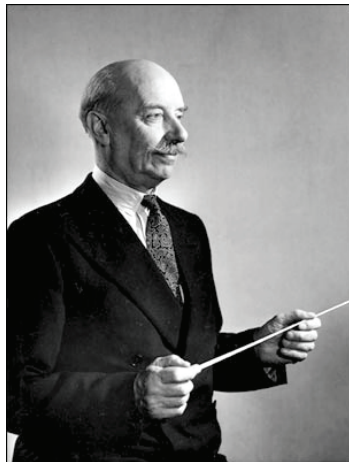


Sir Adrian Cedric Boult (April 8, 1889 – February 22, 1983)

Boult was born in Chester and educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. As a schoolboy, he was introduced to the world of music by a family friend, Frank Schuster, who was a friend of Edward Elgar and introduced the young Boult to the composer around 1905.

He completed his musical education at the Leipzig Conservatory where he learnt to conduct by watching the eminent Hungarian conductor Arthur Nikisch. He sang in choral festivals and at the Leeds Festival of 1913, where he went to watch Nikisch conduct, and made the acquaintance of George Butterworth and other British composers.

*During World War I he was employed at the War Office, and whilst there in 1918 planned a series of concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, which included several important recent British works: Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, of which he gave the first private performance, *A London Symphony* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, of which he gave the first performance of the revised version, and *Elgar's Symphony No. 2* which had fallen into neglect. Elgar wrote to him and said he felt sure the future of his music was safe in Boult's hands. In this way Boult laid the foundations for a long career as a champion of twentieth century English music. As one example, Vaughan Williams dedicated *Job, A Masque for Dancing* to Boult in the mid-1930s, several years after the actual première of the work.*



Vaughan Williams

Symphony No. 9 in E minor

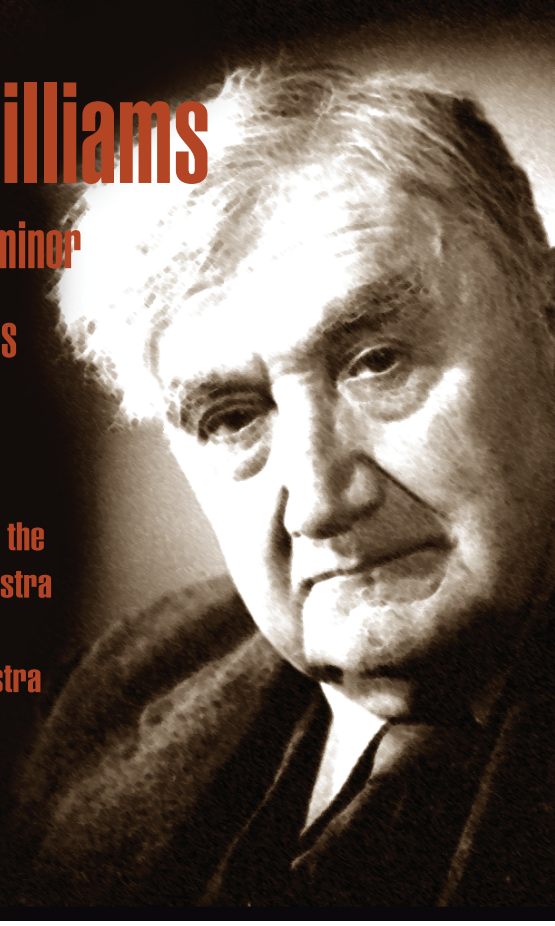
Fantasia on Greensleeves

English Folk Song Suite

**Sir Adrian Boult conducting the
London Philharmonic Orchestra
and the
Vienna State Opera Orchestra**



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS



What is a definitive recording? Is such a thing even desirable? If so, these Boult readings may be the closest we will get to an understanding of how Vaughan Williams intended his symphonies and incidental works to be performed. These recordings, however, go so much further than simply being an encyclopedic collection. Boult and Vaughan Williams enjoyed a mutually beneficial collegiality and warm friendship. Boult gave the premier performances of many of these works. Most, if not all, of these recordings were made under the attentive supervision of the composer. The wonderful biography of the composer, which was written by his second wife, chronicles many of these events in a most humanly interesting way.

The world premiere recording of Ralph Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 9 in E minor was made by Everest at Walthamstow on the morning of the composer's death, August 26, 1958. The composer planned to attend the Everest sessions just as he had attended the earlier Decca sessions for the first eight symphonies. The composer died a mere seven hours before the beginning of the recording sessions. As before, Adrian Boult conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra, but this time he began by recording a tribute to the composer. Of all VW's late works, none remains more underrated or misunderstood than his final symphony, the Ninth. Sir Malcolm Sargent gave the premiere on April 2, 1958 and by most accounts, the performance was disappointing. Several critics wrote the work off as "silly" and "asinine" according to Michael Kennedy's study on the composer while Sir Adrian Boult himself said he believed the 9th represented a "falling off" for the composer. Not all musicologists have agreed with those assessments, however. Peter J. Pirie regarded the 9th as one of VW's very greatest works saying the music struck him as something that might have

been prompted by a nightmare the composer may have had. VW himself said the original inspiration for the 9th came from Salisbury and its associations with Thomas Hardy's Tess. Whatever its inspiration, the 9th Symphony is an imposing work but one that has been well served on record. With only a couple of exceptions, every recording of the 9th has been part of a recorded cycle of VW symphonies. Evidently recording companies have not found the work important enough to record on its own.

Boult gives a harrowing performance, one of the best on record, in absolutely first-rate sound. What is most remarkable about this performance is the dedication of the playing by the London Philharmonic. The players sound as if they were all deeply affected by VW's immediate passing for there is an intensity and commitment to the playing that no other recording matches.

Boult inscribed the Greensleeves Fantasy and English Folksong Suite for Westminster in 1959. Same remarkable permanence of conception with Greensleeves, again not only overall - 4:45 in 1954, 4:42 in 1959 and 4:31 in 1970 - but also in Boult's shaping of the piece's architecture. Indeed Boult stands out, not so much for taking the Greensleeves theme at a relatively flowing tempo (which commendably avoids any sentimentalization), but for playing the middle and contrasting section (based on the Norfolk folk song "Lovely Joan") very slowly (and introducing it every time by a biting accent), depriving it of any sense of contrast but turning instead the whole piece into a continuous, brooding dirge, or a nostalgic pavane. The playing for the English Folk Songs, predictably, has great resonance and remains thoroughly idiomatic.

Ralph Vaughan Williams Symphony no. 9

Sir Adrian Boult conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra

Fantasia on Greensleeves

English Folk Song Suite

Sir Adrian Boult conducts the Vienna State Opera Orchestra

Introduction by Sir Adrian Boult

1. Symphony No.9: Allegro moderato
2. Andante sostenuto
3. Allegro pesante
4. Andante tranquillo
5. Fantasia on Greensleeves
6. English Folk Song Suite

Recorded by Everest 1958 • Transferred from 2-track tape

Recorded by Westminster 1959 • Transferred from 4-track tape

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HD TT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



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