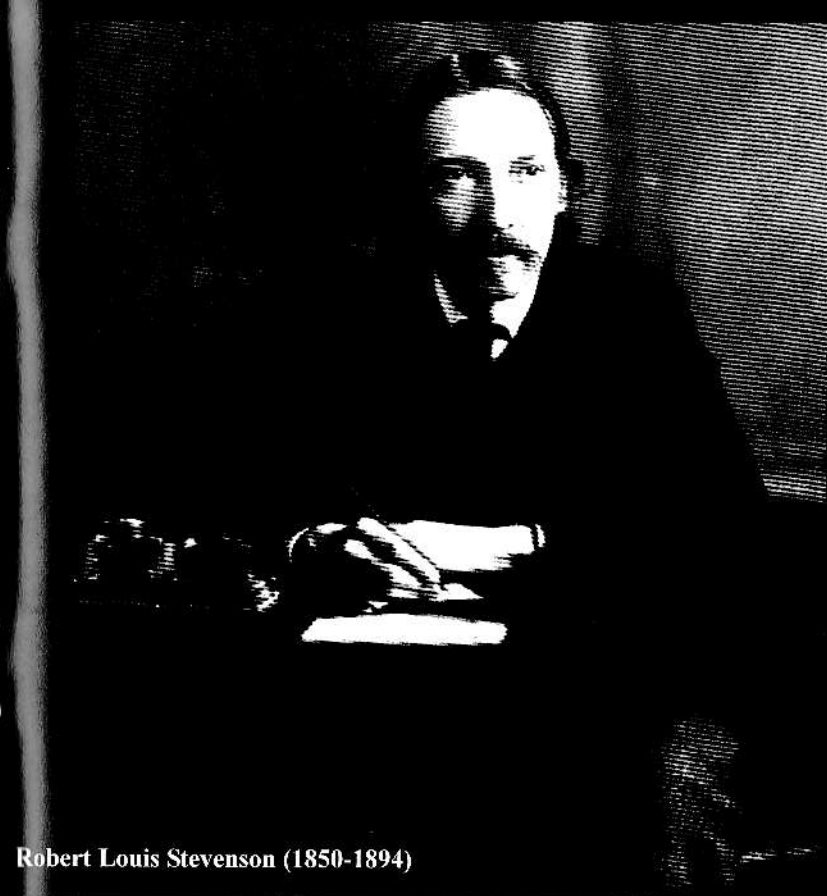
Notes by Malcolm MacDonald

Karl Krueger (1894-1979) was born in Atchison, Kansas. In 1920, after touring Brazil as an organist, Krueger went to Vienna to continue his studies with Robert Fuchs and Franz Schalk. Krueger's conducting career included positions as assistant conductor at the Vienna Staatsoper (1920-22) and Music Director of the Seattle Symphony (1925-32); the Kansas City Philharmonic (1933-43); and the Detroit Symphony (1943-49). In 1958 he founded the Society for the Preservation of the American Musical Heritage.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1946 by Thomas Beecham. Beecham controlled the affairs and policy of the orchestra until his death in 1961. From 1948 until 1963 the orchestra was the resident orchestra for Glyndebourne company performances at both the Glyndebourne Festival and the Edinburgh Festival. In 1950 Beecham took the orchestra on an American tour, becoming the first English orchestra to tour the USA since 1912. The grueling schedule included 51 concerts in 45 cities in 64 days, performing a repertory of 50 works.



Karl Krueger



Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

POEMS BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

EDWARD BURLINGAME HILL

Stevensoniana (Suite I), Opus 24

I. MARCH (*Allegretto vivo*)—Marching Song

Bring the comb and play upon it!
Marching, here we come!
Willie cocks his highland bonnet,
Johnnie beats the drum.

Mary Jane commands the party,
Peter leads the rear;
Fleet in time, alert and hearty,
Each a Grenadier!

All in the most martial manner
Marching double-quick;
While the napkin like a banner
Waves upon the stick!

Here's enough of fame and pillage
Great commander Jane!
Now that we've been round the village
Let's go home again.

II. LULLABY (*Andante espressivo*)—The Land of Nod

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay;
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the Land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do—
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the Land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

III SCHERZO (*Molto vivace*)—Where go the boats

Dark brown is the river,
Golden is the sand.
It flows along for ever,
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,
Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating—
Where will all come home.

On goes the river,
And out past the mill,
Away down the valley,
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring my boats ashore.

IV. THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE (Moderato, non troppo)

When children are playing alone on the green,
He comes the playmate that never was seen.
When children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'T is he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'T is he when you play with your soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchman and never can win.

'T is he when at night you go off to your bed,
Bids you go to sleep and not trouble your head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself.

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Photo of Karl Krueger courtesy of The Detroit Symphony Orchestra

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