

# BYRON CONCERT

Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the death of Lord Byron  
at Missolonghi Greece April 1824



THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE 21st APRIL 1974

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# BYRON CONCERT

Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the death  
of Lord Byron at Missolonghi, Greece. April, 1824

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE  
21st April, 1974

With the  
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
Conducted by Bernard Herrmann

And the voice of  
ROBERT HARDY



Bernard Herrmann  
Photograph by John Engstead

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# Byron to-day

by Bernard Herrmann

Although Byron has been dead for 150 years he still exerts as vibrant and forceful an influence on the creative mind as ever he did, as it is the business of this concert to demonstrate. We present this programme, not in any spirit of sycophantic homage-making or arid antiquarianism, but as a testimony to our belief in Byron as a living presence, a vital source of fascination and inspiration for artists in all media of creativity. His dynamic zest for life, his fearless iconoclasm, his love of liberty and hatred of oppression, the richness of his poetic technique, his intense interest in nature, in the supernatural, in the magical, his feeling for drama as an integral part of life — all are as meaningful and relevant today as when they first burst like a bombshell on the contemporary scene of life and letters. We speak of a 'Byronic attitude' in relation to a man's character as a whole, not just to some particular facet. Byron has become a part of all our lives, whether we are consciously aware of it or not. If he'd never existed we'd have had to invent him, to paraphrase Voltaire.

Musically speaking, Byron's following has been enormous, and we can do no more here than offer a representative cross-section of those composers whose muse has been fired by Byron's own. Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* was not conceived in response to any specific work by Byron, rather as an epitome of the Byronic spirit in musical terms. Schumann's *Manfred*, Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* — both are classics of the Romantic age. A spate of contemporary works bears witness to a continuing vitality, an ageless appeal. We have no opportunity to explore the *Byronic Symphony* of Alan Bush, the so far incomplete opera *Don Juan* of Leonard Bernstein (to a libretto by Lillian Hellman) Josef Holbrooke's *Byron*, or the new opera *Lord Byron* of Virgil Thomson. We are, however, including Richard Arnell's *Symphonic Portrait—Lord Byron* and a new specially commissioned choral work by Elizabeth Maconchy, *The Isles of Greece*. And, hailing in Byron, as we do, not merely a great poet but also a great ideal, we conclude with Franz Liszt's *Tasso* — Tasso the poet so beloved of Byron, Liszt the composer who identified himself so positively with the spirit of both and celebrated them in this, one of the greatest of his orchestral tone poems. Our concert is thus intended, not as a random compilation of works associated with Byron, but as an attempt to recreate the living presence of Byron in music which grew out naturally from his influence and ambience.

Bernard Herrmann

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## Bernard Herrmann

BERNARD HERRMANN'S lifelong love of English poetry has found expression many times both in his composing and his conducting. He is the only composer so far to have completed a full-length opera on "Wuthering Heights" after writing the score for the 1944 film version of "Jane Eyre" (with Orson Wells as Rochester) had brought him into the world of the Brontës; and two years before, in 1942, he produced an important song-cycle "Fantasticks" six settings for soloists and orchestra of the 16th-century English poet Nicholas Breton. In his seventeen-year-long capacity as conductor-in-chief of the CBS Symphony Orchestra he played English music whenever he had the opportunity, which was often: Bax, Delius, Lambert, Vaughan Williams, Moeran, Warlock, Berners, Cecil Gray, McEwen, all appeared in Herrmann's programmes; and he numbered many American premieres and performances of unfamiliar or neglected works.

Mr. Herrmann was born in New York City. Among his teachers was Percy Grainger (another great Anglophile) much of whose hatred of stuffiness and pretentiousness in music-making he has inherited. While still in his late teens he had formed his own orchestra and made the acquaintance of Charles Ives, whose works he has constantly championed over the years — long before he was ever the cult-figure he has become today. Shortly after joining CBS he encountered the young Orson Welles, which led to an invitation to write the music for one of the great masterpieces of world cinema, "Citizen Kane". This was in 1940 and marked the start of a long association with the British and American cinema embracing many celebrated films, including Hitchcock's "Psycho", "Marnie" and "Vertigo" and Truffaut's "Fahrenheit 451" and "The Bride Wore Black". Mr. Herrmann has also written much for the concert hall including the cantata "Moby Dick", a String Quartet ("Echoes") and a Symphony (newly recorded). A recent world premiere recording of Ralf's Byronic "Lenore" Symphony and tonight's programme testify to a special enthusiasm: music of the 19th century Romantic period.

CHRISTOPHER PALMER

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## Sir Arthur Bliss Master of the Queen's Musick



Photograph by Fay Godwin

Arthur Bliss was born in London on August 2, 1891. He was educated at Rugby and Pembroke College, Cambridge, where in 1913 he took his B.A. and Mus. Bac. In 1914, he obtained a commission, served in France with the 13th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, then with the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, was wounded on the Somme in 1916, gassed at Cambria in 1918, and mentioned in despatches. He served in the Overseas Music Service of the B.B.C. in 1941, and was Director of Music from 1942-44. He was knighted in 1950, and in 1953 was appointed Master of the Queen's Musick. He was made a K.C.V.O. in 1969, and a Companion of Honour in 1971.

## Address

Written by Byron, and spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, 10th October, 1812

(After the earlier theatre on the site had been destroyed by fire)

In one dread night our city saw and sigh'd  
Bow'd to the dust, the Drama's tower of pride;  
In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,  
Apollo sink and Shakespeare cease to reign.

Ye who beheld (oh! sight admired and mourn'd  
Whose radiance mock'd the ruin it adorn'd!)  
Through clouds of fire, the massy fragments riven,  
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from heaven;  
Saw the long column of revolving flames  
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames,  
Say — shall this new, nor less aspiring pile,  
Rear'd where once rose the mightiest in our isle,  
Know the same favour which the former knew,  
A shrine for Shakespeare — worthy him and you?

Yes — it shall be — the magic of that name  
Defies the scythe of time, the torch of flame,  
On the same spot still consecrates the scene,  
And bids the Drama *be* where she hath *been*:  
This fabric's birth attests the potent spell —  
Indulge our honest pride, and say, *How well!*

As soars this fane to emulate the last,  
Oh! might we draw our omens from the past,  
Some hour propitious to our prayers may boast  
Names such as hallow still the dome we lost.  
On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art  
O'erwhelm'd the gentlest, storm'd the sternest heart.

On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew;  
Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew  
Sigh'd his last thanks, and wept his last adieu;  
But still for living wit the wreaths may bloom  
That only waste their odours o'er the tomb.  
Such Drury claim'd and claims — nor you refuse  
Our tribute to revive his slumbering muse;  
With garlands deck your own Menander's head!  
Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead!  
Dear are the days which made our annals bright,  
Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write.  
Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,  
Vain of *our* ancestry, as they of *theirs*:  
While thus remembrance borrows Banquo's glass  
To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass.  
And we the mirror hold, where imaged shine  
Immortal names, emblazon'd on our line,  
Pause — ere their feebler offspring you condemn,  
Reflect how hard the task to rival them!

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule obey'd  
The Drama's homage by her herald paid,  
Receive *our* welcome too, whose every tone  
Springs from our hearts, and fain would win your own.  
The curtain rises — may our stage unfold  
Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old!  
Britons our judges, nature for our guide,  
Still may we please — long may you preside!

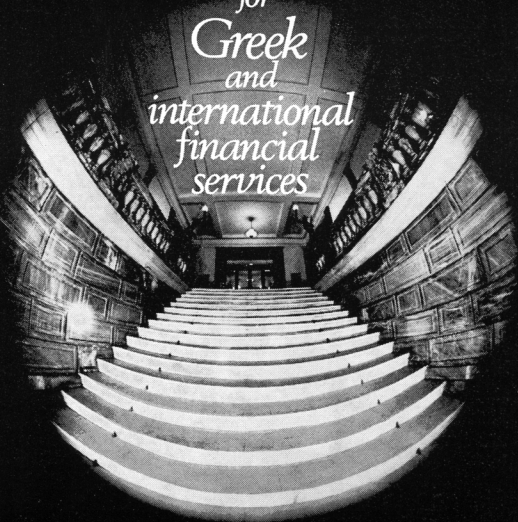
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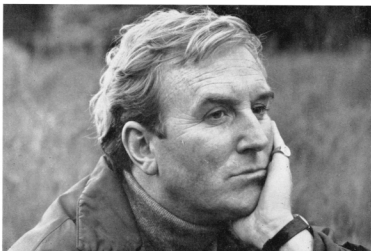
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## Robert Hardy



Robert Hardy who played Byron in *Camino Real* at the Phoenix Theatre in 1957, began his acting career with the Shakespeare Memorial Company in 1949. His first London appearance was as Claudio in Gielgud's *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1952, following that with Jack Frewer in Charles Morgan's *The River Line*.

The following year he joined the Old Vic Company, playing among other parts, Ariel in *The Tempest* and Prince Hal in both parts of *Henry IV*. By 1956 he was making his first appearance in New York, and after nearly three years in the United States he returned to Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon for the Centenary Season to play the King of France in *All's Well*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Sicinius in *Coriolanus*, and Edmund in *King Lear*. There followed a long historical stint on BBC television as Prince Hal again, and Henry V in *Age of Kings*. Perhaps not so many will remember his earlier television performance as David Copperfield in the first television classic serial.

In 1963 he wrote and narrated *The Picardy Affair*, a television documentary about the Battle of Agincourt also for the BBC, and the following year he headed the English Company to open the Chicago Festival, playing Henry V and Hamlet. Then films and television claimed him: *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold* and *10 Rillington Place* on the big screen, Alec Stewart in *The Troubleshooters*, Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda*, Sergeant Gratz in *Manhunt*, among other appearances on the small screen.

He wrote and narrated *The Leopard and the Lilies*, a radio documentary in 1971, the year he appeared in the film *The Young Winston* and played Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester in the BBC series *Elizabeth R*, and, after breaking his hip in a riding accident, was the narrator for the BBC series *The British Empire*.

He spent most of 1972 filming (*Le Silencieux* in France, and *Dark Places*, *Yellow Dog*, *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*) but also found time to write and narrate the *History of the Longbow* for BBC television. Last year he played Albert, the Prince Consort in the ATV series *Edward VII*, to be released later this year and he has just been playing Herbert Asquith in the BBC television plays about the suffragette movement. West End audiences saw him as Tiger in Anouilh's *The Rehearsal*, and as Martin in Iris Murdoch's *A Severed Head*. Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* followed later, and at the moment he is starring with Alan Bennett and Margaret Courtenay in *Habeas Corpus* at the Lyric Theatre, London.

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# Harold in Italy

Symphony: Harold en Italie Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

I Adagio - Allegro  
II Allegretto  
III Allegro assai - Allegretto  
IV Allegro frenetico

Berlioz's Italian travels began (in 1831) under the auspices of Byron, with an encounter with a Venetian who claimed to have captained Byron's ship on his journey's through the Adriatic and the Greek islands, and with a near-sprawling off Leghorn (the details of which are remarkably similar to the experiences of Byron off the Greek coast twenty years earlier). Later, in the dog-days in Rome, to escape the unbearable heat he would go to St. Peter's, taking with him

a volume of Byron, and settling myself comfortably in a confessional, enjoy the cool air of the cathedral; and, in a religious silence, unbroken by any sound but the murmur of the two fountains in the square outside, . . . I would sit there absorbed in that burning verse . . . I adored the extraordinary nature of the man, at once ruthless and of extreme tenderness, generous-hearted and without pity . . .

The parallels must not be pursued too far (though Berlioz's "ideal" childhood love for Estelle Dubouef can hardly help reminding us of Byron's for Mary Duff). Self-identification with Byron was common enough among the French Romantics. But the title *Harold* (later *Harold in Italy*) which Berlioz gave to his second symphony, composed in 1834 two years after his return to France, was more than a gesture to fashion. The symphony originated in a request of Paganini's for a work for viola and orchestra; but when the first idea had been abandoned and replaced by a symphonic work based on "poetic impressions recollected from my wanderings in the Abruzzi mountains" the solo viola, now cast in an obbligato rather than a concerto role was conceived as "a kind of melancholy dreamer in the style of Byron's Child Harold"; and this is what it is.

Like Byron's autobiographical hero, the viola in Berlioz's symphony is an observer standing apart; the Harold theme preserves its identity unchanged, no matter what is going on around it. At the same time it is through the consciousness of this observer that the varied scenes of Italian life and nature evoked in the work are seen; for the Harold theme not only recurs throughout the four movements: from it is also derived the thematic material of the work as a whole. The different sections of the symphony are thus linked not merely at the superficial level of a recurring motto theme, but organically.

*I. Harold in the mountains: scenes of melancholy, happiness and joy.* The work opens with a dark, sinuous fugato, beginning on cellos and basses, to which bassoon and oboe add a plangent counter-subject. After a while, woodwind in octaves play a wailing melody which is in fact a minor-key version of the Harold theme. The music rises to a grand, cloudy fortissimo, the fugato resumes, culminating in a flourish, the texture clears, and the harp introduces the soloist. The viola's statement of the

main theme — an open-hearted melody in G major, with a touch of melancholy about it — runs to some thirty bars. The theme is immediately restated, in slightly shorter form and in canon, richly scored. This leads to the *Allegro*, a lively movement in 6/8 time, with an easy swinging gait (speed is reserved for the coda). The spritely second subject (which, like the Harold theme, was derived from a discarded overture, *Rob Roy*, that Berlioz wrote while in Italy) only feints at the orthodox dominant key, and once the exposition is over, sonata form is abandoned; development, recapitulation and coda are merged in a continuous process, in which the cross-rhythms and metrical superimpositions which are such a feature of this work are already prominently displayed.

*II. March of the Pilgrims, singing the evening prayer.* The Pilgrims' March moves in a single arc — *pppp* crescendo to *f*, diminuendo to *pppp* — which contains three musically developed ideas; the pilgrims' approach across the stretched out evening landscape and their disappearance into the dusk, the gradual change from day to night, and the curve of feeling in the solitary observer of the scene, from contentment to angst and isolation. The material consists of a broad E major theme repeated many times, variously harmonised, over a trudging bass, a constantly recurring C natural, tolling like a bell, on horns and harp, a fragment of chorale-like music for muted strings, and the comments of the solo viola, which resolve themselves into a long series of arpeggios played on the bridge of the instrument.

*III. Serenade of an Abruzzian mountain-dweller to his mistress.* This movement makes use of the *pifferari's* music which Berlioz enjoyed listening to while he was in Italy. A rapid tune on oboe and piccolo above a drone bass (*Allegro*), with a persistent dotted rhythm on the violas, gives way to an *Allegretto* half the speed, in which the cor anglais's rustic melody is embellished by the other woodwind and then combined with the Harold theme. The *Allegro* is then repeated, after which the material and tempos of the two sections are combined, while flute and harp play the Harold theme in long notes high above the rest.

*IV. Brigands' Orgy: recall of earlier scenes.* The finale begins with a brusque call to order, full of energetic syncopations. Then, after the manner of the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the various themes of the previous movements are reviewed and rejected. The Harold theme is the last to go, becoming gradually less distinct before the gathering onslaught of the brigands' music. Rhythm is dominant; and, with the viola out of the way, percussion instruments can be deployed. The music here anticipates Berlioz's opera *Benvenuto Cellini* in its rhythmic drive, variety of colour and texture, and wild humour. The exposition is largely repeated; then the development breaks off, and we hear in the distance (violins and cellos behind the scenes) the faint sound of the pilgrim's march. The solo viola is roused to a momentary comment. But it is swept aside and the orgy resumed with increasing savagery — though the tempo remains steady right up to the furious conclusion.

DAVID CAIRNS

## Frederick Riddle



FREDERICK RIDDLE has had a distinguished career in music — as a soloist, in chamber music and as principal viola in three London orchestras: the London Philharmonic, the London Symphony and, since 1953, the Royal Philharmonic.

As a broadcaster, he has been heard on hundreds of occasions and his name is something of a household word to thousands of listeners. In addition, he has made many recordings for the gramophone and travelled extensively throughout Europe.

He is, moreover, Professor of Viola at the Royal College of Music — where he, himself, was trained — and also held the same post, concurrently, at the Royal Manchester College of Music. While a student at the Royal College of Music, he was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal as the most outstanding student of the year. For many years, Frederick Riddle shared a music association with Sir Thomas Beecham, which only ended with the latter's death in 1961.

Frederick Riddle is married to Helen Clare, the soprano, who has sung on hundreds of occasions with the BBC Concert Orchestra. She now teaches singing and voice production. They have a married daughter.



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## **Il Pianto delle Muse in Morte di Lord Byron**

This cantata was the only work which Rossini wrote for London. An opera with the title *Ugo, Re d'Italia* was to have been given during his visit here, and he had completed the first Act of it; but, for reasons which are not clear, the whole project was abandoned.

Lord Byron had died in April, 1824, and it was very fitting that this tribute should come from an outstanding Italian opera composer, who had already contributed a stage piece on the subject of *Maometto II*, which concerned the Greek fight for liberty.

It is not an original piece in the truest sense of the word, for Rossini borrowed one of the themes from this opera. It was quite usual for him to quote himself, and to make use of the same material in different works.

At the first performance, Rossini, who was a high baritone, took the solo part of Apollo, and he was supported by the principal Italian artists who had appeared at the King's Theatre in performances of his operas.

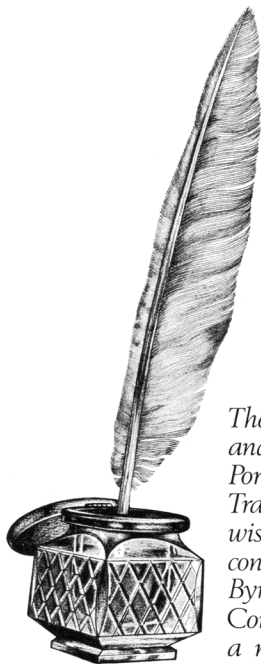
The work is described in Italian as *canzone con coro*. It is dedicated to the Honourable F. de Roos, and the original publication bears Rossini's signature.

After a two-page piano introduction, which Rossini himself played, the solo voice enters and then three sopranos join in, and they are followed by two tenors and a bass. Later, a two-part chorus comes in, and in the final stages of the piece there are nine vocal lines. The music is not tragic, but there is a very beautiful flowing tune, which is certainly one of Rossini's finest inspirations.

The first performance took place at the second of two benefit concerts specially arranged for Rossini and given at Almack's Rooms, King Street, St. James, on June 9, 1824. The first performance this century was on October 26, 1972, at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, when it was given under my direction.

ALEXANDER BRYETT





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# CONCERT PROGRAMME

## FIRST PERFORMANCE

The Isles of Greece

Elizabeth Maconchy

The Thames Chamber Choir

## INTERVAL

Symphonic Portrait — Lord Byron

Richard Arnell

*I stood in Venice on  
the Bridge of Sighs*

Robert Hardy

*On this day I complete  
my 36th year*

Tasso, Lamento et Trionfo

Liszt

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Nicholas Reader

*Horns*  
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James Warburton

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Stanley Woods  
Malcolm Hall  
Graham Whiting

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*Tuba*  
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Michael Baker

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Vivian Troon

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FIRST PERFORMANCE

**The Isles of Greece**

For Chorus and Orchestra

ELIZABETH MACONCHY

This work was commissioned by  
The Byron Society with funds provided by  
The Arts Council of Great Britain

*With compliments*

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*The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!  
Where burning Sappho loved and sung —  
Where grew the arts of war and peace —  
Where Delos rose and Phæbus sprung!  
Eternal summer gilds them yet,  
But all, except their sun, is set.*

*The mountains look on Marathon —  
And Marathon looks on the sea;  
And musing there an hour alone,  
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;  
For, standing on the Persians' grave,  
I could not deem myself a slave.*

*Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!  
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —  
I see their glorious black eyes shine;  
But, gazing on each glowing maid,  
My own the burning tear-drop laves,  
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.*

*Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!  
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,  
Exists the remnant of a line  
Such as the Doric mothers bore;  
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,  
The Heracleidan blood might own.*

*Place me on Sunium's marbled steep —  
Where nothing, save the waves and I,  
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;  
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:  
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —  
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!*

Don Juan, Canto III, LXXXVI

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ELIZABETH MACONCHY is Irish by birth, but her musical life has centred on London. Her biggest output has been in the field of chamber music, and includes ten string quartets. This is the medium in which, above all, she enjoys writing. The B.B.C. are to broadcast a series of her quartets in the music programme this summer.

She has written in most of the accepted musical forms, including opera, orchestral, string orchestral and choral works, all of which have been performed in London and elsewhere and broadcast. A recent record is *Ariadne*, a setting of C. Day-Lewis' dramatic monologue for soprano and orchestra, sung by Heather Harper.

*The Isles of Greece*, commissioned by The Byron Society for the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Byron's death, was written in the autumn of 1973.



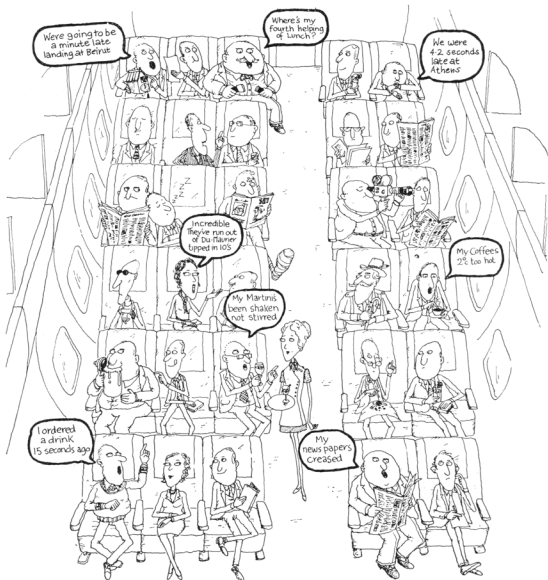
Photograph by Edward Morgan

## The Isles of Greece

This setting for Chorus and Orchestra is of five stanzas from Byron's "Don Juan". They are among his best-known and best-loved poems, and embody his deepest feelings: the consummation of his love for Greece and his passionate concern for liberty. I hope that the depth and conviction of his feeling has in some degree communicated itself to the music.

It is a straightforward setting. The character of the musical ideas, the overall shape of the work, and the changes of mood are all suggested by the words. The variety of mood gives plenty of scope, within a tightly constructed framework, for variety in the music. The impassioned invocation of the opening, the lyrical musing over Marathon, the change to "Standing on the Persians' grave, I could not deem myself a slave" (which gives rise to a resolute tune, echoed later at "And there, perhaps, some seed is sown, The Heracleidan blood might own") — and the final cry of the liberator: "A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine — Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!"

Elizabeth Maconchy



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# Italy awaits you

*I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs:  
A palace and a prison on each hand:  
I saw from out the wave her structures rise  
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:  
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand  
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles  
O'er the far times, when many a subject land  
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,  
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her  
hundred isles.*

Childe Harold, Canto IV

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## Symphonic Portrait — Lord Byron

Discussing another work of mine (also associated with Sir Thomas Beecham) *Landscapes and Figures* with the critic, Charles Reid, I said that it was concerned with imaginary paintings. He complained that I could not have "a fantasy about a fantasy". I didn't understand this and I still don't, because in fact *Symphonic Portrait — Lord Byron* is a fantasy in which I dreamt that I was Byron. I did not dream this; I imagined it, so that it, too, is a fantasy about a fantasy. If it is impossible, it nevertheless exists!

The work was first performed by Sir Thomas Beecham with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at a Royal Philharmonic Society concert on November 19, 1952, and later by Bernard Herrmann. After the concert a very glamorous party was given at John Murray's (Byron's publisher) in Albemarle Street. Byron himself might have enjoyed it.

The shape of the work is a mixture of variation form, with variants of themes presented at the beginning, and the English Fantasia form — this being a series of apparently unconnected sections, complete in themselves.

The sections are:

The Dream (where I imagine myself dreaming that I am Byron)

The Abbey — a riotous party

Augusta — his relationship with his half-sister  
Success and Disgrace: "One day I woke up to find myself famous"

Voyage — his voluntary exile

Theresa — a love affair

Battles — his Grecian campaign, death, and a form of apotheosis

Composition began in June, 1952 and the work was completed on November 6. The first rehearsal took place in Nottingham on the 13th for the premiere at the Royal Festival Hall on the 19th.



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## Richard Arnell



Photograph by Thomas E. Jones

Richard Arnell, born during an air raid in London in 1917, has had a tumultuous emotional life, particularly expressed in the works written between 1950 and 1960. This period saw the production of three programme works, *Landscapes and Figures* (commissioned by Sir Thomas Beecham for the Edinburgh Festival), *Portrait: Robert Flaherty* and the *Fifth Symphony*, all being heavily charged with unabashed romanticism. In recent years, Arnell, who has written in almost all genres, has increasingly turned to the mixed media. *Astronaut 1* written for the Sunderland Arts Centre science fiction festival in November, 1973, is organised for narrator, (the poet, Edward Lucie Smith, himself), contralto, rock group, tape, film, horn, cello, settings designed by Charlotte Jennings, and improvisation on the piano. This is to be followed by *Astronaut 2* for the same forces.

Arnell, at present Chairman of the Composers Guild of Great Britain, teaches composition at Trinity College of Music and is Music Consultant to the London Film School. He has written several film scores and has also written and produced some short films, notably the animated film *Zero Growth* with Pierre Gaudry. A projected animation film is *Music seems to move from left to right*.

He was sponsored particularly by Sir Thomas Beecham, who gave many performances of a large number of Arnell's works, both in the United States and in Britain, and particularly since 1943, by Bernard Herrmann, Barbicoll, Stokowski, Groves, Pernoo, Barzin, Carewe and many others have conducted his orchestral works.

# How well do you know your Byron?

*(For all but the most ardent devotees, four correct answers is good; five or six is very good; more than six verges on the excellent.)*

1. Byron went from Harrow to Cambridge. Which college?
2. What follows 'wine and women, mirth and laughter'?
3. What did Byron have in common with Leander?
4. And with Mr. Ekenhead?
5. Christened 'George Gordon', Byron later adopted another name. What was it?
6. Complete the couplet: 'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart . . .'
7. For which feminine name did Byron, in *Don Juan*, declare a passion?
8. Who came down 'like the wolf on the fold'?
9. Byron described the English winter as ending in July. Recommencing when?
10. Which of these was *not* written by Byron?  
Sardanapalus . . . Prometheus . . . Prometheus Unbound . . .  
The Corsair . . . Vision of Judgement.
11. Which, according to Byron, is 'the monarch of mountains'?
12. 'The smiles that win, the cheeks that glow'. Was this Byron's description of a TAP air hostess?

*With best wishes for a successful evening . . .*

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ANSWERS: 1. Trinity. 2. Sermons and soda-water the day after. 3. Both swam the Hellespont. 4. He swam the Hellespont, too. 5. Noel. 6. 'Tis woman's whole existence. 7. Mary. 8. The Assyrian. 9. August. 10. Prometheus Unbound (Shelley). 11. Mont Blanc. 12. No—but it might well have been.

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## On this day I complete my 36th year

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved  
Since others it hath ceased to move;  
Yet though I cannot be beloved  
Still let me love.

My days are in the yellow leaf;  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker and the grief,  
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys  
Is lone as some volcanic isle!  
No torch is kindled at its blaze —  
A funeral pile!

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,  
The exalted portion of the pain  
And power of love, I cannot share,  
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*, and 'tis not *here*  
Such thoughts should shake my soul; not *now*  
Where glory decks the hero's bier,  
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,  
Glory and Greece around me see!  
The spartan, borne upon his shield,  
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece — she *is* awake!)  
Awake my spirit! think through *whom*  
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,  
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down  
Unworthy manhood! Unto thee,  
Indifferent should the smile or frown  
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*  
The land of honourable death  
Is here — up to the field, and give  
Away thy breath!

Seek out, less often sought than found,  
A soldier's grave — for thee the best;  
Then look around, and chuse thy ground,  
And take thy rest.

On his 36th birthday, January 22, 1824, Byron emerged from his bedroom at Missolonghi with this poem in his hand, and said to Pietro Gamba, Colonel Stanhope and other friends: "You were complaining that I never write any poetry now; this is my birthday and I have just finished something which I think is better than what I usually write."

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# Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

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Byron is one of the poets, along with Homer, Victor Hugo and Lamartine, whom Liszt described himself as studying avidly when, in his early twenties, he embarked on a thorough course of reading; and though the symphonic poem *Tasso* originally came into being as an overture commissioned for a centenary performance of Goethe's play *Torquato Tasso* in 1849, Byron's poem was acknowledged by Liszt as the chief influence on the final and definitive form of the work that was first performed five years later.

The 16th century Italian poet Torquato Tasso, the "eagle spirit" caged but defiant whom Byron celebrates, was a favourite Romantic symbol of the suffering artist, immured by society and by his own uncompromising dedication to an ideal; and Liszt chose him as the type of "the genius misjudged by his contemporaries but crowned by posterity with a radiant halo". The preface to the score goes on to describe the detailed intention behind the work:

Tasso loved and suffered in Ferrara, he was avenged in Rome, and his fame lives on today in the popular songs of Venice... To reproduce (these ideas) in music, we first evoked the great shade of his heroic spirit, as it still haunts the Venetian lagoons; then we imagined him, proud and melancholy, gazing upon the revels at Ferrara where he created his masterpieces; and lastly we followed him to Rome, the eternal city which crowned in glory the poet and the martyr.

The work is constructed out of a tune which Liszt heard a Venetian gondolier sing to the opening words of Tasso's epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata*. The slow, sombre introduction (*Lento*), beginning with a falling figure in triplets which is related to the main (gondolier) theme, evokes the poet in his "prison'd solitude", brooding on the "long years of outrage, calumny and wrong". A brief but violent *Allegro strepitoso* (based on the same figure), recalling Tasso's persecutions at the hands of his princely tormentors, is followed by the return of the *Lento*, and then by the first full statement of the main theme (*Adagio mesto*), introduced by bass clarinet with a solemn accompaniment of harp, horns and pizzicato strings. The theme is repeated in varied instrumentations. For a moment it glows grandly in the major (trumpets); then the vision fades, and plaintive woodwind sadly recall the opening triplet figure. This leads to the central section of the work, a graceful, courtly *Minuet* (related, like everything else, to the main theme), against which, after a time, the main theme is projected like a presence (violins and cellos). The Minuet grows more agitated until, with an acceleration of the tempo, the violent *Allegro strepitoso* returns, subsiding as before into the *Lento* introduction. But now, instead of a repetition of the main theme in its tragic form, trumpets and horns herald the final section of the work, the triumph of Tasso (corresponding to the final section of Byron's poem, in which the imprisoned poet predicts that he alone, out of all Ferrara's court, is destined to survive and be remembered down the ages). The music of the Minuet, now brilliant and jubilant, becomes the setting for successive statements of the main theme, which culminate in a blaze of glory.

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Sir Denis read a paper on "The problem of Byron's lameness" at the Royal Society of Medicine in June, 1960.



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romantic land!”

Byron Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

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The Byron Society was originally founded in Britain in 1888, at the instigation of King George I of Greece, "to keep Byron's achievements alive in the hearts of his countrymen." It prospered for many years, but eventually ceased its activities on the outbreak of the second world war. It was revived in January, 1971, when the present organization was formed.

Its aim is to educate the public in and to promote research into the life and work of Lord Byron, and the history and literature of each country with which he was associated. To this end, it has been developed as an international society, with national organizations in Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States. The Society arranges one major international activity each year, and from June 27 to July 1, 1974, will hold a Seminar on "Byron's influence on European thought" at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Each year, a visit to a country of Byronic interest is arranged. In 1974, this will be a tour of "Byron's Greece".

The Society publishes annually (on April 19) *The Byron Journal*, a scholarly publication which covers Byron's life, his art, and the relationship between them, his achievements in different fields, his influence on his contemporaries and successors and his critical reputation at different times and in different countries.

Details of membership and the Society's programme can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary:

Mrs. Elma Dangerfield, O.B.E.  
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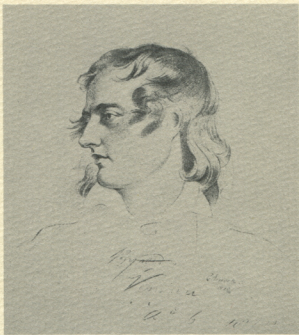
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Wellington Street  
Derby



From a drawing by S. H. Harlow, made in Venice in 1818, when Byron had grown his hair longer, and brushed it forward instead of back. The drawing was signed by Byron and engraved in 1820.