

Boult

CONDUCTS ENGLISH Music

ARNOLD Eight English Dances Op.27 & 33

- 1. Andantino (2:44)
 - 2. Vivace (1:45)
 - 3. Mesto (2:17)
 - 4. Allegro risoluto (1:36)
 - 5. Allegro non troppo (2:47)
 - 6. Con brio (1:33)
 - 7. Grazioso (2:20)
 - 8. Giubiloso (2:20)
- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 1-2 November 1954
Originally issued in March 1955 as Deca LW5166

- 9. BAX Tintagel (13:30)
- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 1-2 November 1954
Originally issued in February 1955 as Deca LXT5015

ELGAR Three Bavarian Dances, Op. 27

- 1. The Dance (3:45)
 - 2. Lullaby (3:16)
 - 3. The Marksman (4:46)
- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 21 October 1954
Originally issued in January 1955 as Deca LW5157

ELGAR Chansons de Nuit & Matin, Op. 15

- 2. Chanson de matin (3:18)
 - 1. Chanson de nuit (4:06)
- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 18-19 February 1954
Originally issued in May 1954 as Deca 78rpm X574

- HOLST The Perfect Fool, Op. 39 (10:46)
- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 1-2 November 1954
Originally issued in February 1955 as Deca LXT5015

BUTTERWORTH

- A Shropshire Lad (8:41)

- The Banks of Green Willow (5:25)
- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 1-2 November 1954
Originally issued in February 1955 as Deca LXT5015

WALTON Siesta (4:48)

- Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 20 October 1954
Originally issued in January 1955 as Deca LXT5028

The London Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Sir Adrian Boult

Transfers from the collection of Edward Johnson

XK remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, September-October 2009

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Adrian Boult

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Sir Adrian Cedric Boult CH (8 April 1889 – 22 February 1983) was an English conductor. Boult was born in Chester and educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. As a schoolboy, he attended Sir Henry Wood's Saturday afternoon and Sunday concert series, seeing Debussy and Arthur Nikisch conduct. After the formation of the London Symphony Orchestra he attended those concerts too, featuring leading conductors of the day.

A family friend Frank Schuster, who was a friend of Edward Elgar, introduced the young Boult to the composer around 1905. By the time he went to Oxford and began conducting, Boult had a good collection of scores, and knew many of them by heart. In 1909, the 20-year-old Boult read a paper to the Oriana Society entitled *Some notes on performance*, in which he laid down three precepts for an ideal performance: observance of the composer's wishes, clarity through emphasis on balance and structure, a final effect of music made utterly without effort. These guiding principles lasted throughout his career.

In 1912 he continued his musical education at the Leipzig Conservatory where he learnt to conduct by watching the eminent Hungarian conductor Arthur Nikisch. Boult admired Nikisch above other conductors "not so much for his musicianship but his amazing power of saying what he wanted with a bit of wood. He spoke very little", a view which chimed with his belief that "all conductors should be clad in an invisible Tarnhelm which makes it possible to enjoy the music without seeing any of the antics that go on." 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.

Boult made his professional conducting debut on 27 February 1914, with part of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society at West Kirby Public Hall.

Declared unfit for active service, 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.

In 1924 Boult was appointed to the conductorship of the City of Birmingham Orchestra—now the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra—and in 1930 he was made Director of Music at the BBC and conductor of the BBC's Wireless Symphony Orchestra (which was renamed the BBC Symphony Orchestra), succeeding the BBC's first Director of Music Percy Pitt. In 1933, Boult married Ann Wilson, the ex-wife of Steuart Wilson, tenor singer and administrator. The marriage lasted until Boult's death. Boult was knighted in 1937. During World War II the BBC Symphony Orchestra was evacuated to Bristol, where it suffered from bombing, and to Bedford, where Boult strove to maintain standards and morale as many key players left. In these years he made recordings of Elgar's *Second Symphony*, Holst's *The Planets* and Vaughan Williams' *Job*, *A Masque for Dancing*.

In 1948, Steuart Wilson was appointed Director of Music at the BBC. Suggestions that the standard of playing had fallen beyond Boult's ability to rectify were taken as a reason to insist on his retirement at the age of 60 in 1949, an incident which remains controversial to this day. After it became clear that Boult would not be able to retain his position with the BBC Symphony, Thomas Russell, the Managing Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO), offered Boult the position of Principal Conductor of the LPO in succession to Eduard van Beinum. In the 1930s under Thomas Beecham, the LPO had been the other crack London orchestra, but since Beecham's departure, was in need of rebuilding. Boult accepted this position and threw himself into this task. The results can be heard to this day in a long series of recordings beginning in 1950 and including in their early years a complete set of the Vaughan Williams symphonies and much Elgar. He obtained for the orchestra a recording contract with American companies and recorded Johannes Brahms symphonies, Hector Berlioz and Jean Sibelius, among other composers.

There was controversy and ambiguity over Boult's role in the dismissal of Thomas Russell from his position as the LPO Managing Director, in 1952, during the Cold War years, as Russell was an avowed member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Boult served as the LPO's principal conductor until 1957. After the sudden resignation of Andrzej Panufnik from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO), Boult returned as Principal Conductor of the CBSO for the 1959-1960 season. That was his last chief conductorship, though he remained closely associated with the LPO as its President until his retirement.

Boult recorded all seven then-existing symphonies by Vaughan Williams for Decca Records in 1953-54 with the LPO, with the composer present; these sessions included the *Sixth Symphony's* first-ever recording. Decca also taped Vaughan Williams' short speech to the musicians following the recording of the *Sixth* symphony, and included it in the album. The composer was to have been present for the first recording of his *Ninth* symphony, for Everest Records in 1958, but he died the night before the session took place; Boult recorded a short introduction as a memorial tribute to Vaughan Williams.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM