

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

*Suite on English
Folk Tunes*

'A time there was . . .'

FOR ORCHESTRA

Op. 99

A time there was – as one may guess
And as, indeed, earth's testimonies tell –
Before the birth of consciousness
When all went well.

THOMAS HARDY

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This work originated with its third movement, *Hankin Booby*, which was commissioned for the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, on 1st March 1967; the other four movements were added in the autumn of 1974. The Suite is founded on tunes published in the seventeenth century in Playford's *The Dancing Master*, and some folk songs collected orally at the beginning of this century.

1. *Cakes and Ale*
Dances 'We'll wed' and 'Stepney Cakes and Ale'
2. *The Bitter Withy*
Songs 'The Bitter Withy' and 'The Mermaid'
3. *Hankin Booby*
Dances 'Mage on a Cree' and 'Half Hannikin'
4. *Hunt the Squirrel*
Dances 'Hunt the Squirrel' and 'The Tuneful Nightingale'
5. *Lord Melbourne*
Dance 'Epping Forest' and song 'Lord Melbourne'

Unlike the fragmentary use I have made of the other tunes in this Suite, *Lord Melbourne*, played by the cor anglais, is used complete. It was written down in his usual meticulous detail by Percy Grainger, to whose memory the Suite is 'lovingly and reverently' dedicated.

B.B.

Von diesem Werk entstand zuerst der dritte Satz, *Hankin Booby*, der für die Eröffnung der Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, die am 1. März 1967 stattfand, in Auftrag gegeben worden war; die übrigen vier Sätze wurden im Herbst 1974 hinzugefügt. Die Suite basiert auf Melodien, die im siebzehnten Jahrhundert in Playfords *The Dancing Master* veröffentlicht worden sind, und einigen Volksliedern, die zu Beginn dieses Jahrhunderts mündlich aufgenommen worden sind.

1. *Cakes and Ale*
Die Tänze 'We'll wed' und 'Stepney Cakes and Ale'
2. *The Bitter Withy*
Die Lieder 'The Bitter Withy' und 'The Mermaid'
3. *Hankin Booby*
Die Tänze 'Mage on a Cree' und 'Half Hannikin'
4. *Hunt the Squirrel*
Die Tänze 'Hunt the Squirrel' und 'The Tuneful Nightingale'
5. *Lord Melbourne*
Der Tanz 'Epping Forest' und das Lied 'Lord Melbourne'

Anders als die übrigen Melodien dieser Suite, die ich nur bruchstückhaft verwendet habe, ist *Lord Melbourne*, das vom Englischhorn gespielt wird, vollständig übernommen worden. Es war von Percy Grainger mit der üblichen peinlichen Genauigkeit niedergeschrieben worden; seinem Andenken ist die Suite 'in Liebe und Ehrfurcht' gewidmet.

B.B.

ANMERKUNG DES VERLEGERS

Um zum Verständnis für den zweiten Satz dieser Suite beizutragen, drucken wir untenstehend eine Version der apokryphen Geschichte von der Kindheit Jesu Christs ab, von der es viele Fassungen gibt, und die verschiedene Titel wie 'Die schmerzhaft Weidenrute', 'Die heilige Quelle' und andere trägt. Der hier angegebene Text ist eine Verschmelzung verschiedener Versionen, die in den Nr. 8 und 14 des Folk Song Journals erscheinen.

DIE SCHMERZHAFTE WEIDENRUTE

Ein Lied aus Sussex, das Ralph Vaughan Williams im September 1905 in Wimbledon aufgeschrieben hat, als Mr. Hunt es ihm vorsang. FSJ Band II (Nr. 8, 1906), Seite 205. Die Verse 5 und 6 wurden dem FSJ Band IV (Nr. 14, 1910), Seite 33 entnommen.

Unser Heiland wollte an einem hohen Feiertag nur zögernd
hinausgehen,

Und einige Regentropfen fielen schon;
Unser Heiland bat seine Mutter Maria um Erlaubnis,
Ob er wohl gehen und Ball spielen dürfe.

“Ball spielen, mein liebster Sohn,
es ist Zeit, daß du gehst, geh' nur,
Und daß ich nie etwas von schlechtem Betragen höre,
Nachts, wenn du nicht heimkommst.”

Hin und her rannte unser Heiland in der Halle,
Und als er so rannte um Ball zu spielen,
Traf er drei nette, lustige Lords.

“Gut getroffen, gut getroffen, ihr drei lustigen Lords,
gut getroffen, gut getroffen,” sagte er,
“Und welcher von euch drei netten, lustigen Lords
wird mit mir Ball spielen?”

Sie sagten, sie seien die Söhne edler Damen und Herren,
Geboren in einem vornehmen Gemach,
“Und du bist nur das Kind einer armen Jungfrau,
Geboren in einem Ochsenstall.”

“Wenn ich nur das Kind einer armen Jungfrau bin,
Geboren in einem Ochsenstall,
So werde ich euch am Ende wissen lassen,
Daß ich über euch allen stehe.”

Unser Heiland baute eine Brücke aus Sonnenstrahlen,
Und über diese Brücke ging er,
Und die Lords folgten ihm nach,
Und ertranken alle drei.

“O Mutter, liebe Mutter, zanke nicht mit deinem Sohn,
er ging nämlich über die Brücke,
Und die Lords folgten ihm nach,
Und ertranken alle drei.”

Sie sammelte einen Armvoll kleiner Weidenruten
Und legte ihn übers Knie, übers Knie,
Und mit diesem Armvoll kleiner Weidenruten
gab sie ihm drei Hiebe.

“O die Weidenrute, die Weidenrute, die schmerzhaft
Weidenrute,
Die mir so weh tat,
Die Weide soll als allererster Baum
Ganz und gar im Innersten verderben.”

Deutsche Übersetzung: Dorothee Eberhardt

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

To assist the appreciation of the second movement of this Suite, we print below a version of the apocryphal tale of Christ's childhood that appears in many forms, called variously 'The Bitter Withy', 'The Holy Well', and other titles. The text given is an amalgamation of versions appearing in the Folk Song Journal Nos. 8 and 14.

THE BITTER WITHY

A Sussex song, noted by Ralph Vaughan Williams at Wimbledon in September 1905 from the singing of Mr. Hunt. FSJ Vol. II (No. 8, 1906) page 205. Verses 5 and 6 added from FSJ Vol. IV (No. 14, 1910) page 33.

Our Saviour tarried out on a high holiday,
Some drops of rain did fall, did fall,
Our Saviour asked leave of his mother Mary,
Might he go and play at the ball.

"To play at the ball, my own dearest son,
It is time you're going, or gone, or gone,
And it's never let me hear of your ill-doing
At night when you don't come home."

It was up the hall, it was down the hall,
Our Saviour he did run, did run,
As our Saviour was a-running for to play at the ball,
He met three jolly jolly dons.

"Well met, well met, you three jolly dons,
Well, met, well met," said he.
"And it's which of you three jolly, jolly dons,
Will play at the ball with me?"

They said they was lords' and ladies' sons
Born in a bower, all in all,
"And you are but a poor maiden's child
Born in an oxen stall."

"If I am but a poor maiden's child,
Born in an oxen stall,
I will let you know at the very latter end
That I am above you all."

Our Saviour built a bridge by the sunbeams of the sun,
And 'twas over the bridge went he, went he,
And the dons they went a-following after he,
And they got drowned all three.

"Oh mother, dear mother, don't scold on your son,
For 'twas over the bridge went he, went he,
And the dons they went a-following after he,
And they got drowned all three."

She gathered an armful of small withys
And laid him across her knee, her knee,
And with that armful of small withys
She gave him lashes three.

"O the withy, the withy, the bitter withy,
That has caused me to smart, to smart,
And the withy it shall be and the very first tree,
Shall perish all at the heart."

ORCHESTRA

2 Flutes, 2nd doubling Piccolo
2 Oboes, 2nd doubling Cor Anglais
2 Clarinets in B \flat
2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in C

Timpani

Percussion (2 players)

Side Drum, Bass Drum, Tamburo (without snares),
Triangle, Tubular Bell

Harp

Strings

Preview File Only

The *Suite on English Folk Tunes* was first performed
by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Steuart Bedford
at the Maltings, Snape, on 13th June 1975 as part
of the 28th Aldeburgh Festival

Duration: 14 minutes

Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Percy Grainger

SUITE ON ENGLISH FOLK TUNES

'A time there was ...'

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913-1976)

1. Cakes and Ale

Fast and rough (♩. = 140)

The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes:

- Flutes 1, 2
- Oboe 1
- Cor Anglais (= Oboe 2) with a 12/8 time signature
- Clarinets 1, 2 (B♭)
- Bassoons 1, 2
- Horns 1, 2 (F) with a 12/8 time signature
- Trumpets 1, 2 (C) with a 12/8 time signature
- Timpani with a 12/8 time signature and the instruction *f short and heavy*
- Percussion 1 and 2
- Harp with a 12/8 time signature

The second system includes:

- Violins 1 and 2 with *f heavy* markings
- Violas with a 12/8 time signature and *f heavy* markings
- Cellos with *f heavy* markings
- Double Basses with *f heavy* markings

A large diagonal watermark reading "Preview File Only" is overlaid on the score.

5

Score for measures 5-8. Instruments: Timp., Vln.1, Vln.2, Vla., Vc., Db. Dynamics: *sim.*, *f*.

9

Score for measures 9-12. Instruments: Timp., Vln.1, Vln.2, Vla., Vc., Db. Dynamics: *fp*. Includes a large blue watermark: "Preview File Only".

13

Score for measures 13-16. Instruments: Hn.1.2 (F), Tpt.1.2, Perc.1, Vln.1, Vln.2, Vla., Vc., Db. Dynamics: *f*, *stacc.*, *mf marked*, *f*. Percussion includes S.D. (Snare Drum).

17

Ob.

Cl. 1 (B \flat)

Hn. 1,2 (F)

Tpt. 1,2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

fp *cresc.* *f* *p*

S.D. *fp* *cresc.* *f* *p*

Tri. *p*

21

Ob.

C.A.

Cl. 1 (B \flat)

Bsn. 1

Perc. 2

Vln. 1

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

stacc. *p* *pp* *cresc.* *mf*

pizz. *p* *pizz.* *p* *pizz.* *p* *pizz.* *p*

2. The Bitter Withy

Allegretto (♩ = 58)

Horns 1, 2 (F)

Harp

mf ringingly

Violins 1

p express.

pp

Violins 2

p express. unmuted

pp

Violas

p express.

pp

Cellos

p express.

pp

Double Basses

pizz.

p

7

Harp

mf

Vln.1

p

pp

p express.

Vln.2

p

pp

p express.

Vla.

p

pp

p express.

Vc.

p

pp

p express.

Db.

p

3. Hankin Booby

Heavily (♩ = 72)

Musical score for Flutes 1, 2, Oboes 1, 2, Clarinets (B♭) 1, 2, Bassoons 1, 2, Trumpets 1, 2, and Percussion. The percussion part features a Tamburo. The score is in 6/8 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *mp*. A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

Musical score for Flutes 1, 2, Oboes 1, 2, Clarinets (B♭) 1, 2, Bassoons 1, 2, Trumpets 1, 2, and Percussion. This section includes dynamic markings such as *cresc.*, *f*, and *pp*. The percussion part includes a Tamburo. The score is in 6/8 time and includes first and second endings for the woodwinds and percussion. A large blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

4. Hunt the Squirrel

Fast and gay (♩. = 134)

Violins 1 div. a2

Violins 2 div. a2

6 8

sf *sfp* *f marked* *sf*

8

Vln.1 div.

Vln.2 div.

sfp *f marked* *sfp* *f marked* *pp* *f marked* *sfp*

15

Vln.1 div.

Vln.2 div.

sf *f* *sf* *f* *sim.* *mf* *f* *sf*

22

Vln.1 div.

Vln.2 div.

sf *f* *f* *f*

