



The Resonance of a Small Voice: William Walton and the Violin Concerto in England between 1900 and 1940

Paolo Petrocelli

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This book constitutes both a study and a historical musicological analysis of Sir William Walton's Violin Concerto, treating the form of the violin concerto in general in England, as it developed between 1900 and 1940, taking into consideration the works of Charles Villiers Stanford, Edward Elgar, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Frederick Delius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Arthur Somervell, Arnold Bax and Benjamin Britten. The study is divided into three parts: - The Violin Concerto in England between 1900-1920: Stanford, Elgar, Coleridge-Taylor, Delius. - The Violin Concerto in England between 1920 and 1940: Vaughan Williams, Somervell, Bax, Britten. - William Walton's Violin Concerto The book opens with a brief description of the form of the Violin Concerto between the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe. This description is intended to provide both a familiarity with the fundamental characteristics of this musical form during the period under examination, and the beginning of a comparison between different national compositional styles. Each section is introduced with a portrait of the historical musical character in England during the respective period, and presents, after a biographical introduction to the respective composers, a formal structural, harmonic and aesthetic analysis (this analysis being embedded within a general discussion of the concertos themselves). In addition, a study of the technical and interpretative aspects of the concerto and a reflection on the relationship between composer and performer form part of the analysis. At the close of each section a comparative overview is also given. The first and second parts are developed entirely in relation to the third, which treats, exclusively and in considerable depth, Sir William Walton's Violin Concerto, the work to which the greatest attention is devoted. The appendix provides various unpublished texts concerning some of the concertos treated (with particular reference to Walton's) that were gathered during research. It is hoped that these will prove useful in enriching and completing a reflection, begun in the book, on the decidedly performative and interpretative aspect of violin music produced by British composers in the first half of the 20th century. Currently there are no modern texts that approach the violin concertos of this period in an exhaustive way. This text proposes to fill the gap, drawing the attention of scholars, musicologists and musicians to the appeal of this repertoire, composed of works of great artistic value that have been, for too long, unjustly forgotten. The volume will be useful to university and conservatory students, musicologists, composers, violinists and musicians in general, in as much as it treats, in specialized yet accessible language, the aspects of the concerto that are of interest to the author. The study is enriched by the inclusion of unpublished documents (letters and essays written by both the composers themselves and by those to whom the concertos were dedicated), that will help to illuminate the myriad cultural and personal circumstances that fed and gave life to these great works.

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