

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen:

I want to begin by saying what a great honour I consider it to have been asked to give the Crees lecture this year, following in the footsteps of others whose distinction is far superior to my own. That I should be here is, therefore, rather humbling. As American air hostesses say, I appreciate the Royal College of Music had a choice, and I thank it for choosing me. For when I was asked to give the 2018 lecture I knew within an instant what the subject would have to be: for later this year we mark the centenary of the death of a man who gave more to this College, and more to the profession of music in England, than most of us can begin to compute. And it is he whom I come to praise, and extol, tonight.

We are used to tales of those who suffer for their art. Many waiters in restaurants are biding their time before they become the next Kenneth Branagh or Keira Knightley; and we have all heard buskers in the tube who are waiting to assume the mantle of Perlman or Benedetti. It might, therefore, not seem to have been a hardship that for seven years in his youth, from 1870 to 1877, the man I am about to contend was one of the most significant cultural figures in our nation's history, on a par with Milton, or Turner, or Wren, worked as an underwriter for Lloyd's of London. But that was where Hubert Parry spent those crucial, formative years between the ages of 22 and 29, when most well-to-do young men in mid-Victorian England would be laying the foundations for the career that would last the rest of their lives. Parry was destined to become the head of the profession of music in England: but the time when he should have been training for this he spent as an insurance man. Music was squeezed in at the margins.

Luckily for music, and luckily for English culture, underwriting insurance policies was only to be a temporary expedient. Instead, and almost by accident - as these things so often are in England, and were so even more often in those less orthodox times - Parry was able to fulfil his vocation and become a musician; and not just any old musician. He composed, as he had been learning to do ever since he was a boy at prep school; and I claim here and now that he was a composer touched by genius - and if that genius is under-appreciated, it is not least because his music is shamefully under-performed, because it is shamefully little

known. But he also had a rare ability to teach, an ability accentuated by the passion he felt to communicate to others his own love of music, and his awareness of the central part it plays in our civilisation. He had also taken it upon himself to read phenomenally widely, which is never a bad thing for a teacher.

When still a boy he saw how much was missing from our cultural life because of our failure as a society to encourage the culture and art of music: and it would be to rectifying these deficiencies that he devoted his life. Parry was lucky, while at his prep school in Winchester, to have one of the few headmasters then in existence who felt a child's obvious talent in music should be developed and encouraged, rather than beaten out of him as though it were some vulgar embarrassment. He was lucky, at the same time, to be able to meet and learn from S S Wesley at Winchester Cathedral, plugging himself at the age of 12 into an English choral tradition that he would do so much to revive, expand and improve. He was equally fortunate, once he moved on to Eton, to be able to take lessons from Sir George Elvey, the organist at St George's Chapel in Windsor, for whom the 15-year old Hubert wrote his first church music. But for these happy proximities in the young Parry's life, his own career, and British cultural history, could have been very much different; for make no mistake: these were intellectual privileges nearly unheard of among most well-to-do boys in the early 1860s, such as him.

That Parry felt an evangelist's streak when it came to music was clear from his determination to find ways of sharing his passion with others. He was a co-founder of the Musical Society at Eton, not just that there might be a formal group that could play some of his own compositions, but that other boys might be attracted to the idea of the important role music could come to play in their lives, as an audience as well as as participants. Although in the Victorian family music played its part, Parry seems to have grasped from early on that in England the art of music would require institutions to carry it forward if it were ever to be something more than light entertainment or an occupation for dilettantes, and if English composers were once more to contribute to a European tradition in a way that commanded respect.

Before England became what the Germans so patronisingly called the Land Without Music, any advancement of the art here had been done mainly by

the Church and by the Court. In the rapidly secularising late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, when the church was losing its influence and the court, despite Prince Albert's attempts, showed remarkably little interest in music, other ways had to be found. Musical societies were a start: but one day Parry would be presented with an opportunity to shape an institution whose effect on what came to be called the English Musical Renaissance would be second to none, and which would give him his opportunity to become the titan of our cultural life that I hold him to be.

Within six years of leaving his underwriter's desk he had become indelibly associated with this great College in which we are all gathered this evening: and not the least of Parry's achievements in the ensuing three and half decades would be to ensure not just that the Royal College of Music became a truly great British conservatoire, abundantly fulfilling Prince Albert's desire to pack South Kensington with temples of the arts and sciences as the legacy of the Great Exhibition of 1851, but creating too the leading such institution in the country and one of the finest in the world. Over those 35 years, until his death in 1918, on the eve of the Armistice in a war that had almost broken his heart, his teaching, and his inspiration, launched the careers of some of the greatest names in the history of English music. Through them, not only did Parry succeed in putting music at the centre of our national culture to the point where our great composers – most of them his pupils – were household names, but he was godfather to the creation of what perhaps his most celebrated pupil, Ralph Vaughan Williams, called a truly “national music”.

Parry was never short of ambition for this place, or for the art it championed. Speaking in 1915, he said to students here that “The Royal College of Music has always been a place with big aims of doing special services to the nation, and it was organised from the start with a view to their attainment.” Parry himself has become synonymous with our national culture, as must be the fate of a man who writes *Jerusalem*, or *I Was Glad*: but his contribution to that culture, thanks to his work here and to that of the pupils he shaped and guided, far exceeds the great music he wrote. It puts him in a league of his own among English musicians. He has shaped the minds and the consciousnesses even of some who have never knowingly heard of him. He was what our forebears used to call a great Englishman: great not just because of the creative work he did

himself, but because of the way in which he did it, and his selflessness towards this institution and towards others. He enriched our culture, and continues to enrich it to this day, 100 years after his death, not least because of what used to be considered the presiding traits of the class into which Parry was born: a generosity of spirit and a selflessness, a lack of ego but, instead, a sense of fulfilment that could be gained only by helping others. It is thanks entirely to that selflessness that we have a musical culture of which we can be so very proud, and which is why Parry is not merely a big figure in music, but a titanic one in the culture of these islands. His modesty is something I must stress, for he would be horrified to be the subject of a lecture here tonight. He used to welcome lecturers to this college to speak to students on subjects other than music, in order to broaden his pupils' minds. I hope he would, at least, be pleased to think that it is a historian and not a musician who finds himself talking about him this evening.

But what, above all, we must reflect upon when we salute his memory on this great anniversary is how he overcame the obstacles before him in pursuing a career in music, and how it, and all he achieved, might so easily not have happened. Parry was born into the upper end of the squirearchy, and there, believe it or not, lay the problem. It was not done for the upper middle class to pursue a career in music, a form of entertainment considered by the high Victorians to be something practised in the privacy of one's own home by sometimes gifted amateurs to pass the time, but only practised in public for remunerative purposes by glorified tradesmen and, of course, foreigners. For Hubert Parry to have pursued a career in music was unthinkable to his remote and distinctly hands-off father: hence the seven years spent at Lloyd's after he left Oxford.

Parry wanted to please his father: but then it seems, if he had a failing, it was that he wanted to please everyone. The others pleased by the Lloyd's job were the family of Lady Maud Herbert, his intended fiancée, who expected her to be kept in the style to which she was accustomed as the daughter of an earl. Parry may even have felt some sort of guilt at being born into wealth himself, and wanted to earn his own living, in an age when inequality was on a scale beyond the comprehension of most people today, however unfair some might think our

society is. So despite his precocious talent as a musician, it was the City for him: until, at last, he decided to assert himself.

Given how much we owe Parry, we should pause for a moment to consider how immensely fortunate he was, and we were, that in an age when musical education in these islands was pretty much an intellectual wasteland, he had the grounding he did. Being born into privilege, as Parry was, was in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century more likely to condemn a young man to an education of boorishness and barbarism than of sweetness and light. Parry was uniquely fortunate to have Wesley and Elvey close at hand in his formative years, but was luckiest of all in Mr Kitchin, his prep school master, who where music was concerned did not share the philistinism of almost all his contemporaries. One wonders how many other Parrys there might have been out there for whom events did not synchronise in so favourable a way. There was more chance of an Elgar coming through from the class that was in trade, though I do not underestimate the struggle that he had to make the leap from Worcestershire to London. In any case, it became the main part of Parry's mission to ensure that no sheep became lost in the pastures that were English music, and he succeeded brilliantly.

As I have mentioned, the Germans – whom Parry adored - with their Beethoven, their Haydn, their Brahms and their Wagner, took to looking down on us in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and calling us “Das Land ohne Musik” – the land without music. How right they were: since Purcell, Clarke and Blow had died, and discounting the prominent overseas player George Frederick Handel, we had managed to get on to the field only something of a second eleven – not that there were easily eleven of them: Arne, Boyce, Sterndale Bennett, and those remarkable monosyllables Mudge, Crotch and Webbe (with an e on the end). So Parry not only had to overcome the snobbishness of his father in seeking to make a career in music; he was going into what seemed to be a dying industry. Arthur Sullivan had begun to enjoy some sort of critical reputation, but young Edward Elgar was conducting the orchestra in a lunatic asylum and most orchestras, whether comprised of lunatics or not, concentrated mainly on playing the works of the German masters. There was a wall of cultural prejudice to be broken before Hubert Parry could begin to make an impact.

But it was perhaps Parry's good fortune that he would not be called upon to open a new front for English music by composition alone. Thanks to the initiative of his friend and mentor George Grove, in ensuring that Parry was present at the creation of the Royal College of Music, Parry would also have a key role in training many other footsoldiers, and a few generals too, of the Army that would be required to put English music back on the map. Soon, he would not be the only one trying to break through as a composer: thanks to his teaching, within a few years others would follow him, thereby magnifying his cultural influence. And nor would they just be the great musicians who came under his direction here in this temple of learning; the first English composer since Purcell to enjoy a great continental reputation, Elgar, freely admitted he learned much of what he knew about composition from the articles Parry wrote on the subject in Grove's *Dictionary*. Indeed, because of the overwhelming contribution Parry made to this College we may be at risk of forgetting what, also because of his connection with Grove, he had done for musical education in the years before the RCM existed to exploit his talents. From 1875 onwards he wrote numerous articles for the new dictionary that bore Grove's name, and several chamber works that would be heard at concerts at the Bayswater house of his teacher and mentor Edward Dannreuther, whom Parry would appoint professor of piano at the RCM in 1895: and he did all this while still underwriting at Lloyd's, which he did not give up until 1877.

Parry could not have become the great cultural figure he was without breaking the mould others – notably his father – had made for him, and seeking to be his own man. In this, he was helped again by fortunate connections. He met Wagner with Dannreuther in 1877, which helped shift the nature of the musical influence upon him – which, while remaining profoundly German, became more radically so, as would be heard in his first major work, *Prometheus Unbound*, of 1880. For those who doubt Parry's heft as a composer, *Prometheus* is significant in at least two regards. It is a work whose score shows the significant talent of the composer; and it is credited as being the work that started the English Musical Renaissance. It is all the more unfortunate that no recording exists of it, and I have but the vaguest memories, as some of you might, of hearing it on Radio 3 at its centenary in 1980.

But two other intellectual departures in the 1870s shaped the Parry who would tower over English musical life until the end of the Great War: his realisation that he no longer believed in God, and that he no longer supported the blinkered and self-serving Toryism of his father. Parry could have had no better political hero than Mr Gladstone for, like Gladstone, he fundamentally believed in the extension of sweetness and light to as many people as possible. As with his pupil Vaughan Williams, detaching himself from God did not prevent him from writing a great deal of music setting religious texts, and we are fortunate that it did not. It did, perhaps, allow both composers to choose texts on the basis of the euphony of the sounds of their words, a rather different consideration from that of what those words actually mean.

By the time Elgar had his first triumph with *The Enigma Variations* Parry and Stanford had, as teachers and composers, properly put English music back on the map. Parry had by the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century composed four symphonies, numerous choral works for which there was a huge demand from audiences the length and breadth of Britain, and had been asked to write a work for the Queen's diamond jubilee in 1897. His contemporaries took his contribution to the nation's cultural life far less for granted than perhaps we do. It was as much for his brilliance as a proponent of the art of music as for his skills as a teacher, never mind as a composer, that he became the obvious man to succeed Grove as Director of this great college in 1895. His knighthood followed in 1898 and his baronetcy in 1902, by which time he had also been appointed professor of music at Oxford: the honours were without question for his personal achievements across the field of music; but they were also a sign that music had, thanks largely to him, Grove and Stanford and through the crucible of the Royal College, put itself at the forefront of our national life for the first time in about 200 years. And I must stress: this was not just because he helped produce a number of great composers. He also helped produce and inspire that army of teachers that raised the standard of musical education the length and breadth of these islands in the 20th century. They in turn inspired schoolchildren, amateur choirs, and the very business of making music that remains, thank God, so central to our culture today.

Some writers have accused Parry and Stanford together of having developed an “ideology” of English music rooted in German norms. Anyone who bothers to look up the word “ideology” in a dictionary will see the term is, in this context, meaningless. Parry did, however, face the need to take important decisions about his own conduct of this college when he assumed responsibility for it in 1895: with the underpinning knowledge that the young men and women of this college to whom he gave creative and aesthetic leadership would become the next generation of the renaissance that he, Stanford and Grove had launched. Parry’s service here, fulfilling though it undeniably was, was also an act of sacrifice. From the moment he took over his compositions became fewer and farther between. Duty also took a toll on Parry’s physical and psychological health: in a difficult marriage, he was lonely in his personal life, and seems have thrown himself into his work even more as a consequence. Within 10 years however he had become, according to Elgar, “the head of our art in this country”.

Parry was more than simply an inspirational figure to those who became the pillars of the musical renaissance in England to which he and his colleagues, in their different ways, gave birth. His example and his ethos were essential to men such as Vaughan Williams and Holst in confirming them in their convictions that they had to develop music in these islands after its long moribund period. They did it, first and foremost, through the example of folk-song; and when the Folk Song Society of England was established in 1898, there was no other man who could possibly have been asked to give the inaugural address but Parry. One passage in it resonated so deeply with Vaughan Williams that it changed his entire idea of how write music, and settled his notions of what sort of a composer he had to be. “The great composers,” he said, “have concentrated upon their folk music much attention, since style is ultimately national. True style comes not from the individual but from the products of crowds of fellow-workers who sift and try and try again till they have found the thing that suits their native taste.” Parry had learned this from his study of German composers: the whole idea can be put more bluntly, which is that we are all victims of our upbringing. It is not just the English composer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who hunted the folk-song down to its lair: Brahms did it, Dvorak did it, Janacek did it, Ravel did it. In his *Evolution of the Art of Music*, Parry even showed that the structure of a Beethoven

Symphony could be traced back to the art of a simple folk-singer. He gave intellectual validation to the whole process by which the English Musical Renaissance came about.

As Vaughan Williams put it 30 years after Parry's death, he knew that "vital art must grow in its own soil and be nurtured by its own rain and sunshine." When Vaughan Williams was still at Charterhouse his cousin, Stephen Massingberd, had quoted to him Parry's remark that "a composer must write music as his musical conscience demands." From the moment he first heard parts of *Judith* in his teens, Vaughan Williams knew there was, as his brother had put it to him, "something peculiarly English about his music." There are moments in *Judith* that evoke the history of English church music back to the Tudor polyphony that was so heavily to influence Vaughan Williams himself: perhaps that is why it was so redolent of England. An attempt is to be made to perform it at the Festival Hall next year, if the money can be raised, and one can only wish it well.

Once he became Parry's pupil, Vaughan Williams realised that Parry's watchword was "characteristic": "He was always trying to discover the character revealed in even the weakest of his students' compositions", VW recalled late in life; and he recalled giving Parry a composition where he had written out a scale with one note repeated. Parry, who had studied the work more carefully than VW had written it, simply said to him: "I have been looking at this passage for a long time to discover whether it is just a mistake or whether you meant anything characteristic." Parry's other gift as a teacher was to make his pupils understand the greatness of a composer even if they could not come to like his idiom. His contribution to the understanding of the nature of music was, thereby, prodigious.

Parry made Vaughan Williams realise, as Vaughan Williams in his turn made countless others realise, that there was an idea of Englishness in music that was instinctive. Vaughan Williams felt when he heard the folksong that he worked into the *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* that he had known it all his life. Parry might have said that he was born knowing it. Parry is often accused of writing music as though he were a German – as though he was imitating his beloved Brahms – but his music is constantly infused with the English temper

that he had imbibed from all around him. Who would say that *Lady Radnor's Suite*, for example, is not a little influenced by English folk song, written though it was four or five years before Cecil Sharp went on his quest to collect it? And by the pretty ballads countless respectable English families of the 1890s played on the upright pianos in their over-furnished sitting rooms? All Parry was saying in that inaugural address was that composers draw inspiration from the music they hear around them: just as in the little work that I have long considered the apogee of Parry's orchestral writing, his *Symphonic Variations* of 1897, there is a tremendous passion drawn from Parry's own life, contemplation and feelings, yet also a suavity drawn from the milieu in which he lived; and a grandeur that had rubbed off from the culture of pomp and swagger that was all around him in that year of the old Queen's diamond jubilee. One thing that was important to Parry was that music, like architecture, or painting, or poetry or the novel, could take its rightful place in what he called "characteristic national art". It is not least thanks to him that it did.

Parry understood what made him want to write music: it was his gift as a teacher to make others realise why they wanted to write it, and to judge from what his pupils wrote this was what set him above Stanford as a teacher. He said in *The Art of Music* that "it is the intensity of the pleasure or interest the artist feels in what is actually present to his imagination that drives him to utterance. The instinct of utterance makes it a necessity to find terms which will be understood by other beings." He saw that music was about communication, which would be something at which his pupils, and his pupils' pupils, became adept, to judge from the size of their audiences and from their enduring appeal after all these years. It is in statements such as that that one is reminded that Parry's greatness was, essentially, the greatness of the missionary. His gift was not just to make others share the revelations that had been made to him, but to inspire them to share the revelations with others. For two hundred years the musical impulse had lain moribund in England. Now, thanks to the genius of Grove, and his brilliant choice of Parry and Stanford to give intellectual leadership to the College he founded, the barrenness came to an end, and once more men, and women, were sent out to write music: not entirely for its own sake, but as a new contribution to the ancient culture of this old country. Parry

saw that music was a means of common understanding, a way in which we bind ourselves together by comprehending our shared values and instincts, and each other. One only has to sense the communal feeling of an Albert Hall that has just sung *Jerusalem* on the last night of the Proms – as it has done for the last 72 years – or, on a different but possibly even more meaningful scale, the shared ideals of a branch of the Women’s Institute as they sing it around a piano in a church hall somewhere in England, to understand the potency of the idea.

One of Parry’s most famous remarks was when he told Vaughan Williams to “write choral music as befits an Englishman and a democrat.” What that means becomes entirely clear when one understands Parry’s determination to make music a means of communication not just from composer to listener, but among listeners as a shared experience that is instinctual to them. Vaughan Williams felt that Parry had handed on a tradition to him and his contemporaries that Parry himself had inherited from Tallis through Byrd, Gibbons, Purcell, Battishill and Greene. But of course Parry did not merely guard a sacred flame until others were ready: in his own choral writing he poured an accelerant on it, and the act of worship would in the generation that followed him have more celebrants than ever before.

Through his own choral writings, and through the works he inspired in his pupils, Parry did more than anyone to spread the idea of musicality at the grass roots in Britain. Local music societies, whether choruses of professional standard in big cities or glee clubs in villages, took their lead from him. At all levels they were people who, as he put it, “make what they like and like what they make.” But the influence of Parry and the message about music that he sought to transmit began here, in this building, with his pupils. Grove appointed him to be Professor of the History of Music, and Parry understood implicitly that if the creative spirit were to be properly inspired and directed then those who would embody it would need to know where their art had come from. Speaking as a historian, I am impressed by Parry’s method, and his understanding of the importance of context. The idea he gave his pupils of where their art had come from was highly insightful and illuminating. Gustav Holst, who went to Parry’s lectures in 1893, said that they had given him “a vision, which I learned to call History.”

Parry's relationship with the student Holst is as good an example of any of his generosity of spirit and encouragement that drove so many musicians, whether composers or instrumentalists, to make a success of their vocation. In 1898 Parry had campaigned to secure the impoverished Holst a year's extension of his scholarship: and having done so Holst was then offered the roles of trombonist and répétiteur with the Carl Rosa Company. He wrote apologetically to his patron, who replied: "My dear Von Holst, You are not at all likely to give offence to any authorities at the RCM; they have much too good an opinion of you. I am very sorry we shall not have the benefit of your presence at the RCM this next term, but you are quite right to take an opportunity of the kind you tell me of."

Holst well understood the nobility of what Parry had done for the RCM in accepting the invitation to become its director in 1895. After Parry's death he told his pupil Vally Lasker that "the Directorship of the RCM is an excellent example of the sort of big job that kills an artist. Parry sacrificed himself to save an awkward situation but I still feel that the sacrifice was too great." Yet the nobility of that sacrifice endured, and Parry led his pupils by example in every aspect of their lives. When he welcomed his students back for the new term in September 1914, he talked of those men – including students such as Jack Moeran and Arthur Bliss, who would survive the war and become renowned composers, and teachers such as Vaughan Williams, whose music would for the rest of his life be coloured to some extent by his experience of war – who "have been honourably inspired to go and chance the risks of military life." He added: "We feel a thrill of regard for them. It gives a comfortable feeling of admiration for our fellow-countrymen when we see them moved by fine and honourable motives to face the awful conditions of modern warfare – to risk their lives, and sometimes even worse, for generous ideals."

Yet Parry sounded a note prescient at the time, and which hinted at the damage that would be done to society by the loss of some many young men – in his specific case, of musical talent, but as would soon become apparent, of many other spheres of excellence too, as the country's future leaders, teachers, artists and scientists were slaughtered. "Our pupils are made of different stuff from the pupils of ordinary schools. They are gifted in a rare and special way. Some of

them are so gifted that their loss could hardly be made good. It would be a special loss to the community...The world cannot afford to throw away such lives as if they of of no more account than lives that give no special promise of a rare kind.” He illustrated his point by asking what it would have meant had Wagner been killed in the Dresden disturbances of 1849, before *Tristan*, *Meistersinger*, the *Ring* or *Parsifal*; but also raised the paradox that “the people who offer themselves to such risks are often of the very best quality, and very often such as the world can ill spare; while numbers of those who do not offer themselves are mere loafers and shirkers who would be no loss, and would even be better and happier for being forced to face the guns and learn what a gain some experience of a really strenuous life would be to them.”

It has often been said that Parry would have been more recognized as a great composer had he not given so much of his life and his strength to teaching, and to the Royal College. In his lifetime he became overshadowed by Elgar, an irony given the debt Elgar knew he owed to Parry; and in the 20 or 30 years after his death his two great pupils, Vaughan Williams and Holst, eclipsed him. Parry was the first casualty of a disease that would become all too prevalent in the English musical renaissance: the apparently compulsory period of neglect a British composer must endure in the two or three decades after his death. It seems only Benjamin Britten, another alumnus of this place, has managed to avoid it. By the early 1930s Parry’s reputation as a composer was so low as to be almost subterranean. Even Adrian Boult, then the first conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and a friend and admirer of Parry, would at that time fail to programme him in the concerts of an orchestra one of whose *raison d’etre* was to showcase British music. There simply was, by the 1930s, no demand to hear Parry who, in that era when a loathing of the immediate past had been furnished by Lytton Strachey’s much over-rated and intellectually dishonest masterpiece, *Eminent Victorians*, had been one of the most eminent late Victorians of them all. Stanford suffered the same fate as, to a lesser extent, did Elgar. Boult more than made up for his neglect of Parry with some stunning recordings of his music in later life which, after a barren period that lasted effectively until the 1960s, helped revive admiration for Parry’s music. If anyone questions me about what claim to greatness Parry has other than having written *Jerusalem*, *I Was Glad* and

*Blest Pair of Sirens* – though to most of us that would be claim enough – I refer them to Boult’s majestic account of *The Symphonic Variations*, recorded for Lyrita when the conductor was 84, even though I suspect Boult could still hear the composer telling him that his tempi were too fast, as he had at a performance of the work during the Great War.

Here, among people who need no reminder of Parry’s greatness, it is even less necessary to justify his achievement as a composer than it is to validate what he did as a teacher and an administrator, and how he gave back a voice to the land without music, and helped make us a musical people again. He deserves recognition for what he contributed to our musical canon – not just the works that everybody knows, not just the masterfulness of the *Symphonic Variations*, but his five sublime symphonies, displaying a range of invention, thought and emotion that reach their peak in the profound fifth and final one of 1912. Its originality of conception and subtlety of expression repay constant hearings: but perhaps it tells us more about Parry the man, the man devoted to his art and to its re-birth, who contended uncomplainingly with ill-health and a difficult marriage while fulfilling his vocation and inspiring countless others. Too few know, also, what a fine composer of song and of piano miniatures Parry was; or appreciate that he re-invented the English choral tradition when Elgar had yet come out of Worcestershire, with works such as *Judith* and *Job* that are shamefully unknown today.

Parry was a man who could not stop giving. Even when worn down by ill-health, and deeply depressed by the slaughter of the generation he had until so recently been teaching – depressed, too, by his once-beloved Germany having become an enemy of his country – he raised, and gave some of his own money, to the Music in Wartime charity, which ensured concerts were put on for soldiers, the wounded and in parts of Britain where musical life was dwindling because of the war. What Parry above all he had taught the British was that there was no life without music.

Yet perhaps Parry’s greatest and most enduring act of philanthropy is also among his least known, and wherever the music of his pupil Herbert Howells is played it has a further echo. Not the least of Parry’s gifts as a teacher was to be able to spot talent when he encountered it, and he was in little doubt that

Howells could be a formidable composer. During 1915 Howells's health deteriorated dramatically, as he showed the early signs of Grave's disease. Parry was deeply concerned, and wrote to him recommending a specialist he might see: and adding that he "would also gladly provide for any expense that is entailed". Howells was just 23, exceptionally poor, and had written very little, his only work of note thus far being his first piano concerto, which it took until the Millennium to receive the recording and the recognition it deserved.

Howells was given six months to live. Parry paid for him to become the first human being to receive radium treatment: which he did twice a week for two years. The course was a mere conjecture in terms of its likely success, and was possible only because of Parry's generosity. Howells lived into his 91<sup>st</sup> year and duly became one of our great composers, meaning that the debt owed to Parry was not owed by Howells alone: but for Parry there would be no *Hymnus Paradisi*, no *In Gloucestershire*, not to mention Howells's other works of genius. And, as if Parry had not done enough for Howells by that stage, he helped secure him the post of assistant organist at Salisbury Cathedral as his first job.

Professor Jeremy Dibble, Parry's biographer, has said that for all his other works as an administrator, teacher, writer, aesthete and indeed philosopher of music, Parry needs to be remembered above all as a composer. To an extent I very much agree with Professor Dibble. Parry's achievement is considerable and would be more widely recognized as such if more of his works were more frequently performed. Professor Dibble argues that he is the link between the world of Stainer and that of Vaughan Williams: and of course, for all sorts of obvious reasons he is, and we should appreciate the sense of continuity in our musical life that Parry gives us. But to see Parry first and foremost as a composer – and I would arrogantly claim, indeed, as a great composer – is to see but one of his facets, and not to see the ones that put the art of music back properly into English life. It takes more than one man to make a renaissance: it takes the men, and indeed women, whose artistic and cultural potential a great teacher and visionary such as Parry can inspire. For 35 years, in these buildings, he made those people, and gave us back our musical culture.

For the music alone that he created he deserves enduring recognition and respect: but for his transformation of our cultural landscape through his

dedication to his art in every respect he should be in the Pantheon with Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wren, Turner or Dickens. Few realise how much the present profession of music owes to Sir Hubert Parry; or how much more there is to learn about him than simply that he wrote England's national song, or an anthem that has become the musical centrepiece of our Coronation service, or some of our most beloved hymn-tunes. For that reason a small group of us, including the present Director of this great College and its Chairman of Governors, have for some years been attempting to secure a site in a public space a stone's throw from here to commemorate Parry in a way that is commensurate with his contribution to our national culture and our national life: by having a statue of him erected in sight of the institution to which he gave the second half of his life, in the heart of Albertopolis, where he did as much as any man to fulfil the Prince Consort's vision of the development of the arts and sciences in Britain; and next to the great concert hall where, at every Last Night of the Proms since 1946, his most famous and enduring work has been performed to the rapture of all who hear it. A proper statue of Parry would not merely go some way to repaying the debt that our country and our culture owe him: it would also inform those who walked past it, many of whom might be unaware of his greatness, of his great life, and of his continuing presence in ours. We shall fight on for that statue: and I am in no doubt that by the two hundredth anniversary of his death Sir Hubert Parry will have come to be seen as the titanic figure of our culture that so many of us here this evening know him to be. This College is a monument to his legacy, and does him the greatest honour: what we must turn our attention to now is a monument to him.