

The Penguin Music Magazine (1946-1949) and Music (1950-1952)

The first issue of the *Penguin Music Magazine* [PMM] appeared in December 1946; the last in July 1949. While the journal's circulation was nearly three times larger than that of any other British music periodical,¹ it was not large enough to make it an economically viable long-term undertaking. For this reason, the journal that appeared three times per year was transformed into an annual publication with a new title, *Music* [MSC], which first appeared in 1950. The first issue deals mainly with the events of the second half of the 1948-49 season; the 1951 issue with the entire twelve months of the 1949-50 season, and the 1952 issue with the 1950-51 season. It is important to note that the same structure was maintained in both publications, and that many of the same writers contributed to both.

In the Foreword to the journal's first issue, Ralph Hill describes the focus of the journal in these terms:

Penguin Music Magazine is primarily written for amateurs . . . the need for information and criticism of the right kind is obvious to all who have had experience of the gramophone societies and music clubs which flourish all over the country, and whose members represent the more alive and intelligent section of the amateur music public at large . . . we shall from time to time not only reflect and evaluate what has taken place in our work of music, but we shall discuss the problems confronting the new-comer to music.²

PMM consists of nine issues:³ nos. 1-5 measure 13 x 20 cm; nos. 6-9, 12 x 18 cm. *Music* appeared annually in an 11 x 18 cm format. The number of pages in a PMM issue varies from 93 to 138; those of *Music* from 232 to 281. Both journals were published by Penguin Books Limited, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England.

Ralph Hill (1900-50) was editor of the *Penguin Music Magazine* and of its successor *Music* until his sudden death. Hill was born into a musical family: one of his grandfathers was Joseph Williams, the music publisher, and the other was H. Weist Hill, violinist, conductor and the first director of the Guildhall School of Music where his grandson studied. After military service Ralph Hill went into the family music-publishing business and later began his career as editor of the *Musical Mirror and Fanfare* from 1929 to 1932. Hill became assistant music critic of the *Daily Mail* in 1933 and its chief critic in 1945. From 1933 to 1945 he served as music editor of the BBC's *Radio Times*, and gave lectures and broadcasts on music. Hill was also president of the Critics' Circle from

¹ Ralph Hill, "Through the Looking Glass," PMM 9 (July 1949): 7.

² Ralph Hill, "Through the Looking Glass," PMM 1 (December 1946): 7-8.

³ The issue dates are December 1946, May 1947, September 1947, December 1947, February 1948, June 1948, October 1948, February 1949, and July 1949.

1948-49. His works include biographies of Brahms⁴ and Liszt,⁵ and a series of essays.⁶ He also edited collections of essays on the symphony and the concerto.⁷ His contributions to PMM and to *Music* include editorials that are energetic pleas for better direction of the BBC, which was dealing with the complex post-war financing of its several orchestras, and trying to set standards for quality music criticism. His contributions to PMM's review column "New Books" are many; and, for *Music*, he wrote all the reviews for this column, published in 1950 and 1951, which continued from the earlier journal. He also wrote all of PMM's "Gramophone Commentary" sections from issue no. 5 (February 1948) through issue no. 9 (July 1949); these consist of short notices about recent 78 RPM recordings.

Alec Robertson (1892-1982) succeeded Ralph Hill as editor of *Music* in 1950. Robertson was educated at the Royal Academy of Music and served in the army from 1914-18 in India, Egypt and Palestine. In 1919 he lectured on music at various evening institutes and in 1920 joined the staff of the Gramophone Company, of which he later became the director. In 1930 he studied in Rome and became a priest. Books on Gregorian plainchant,⁸ on church music⁹ and other musical subjects¹⁰ followed. He joined the BBC in 1939, and remained there until his retirement in 1952. He produced many programs for the BBC relating to music. For many years he reviewed records for the *Gramophone*, and served as the magazine's music editor from 1952-72. Robertson wrote the "Record Collector" column for PMM, which contains short reviews of 78 RPM records, and a contribution about music criticism.¹¹ He also wrote the opening editorial and one book review for the 1952 *Music*.

A journal issue (of both PMM and *Music*) typically begins with a table of contents, followed by an editorial titled "Through the Looking-Glass" in which one occasionally finds comments on articles in the issue in question and discussion of numerous subjects including music festivals, the BBC, concert series, music criticism, and concert ticket prices. Thereafter follows articles numbering from five (PMM 2, May 1947) to fourteen (*Music*, 1950) treating a wide range of subjects: composers and their music,¹² musical life in foreign countries;¹³ practical musical skills (tempo,¹⁴ score reading,¹⁵ rhythm,¹⁶

⁴ Ralph Hill, *Brahms* (London, 1941).

⁵ Ralph Hill, *Liszt* (London, 1936).

⁶ Ralph Hill, *Challenges: a Series of Controversial Essays on Music* (London, 1943).

⁷ Ralph Hill (ed.), *The Symphony* (London, 1949); *The Concerto* (London, 1952).

⁸ Alec Robertson, *The Interpretation of Plainchant* (London, 1937).

⁹ Alec Robertson, *Contrasts: the Arts and Religion* (London, 1947); *Sacred Music* (London, 1950); *Christian Music* (New York, 1961); *Music of the Catholic Church* (London, 1961).

¹⁰ Alec Robertson, *How to Listen to Music* (London, 1948).

¹¹ Section of "To Start an Argument. IV: Has Concert Criticism any Value?" PMM 5 (February 1948): 41-44.

¹² Humphrey Searle, "The Unknown Liszt," MSC 1951: 62-75; and Robert L. Jacobs, "Mendelssohn: a Reevaluation I and II," PMM 3 (September 1947): 11-16; PMM 4 (December 1947): 29-32.

¹³ Alan Bush, "Soviet Music in War-Time," PMM 1 (December 1946): 35-40.

¹⁴ F. Bonavia, "Time, Gentlemen Please!" PMM 4 (December 1947): 15-18.

musical forms);¹⁷ sociological and financial issues (e.g., rebuilding British orchestras after the war,¹⁸ financing professional orchestras, permanent or guest conductors, subsidies);¹⁹ analysis of concert repertory (choice of works and frequency of performance, opera in English); concert goers (the role of the audience,²⁰ concert attendance fifty years prior,²¹ provincial audiences); aesthetic considerations (defining music with words, music and poetry,²² music and paintings);²³ psychological issues (the psychology of listening to and understanding music, the composer and the listener,²⁴ humor);²⁵ contemporary music²⁶ (modernism, musical progress); criticism²⁷ (critical listening,²⁸ the value of musical criticism, defining the qualities of music); and broadcasting and recording.

In PMM, the articles are followed by three, more or less, regularly appearing columns containing short commentaries. The first is “Brains Trust”²⁹ in which readers’ questions—such as what is the meaning of the words classical and romantic applied to music, and what is the influence of jazz on composers of classical music—are answered by Julian Herbage, a musicologist on the staff of the BBC. The second column, “Personality Corner,”³⁰ written by C. B. Rees, offers descriptions of the personalities of important contemporary musicians.³¹ The third column, “To Start an Argument,”³² presents opposing points of view on questions, such as, what is the purpose of music?

These three columns are followed by review columns, with varying titles and authors, which occupy almost half of each issue in both journals. The first, “New Books” or “New Books about Music”³³ in PMM and *Music* respectively, contain reviews—by different

¹⁵ Gordon Jacob, “On Reading a Score,” PMM 6 (June 1948): 27-31.

¹⁶ F. Bonavia, “Rhythm in Perspective,” PMM 7 (October 1948): 33-39.

¹⁷ J. Raymond Tobin, “Musical Forms: no. 1, the Concerto,” MSC 1950: 79-89; and William Mann, “Musical Forms: no. 2, the Variation,” MSC 1951: 111-20.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Sharp, “Standard of Performance,” PMM 1 (December 1946): 53-59.

¹⁹ Mary Davie, “State Aid and the Arts,” MSC 1950: 113-16.

²⁰ George Dannatt, “The Audience of the Proms,” PMM 2 (May 1947): 35-38.

²¹ George Sampson, “A Boy and his Music,” PMM 8 (February 1949): 14-19.

²² N. L. Smith, “Composers and Poets Affinities,” PMM 8 (February 1949): 34-37; and Hubert Foss, “Thomas Hardy and Music,” MSC 1951: 100-10.

²³ Michael Ayrton, “Music Inspired by Painting,” PMM 1 (December 1946): 23-28; 3 (September 1947): 28-31.

²⁴ Christian Darnton, “The Function of the Composer,” PMM 7 (October 1948): 13-20.

²⁵ Ernest Chapman, “Concerts Grave and Gay,” MSC 1950: 90-96.

²⁶ Humphrey Searle, “A New Movement in Music,” PMM 4 (December 1947): 19-23.

²⁷ Rupert Crawshay-Williams, “The Language of Music Criticism,” PMM 6 (June 1948): 13-26.

²⁸ J. L. Cowan, “On Listening,” PMM 2 (May 1947): 20-24.

²⁹ PMM 2-8 (May 1947-February 1949).

³⁰ PMM 2-9 (May 1947-July 1949).

³¹ Barbirolli, Van Beinum, De Sabata, Ginette Neveu, William Primrose, Vaughan Williams, Gerald Moore, etc.

³² This column appears only four times in PMM.

³³ In PMM’s first two issues all reviews are by Stanley Bayliss; in MSC’s first two, all are by Ralph Hill. Reviews in all other issues are provided by a variety of authors.

authors—varying in length from a few lines to a few pages. The next review column, “New Music,”³⁴ written by Robin Hull in PMM and J. Raymond Tobin in *Music*, contains mainly reviews of contemporary British music. The author of the next column, “The Record Collector”³⁵ is Alec Robertson.³⁶ When the title of this column changed in PMM to “Gramophone Commentary”³⁷ Ralph Hill replaced Robertson as author. In *Music*, when the column’s name changed once again to “New Gramophone Records,” the reviewers were Richard Bryceson,³⁸ Lionel Salter³⁹ and Andrew Porter. In this column of changing titles, one finds general information about the gramophone industry, short reviews of new recordings, new labels, recording catalogues, 78 RPM records and, in one issue, long playing records (33 1/3 RPM).

The “Music of the Film” review column,⁴⁰ written by Scott Goddard, not only discusses several film scores but also deals with the role and function of film music. The “Music over the Air”⁴¹ column contains reviews of works performed on the radio by the BBC and other orchestras, and discussion of the works selected for performance on *The Third Programme*. Richard Gorer,⁴² Stanley Bayliss,⁴³ Denis Stevens,⁴⁴ Elway Stogers⁴⁵ and Harry Dexter⁴⁶ contribute to this column. “Opera in London,”⁴⁷ written by Stephen Williams, offers reviews of operas performed at the Sadler’s Wells Opera, the New London Opera, the Carl Rosa Opera Company, the Glyndebourne Opera, the Royal Opera at the Covent Garden, and the Cambridge Theatre. The column “Ballet in London”⁴⁸—written by Arnold L. Haskell and later Scott Goddard—discusses performances of the Sadler’s Wells Ballet Company, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and the New York City Ballet Company. “Concerts in London”⁴⁹—written by George Dannatt,⁵⁰ Geoffrey Sharp⁵¹ and Mosco Carner⁵²—treats chamber music and orchestral concerts with special focus on contemporary British compositions. The concerts of the 1951 Festival of Britain are reviewed the following year in *Music*.

³⁴ Titled “New Printed Music” in MSC.

³⁵ Titled “New Gramophone Records” in PMM 2 (May 1947).

³⁶ PMM 1-4 (December 1946-December 1947).

³⁷ PMM 5-9 (February 1948-July 1949).

³⁸ MSC 1950 and 1951.

³⁹ MSC 1952.

⁴⁰ This column appears in PMM 2-8 (May 1947-February 1949).

⁴¹ Titled “Music on the Air” in PMM 1 (December 1946) and 3 (September 1947).

⁴² PMM 1 (December 1946).

⁴³ PMM 2-6 (May 1947-June 1948).

⁴⁴ PMM 7-9 (October 1948-July 1949).

⁴⁵ MSC 1950.

⁴⁶ MSC 1951.

⁴⁷ In MSC the opera column becomes a section of the larger “Music in the Theatre” column.

⁴⁸ In MSC the ballet column becomes a section of the larger “Music in the Theatre” column.

⁴⁹ This column is not found in PMM 9 (July 1949) and MSC 1950.

⁵⁰ PMM 1-8 (December 1946-February 1949).

⁵¹ MSC 1951.

⁵² MSC 1952.

All issues of both journals conclude with a “Northern Diary.” This column is divided first in four, and later in five parts: Music in Scotland; Music in Liverpool; Music in Manchester; Music in Birmingham and later Music in Leeds. Music in Scotland—particularly Glasgow and Edinburgh and specifically the Edinburgh Festival of Music and Drama, the development of the Scottish Orchestra into the first permanent full-scale symphony orchestra in Scotland (the Scottish National Orchestra)—were first written by Stewart Deas⁵³ and later by Maurice Lindsay.⁵⁴ The Liverpool column by A. K. Holland (music critic of the *Liverpool Daily Post*) discusses the Music Department of the University of Liverpool, and the financial difficulties of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society. The Leeds reporter, Eric Todd,⁵⁵ writes about the progress of the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra with its conductor Maurice Miles. In the Manchester column J. H. Elliot focuses attention on the Hallé Orchestra and its conductor Sir John Barbirolli and, to a lesser degree on the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra. Birmingham’s John Waterhouse reports regularly on the City of Birmingham Orchestra, the Midland Music Makers and the Barber Concert Society.

The column “Southern Diary,”⁵⁶ written by John Durrant, appeared for the first time in PMM no. 8 (February 1949). Attention here is focused on Brighton, Portsmouth and Bournemouth, and two orchestras, the Southern Philharmonic Orchestra and the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.

Most of the many contributors to the journals produced only one or two articles. However, a few contributed more regularly. Hubert Foss (1899-1953) was, with six articles, the most prolific. He joined Oxford University Press in 1921 and oversaw the publications of the works of Vaughan Williams, Walton and Rawsthorne. Foss’s work included the first extended study on Vaughan Williams⁵⁷ and *The Concertgoers Handbook*.⁵⁸ Denis Stevens (1922-2004) contributed three articles, two book reviews and three reviews of radio programs to the journals. A musicologist, he studied at Oxford and was an early music specialist and performer (violinist, violist and conductor). He worked for the BBC and held a number of appointments as professor of music. Stevens is the author of several books including *Tudor Church Music*,⁵⁹ and editor of the critical editions of the works of Tallis⁶⁰ and Monteverdi.⁶¹ Edward Lockspeiser (1905-73)

⁵³ PMM 1-2 (December 1946-May 1947).

⁵⁴ PMM 3-9 (September 1947-July 1949) and MSC.

⁵⁵ PMM 6-9 (June 1948-July 1949) and MSC.

⁵⁶ PMM 8-9 (February 1949-July 1949) and MSC.

⁵⁷ Hubert Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, 1950).

⁵⁸ Hubert Foss, *The Concertgoers Handbook* (London, 1946).

⁵⁹ Denis Stevens, *Tudor Church Music* (New York, 1955).

⁶⁰ *Thomas Tallis: Complete Keyboard Works* (London, 1953).

⁶¹ *Claudio Monteverdi, Vespers of 1610* (London, 1961); *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (London, 1962); *L’Orfeo: favola in musica* (London, 1967); *Magnificat* (London, 1969) [with J. Steele].

contributed three articles to PMM. A musicologist and composer, he was chiefly interested in French music and wrote important works on Debussy.⁶²

Each issue of PMM (not *Music*) contains eight or sixteen pages of illustrations (mainly photographs) often depicting subjects treated in articles, or displaying scenes from ballets and operas. Each issue of the journals (PMM and *Music*) closes with from one to seven pages of advertisements dealing exclusively with Penguin publications in *Music*, and partly so in PMM.

Notes on the Calendar

The copies of the journals used for the preparation of this volume are part of the RIPM Archive of Music Periodicals, at the RIPM International Center (Baltimore).

⁶² Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy: His Life and Mind*. 2 vols. (London, 1962-65).