

Hamilton Harty's Legacy with the Hallé Orchestra (1920–1930): a Reassessment

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The long and influential conducting career of Hamilton Harty has attracted little scholarly attention. The only significant contribution to date is the anthology *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music* edited by David Greer in 1979.¹ This general study of Harty relies primarily on materials found in the Hamilton Harty Manuscript Collection (MS14) at Queen's University, Belfast.² Greer was also responsible for the publication of Harty's *Early Memoirs*, relating to his first 22 years, released the same year.³ Given that Harty was one of Britain's leading conductors during the 1920s and 1930s this state of affairs is surprising. Apart from his influential career as an accompanist and his work as a composer, Harty was the permanent conductor of the Hallé Orchestra from 1920 to 1933, and responsible for a number of critical initiatives: the first civic-aided concerts; the orchestra's first recording in April 1921; and its first radio broadcasts during the 1924–25 season.⁴

The purpose of this article is to reassess Harty's legacy and contribution to music in Britain during the interwar period. By comparison to contemporaries such as Thomas Beecham, Adrian Boult, Henry Wood, and Malcolm Sargent, Harty has been largely neglected by commentators. This short reassessment will focus primarily on establishing the following point about Harty's legacy with the Hallé: far from being a

¹ David Greer (ed.), *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1979). Greer was Hamilton Harty Professor of Music at Queen's University, Belfast, from 1972 to 1984.

² Noël Goodwin described the book as 'a series of essays rather than a comprehensive study'. See *The Musical Times*, 120 (December 1979), 1003.

³ David Greer (ed.), *Hamilton Harty: Early Memories* (Belfast: Queen's University, 1979).

⁴ For their first recording the Hallé Orchestra performed *L'après-midi d'un faune* by Debussy and the Rákóczy March from *The Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz. Their first broadcast was on Thursday 16 October 1924 from the Free Trade Hall. It was only part of a concert, from 8:45 pm to 9:30 pm, and included Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Flight of the Bumble Bee', *The Musical Box* by Liadov and the overture to *The Bartered Bride* by Smetana.

conservative conductor of minor significance, Harty was perhaps one of the most important musical directors in Britain during the interwar period, and was responsible for introducing many new works to Manchester and Britain while maintaining the highest orchestral standards in the country during the most severe economic downturn of the twentieth century.

Despite Harty's national success with the Hallé during the 1920s he was criticized by some, like Hans Richter before him, for conservative programmes, a criticism which has unfairly remained attached to Harty's legacy ever since. The music critics at the *Manchester Guardian* were particularly pointed about Harty's apparent neglect of modern composers.⁵ Letters to the editor of *The Musical Times* were even more damning. Perhaps the most critical, sent in 1929 by a Mr. William L. Norman, states:

In the first place, it is common knowledge that it is not just a small minority but a large and increasing body of opinion which is dissatisfied with the Hallé programmes. What particularly annoys us is that we should be fobbed off with contemporary trivialities by Hely-Hutchinson, Bryson, Atterburg, Goldmark etc., when there is so much serious work by Sibelius, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bax, Holbrooke and others...are the Sibelius Symphonies considered too cacophonous for the delicate Hallé ears? And what about the neglected Mahler?⁶

Considering that Mahler was not fully appreciated as a composer by the wider public until after the Second World War it is reasonable to suggest that Harty was actually ahead of his time by introducing any of Mahler's music to Manchester, in particular his Fourth Symphony (26 years after its premiere in Munich) and the fourth movement from his Fifth Symphony. The general neglect of Mahler can be demonstrated by the fact that it was left to Harty to give the English premiere of his Ninth Symphony in 1929, seventeen years after its world premiere in Vienna in 1912. Therefore, to criticize Harty for his apparent neglect of Mahler is unwarranted considering that none of the major orchestras or conductors in Britain were performing his compositions during the

⁵ Following his return from an American tour, Harty performed Gershwin's *An American in Paris* on 15 October 1931, which Neville Cardus, the music critic at *The Manchester Guardian*, called 'not even amusing' and suggested 'a 150% tariff against this sort of American dry-goods': see Michael Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960), 236. In addition, a guarantor exclaimed 'We don't want your American Jazz.... A lot of stuff he [Harty] puts on is rot': see Michael Kennedy, *The Hallé, 1858–1983: A History of the Orchestra* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 17. Ironically, it has been recorded that Harty also found jazz 'sensual, noisy and incredibly stupid': see Stephen Banfield (ed.), *Music in Britain: The Twentieth Century*, The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, 6 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 30.

⁶ *The Musical Times*, 70 (July 1929), 639.

1920s.⁷ In another criticism of Harty's conservative programmes, Michael Kennedy, the leading historian on the Hallé Orchestra, states:

Perhaps the public would have swallowed modern music fed to them skilfully and mixed with plenty of jam, but Harty was not Henry Wood—and even Wood found the provinces at this time less receptive than the audiences for his Promenade Concerts.⁸

I believe that such criticisms are harsh and indeed inaccurate. In *The Hallé Tradition*, Michael Kennedy's criticism of Harty's conservatism is challenged even by his own evaluation in Appendix 4, where he lists what he considered to be the most important works to receive their first performances in England at the Hallé Concerts:⁹

Table 1

The most important English premieres of the Hallé from 1858 to 1960 according to Michael Kennedy (* indicates first performance)

<i>Composer</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Conductor</i>	<i>Date</i>
Mozart	Serenade in B flat for wind instruments	Hallé	17 December 1868
Beethoven	Overture <i>Leonora</i> No. 1	Hallé	2 December 1869
Berlioz	<i>Symphonie Fantastique</i>	Hallé	9 January 1879
Berlioz	<i>The Damnation of Faust</i>	Hallé	5 February 1880
Dohnányi	Symphony No. 2	Richter	30 January 1902
Bartók	Symphonic Poem <i>Kossuth</i>	Richter	18 February 1904
Sibelius	Symphony No. 2 in D major	Richter	2 March 1905

⁷ In an analysis of his own programmes from 1895 to 1937, Sir Henry Wood gives only two English premieres of Mahler's work: Symphony No. 1 in D in 1903, which he believes may have been the first performance of any work by Mahler in Britain, and his Adagietto for Harp and Strings in 1909. He does not mention the English premieres of Mahler's Symphony No. 4 in G (1905), Symphony No. 7 in E minor (1913) or *Das Lied von der Erde* (1914) given at the Promenade Concerts. See Henry Wood, *My Life of Music* (London: Gollancz, 1938), 173 and 353–72. From available records it appears that the London Symphony Orchestra did not perform any of Mahler's orchestral works until Bruno Walter conducted *Das Lied von der Erde* on 29 January 1930: see *The Times*, 27 January 1930, 10.

⁸ Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 216.

⁹ Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 392–3.

<i>Composer</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Conductor</i>	<i>Date</i>
Elgar*	Symphony No. 1 in A flat	Richter	3 December 1908
Bax*	<i>November Woods</i>	Harty	18 November 1920
Stravinsky	<i>Scherzo Fantastique</i>	Harty	21 January 1921
R. Strauss	<i>Suite, Le Bourgeois Gentlehomme</i>	Harty	3 November 1921
Harty*	An Irish Symphony	Harty	13 November 1924
Glazunov	<i>The Kremlin</i>	Harty	12 November 1925
Ibert	<i>Escales</i>	Harty	17 February 1927
Bantock*	<i>Song of Songs</i>	Bantock	10 March 1927
Vivaldi	Concerto for three violins and strings	Harty	27 October 1927
Bryson*	Symphony No. 2 in C	Harty	12 January 1928
Respighi	<i>Concerto Gregoriano</i>	Harty	12 January 1928
Lambert	<i>The Rio Grande</i>	Lambert	12 December 1929
Mahler	Symphony No. 9 in D major	Harty	27 February 1930
Pizzetti	<i>Concerto dell'Estate</i>	Harty	23 October 1930
Sibelius	<i>Night Ride and Sunrise</i>	Harty	20 November 1930
Bax*	Overture to Picaresque Comedy	Harty	19 November 1931
Shostakovich	Symphony No. 1	Harty	21 January 1932
R. Strauss	<i>Schlagobers</i>	Harty	15 December 1932
Rachmaninov	Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini	Nicolai Malko	7 March 1935
Martinú	Rhapsodic Symphony	Barbirolli	16 October 1945
R. Strauss	<i>Suite, Der Rosenkavalier</i>	Barbirolli	14 April 1946
R. Strauss	Duet Concertino for bassoon and clarinet	Barbirolli	4 May 1949
Vaughan Williams*	<i>Sinfonia Antartica</i>	Barbirolli	14 January 1953
William Alwyn*	Symphony No. 2	Barbirolli	14 October 1953
Vaughan Williams*	Symphony No. 8 in D minor	Barbirolli	2 May 1956

Of the thirty-two performances chosen by Kennedy, dating from 1868 to 1956, fifteen were conducted by Harty, and only six by his successor John Barbirolli, and four by each of his predecessors Hans Richter and Charles Hallé, the founder of the orchestra. Kennedy includes two more performances which occurred during Harty's time with the Hallé: Bantock conducted the premiere of his *Song of Songs* on 10 March 1927 and Constant Lambert conducted the first concert performance of his *Rio Grande* on 12 December 1929, with Harty at the piano. Therefore, according to Kennedy, during the first 100 years of the orchestra's history the Hallé under Harty produced the vast majority of its most significant English premieres and first performances, a challenge perhaps to those who criticized Harty for his conservatism.

In his book on the Hallé, Robert Beale goes even further by suggesting that Harty's performances of living composers were the most important contribution of all Hallé conductors in the twentieth century.¹⁰ An impressive 31% of the programmes from 1925 to 1935, a period in which Harty conducted for eight years, were dedicated to works by living composers, more than in any other decade analysed by Beale up to 1995 (see Figure 1). As the decades progressed the percentage of living composers dramatically decreased, and in this respect Harty can be viewed as one of the most significant conductors of modern repertoire in the history of the Hallé. It is interesting that Kennedy described the periods of the orchestra under Richter and Barbirolli as the 'Golden Age' of the Hallé.¹¹ Beale's analysis gives further credibility for Harty's inclusion in this company.

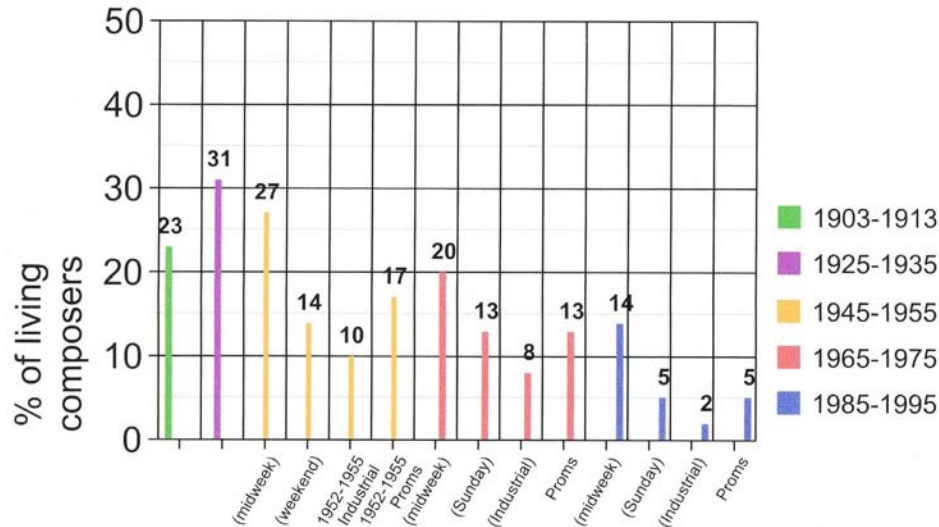
Attendance at Hallé concerts in this period (1925–35) averaged around 62%, the lowest audience level for all five decades which Beale studied. It should be noted, however, that this was not a reflection of public adversity to any modernism in Harty's programmes. The 21 mid-week concerts during the 1929–30 season contained fifteen Manchester premieres, one world premiere and one English premiere, and 42% of the season was also given over to living composers, the highest percentage in any of the 50 seasons during the twentieth century which Beale examined. Despite such modernism the season ended with the highest total receipts to date for Manchester concerts (£9988 7s 0d) and a surplus of £91 for the entire season, proving that the economic downturn, and not artistic considerations, was the main reason for low attendance levels after the 1929–30 season.

¹⁰ Robert Beale, *The Hallé: A British Orchestra in the 20th Century—Music, Money, Maestros and Management* (Manchester: Forsyth, 2000), 179.

¹¹ Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 143, 279.

Figure 1

The percentage of living composers in the Hallé programmes:
10-year periods studied by Robert Beale¹²



Although Harty had the most difficult economic circumstances to contend with, which intensified with the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the resulting Great Depression, his financial success with the Hallé can be measured by the fact that from 1920 to 1930 there were only three seasons which ended with deficits, an astonishing achievement for a British Orchestra during the 1920s.¹³

¹² Beale, 172.

¹³ The financial success of the Hallé was even more notable when compared to other British orchestras. For its own regular series, the London Symphony Orchestra, despite the financial backing it received from major patrons such as Lord Howard de Walden, Cyril Jenkins and Baron Frédéric d'Erlanger, and its relatively low expenses as a self-regulated orchestra, could present only ten concerts for the 1920–21 season and eight concerts for the 1921–22 season, returning to their pre-war level of twelve concerts for the 1924–25 season. In contrast, the Hallé was able to present twenty-one concerts annually for its own regular series throughout the 1920s. Furthermore, since 1915 the Queen's Hall Orchestra under Henry Wood had the benefit of the financial backing of Chappell Ltd., which sustained annual losses of up to £5000. The Hallé never even approached half this level in deficits during Harty's time; nor could they afford to. The Queen's Hall Orchestra had got itself into such financial difficulty that in 1927 it was forced to enter into an agreement with the BBC which took over its concerts. Consequently, the orchestra's concerts became publicly subsidized. The new City of Birmingham Orchestra, founded in 1920, also benefited from financial security. The City Council awarded the orchestra an annual grant of £1250, which amounted to 17.3% of the orchestra's total

The receipts from the Manchester concerts reveal that Harty's popularity with the Manchester audiences never diminished during his time with the Hallé.¹⁴ Only in his last two seasons did receipts for Manchester concerts fall dramatically, almost to the same level as when he first joined the Hallé, but, as has been stated, this was due more to the economic climate than to Harty's programming. Harty coped with these financial difficulties by restricting the *variety* of composers he presented but he always maintained a high level of living composers in his programmes, a courageous decision despite the annual deficits from 1930 to 1933 and a consequent reduction in income from the Manchester concerts by 14%.¹⁵

It is possible that contemporary criticisms directed at Harty's programmes, such as those of Neville Cardus and Samuel Langford at *The Manchester Guardian* and some regular concert-goers like William Norman, were in fact misdirected attacks on Harty's aesthetic beliefs. In a speech to the Manchester Organists Association, recorded by *The Musical Times* in 1924, Harty neatly summed up his aesthetic views in four laws which he believed governed all music:

1. Music must be beautiful in shape;
2. Melody must be the first reason for its existence;
3. What appeals only to the brain cannot live;
4. It is the emotional quality of music which gives it value, with the noblest emotions producing the best music.¹⁶

Such ideas were greatly influenced by Harty's provincial upbringing in Hillsborough, Co. Down, and his self-taught musical education. In direct contrast, nearly all of the most accomplished conductors and composers in England during his career, with the notable exceptions of Beecham and Elgar, had benefited from some form of pro-

income. Thus, the Hallé Orchestra did not experience the same level of financial backing that the other three main British orchestras enjoyed and instead relied on an outdated guarantee system.

¹⁴ Receipts from Manchester concerts during Harty's tenure rose from £7008 in his first season to an average of £8880 from 1921 to 1927, and finally peaking from 1927 to 1931 with an average of £9740. These details of receipts come from the Annual Reports 1920–1933 (HS/1/8/20 to HS/1/8/34) preserved in the Hallé Archive (Bridgewater Hall, Manchester).

¹⁵ The Hallé sustained deficits of £310 for the 1930–31 season, £1583 for 1931–32 and £737 for 1932–33. See Beale, 23.

¹⁶ See *The Musical Times*, 65 (April 1924), 338–9, and Sir Hamilton Harty, 'Modern Composers and Modern Composition', in *The Harty Lectures*, preserved in the Special Collections of the library of Queen's University, Belfast: shelfmark MS14/29 XIV, 2 and 9–10.

fessional music training in their youth, either within the South Kensington circle or on the Continent.

The outcome of Harty's amateur education in music was a mixed bag of musical tastes, which were steeped neither in the Brahmsian tradition of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music nor in the Wagnerian tradition of Frederick Corder and Alexander Mackenzie at the Royal Academy of Music. While the frequency of Wagner in Harty's programmes would suggest that he was a Wagnerian (and his enthusiasm for Strauss, Glazunov and Respighi gives further evidence for this), Harty was also an exceptional interpreter of Brahms and performed all of his major orchestral works to great acclaim.¹⁷ Harty's distaste for staged opera meant that he was at odds with one of Stanford's fundamental aesthetic beliefs, but he did, to some extent, embrace the folk orientation of the English Musical Renaissance begun under Stanford and his pupils at the RCM, notably Vaughan Williams, which reached its zenith during Harty's tenure at the Hallé. His advocacy can be seen in many of his compositions based on Irish folk songs including his *Irish Symphony* and his tone poems for orchestra *With the Wild Geese* and *The Children of Lir*.

In contrast to those in the English pastoral movement, such as Alexander Mackenzie and in particular Cecil Sharp, who saw foreign music in post-war Britain as a threat, Harty was quite progressive in promoting living Continental composers—for example, Ravel, Glazunov, Sibelius, Respighi and Pizzetti—and was responsible for a total of six English premieres, ten Manchester premieres and twelve Hallé premieres from these five composers alone (see Table 2).¹⁸ Unsurprisingly, Richard Strauss was the most frequently performed living composer under Harty's tenure with two English premieres, one Manchester premiere, one Hallé premiere and dozens of performances of his major orchestral works, which Harty revived after their neglect during World War I.¹⁹ Wagner was the most frequently performed composer in almost

¹⁷ Harty conducted Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* nine times. He also performed the First and Fourth symphonies eleven times each (the most for any Hallé conductor by that time); the Academic Festival Overture and the Violin Concerto in D nine times each; six performances of the Second Symphony; five performances of the Third Symphony; four performances of the Double Concerto for Violin and Cello; four performances of the Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor; and three performances of the Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat. Brahms's Requiem was performed twice, and the Tragic Overture once.

¹⁸ Harty also conducted the English premieres of Francesco Malipiero's *Impressioni dal vero* (on 13 November 1924) and his *Armenia, canti armeni tradotti sinfonicamente* (22 October 1925). These are the only works by this composer performed during his tenure with the Hallé.

¹⁹ Harty gave the English premieres of Strauss's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and the Viennese Suite *Schlagobers* on 3 November 1921 and 15 December 1932, respectively. He also gave the Manchester

every season, with Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Berlioz and Mozart as distant seconds. Harty had a predilection for Berlioz and Mozart.

William Norman, quoted earlier, was correct in stating that Harty had neglected Sibelius. In fact, prior to 1929 he had conducted only four works by the composer. After 1929, however, Harty rectified this neglect by presenting many of his compositions; the Hallé premieres of the tone-poem *Tapiola*, the Violin Concerto in D minor and Symphonies Nos. 1, 4 and 5; the Manchester premieres of Symphonies Nos. 3 and 7; and the English premiere of the tone-poem *Night Ride and Sunrise*. However, Norman's criticism of Harty for the neglect of Ravel is unwarranted since he conducted the Manchester premiere of *La Valse*, the first performances by the Hallé of *Tzigane* and *Daphnis et Chloé* and numerous other performances of his works both before and after 1929.

Table 2

Living Continental composers presented by Harty during his tenure

red = English premieres blue = Manchester premieres green = Hallé premieres

Composer	Work	Date	Significance	Repeats
Ravel	Choreographic poem, <i>La valse</i>	15 December 1921	Manchester premiere	13 February 1930
	<i>Bolero</i>	30 October 1930	Manchester premiere	6 November 1930 (requested)
	Arr. of Mussorgsky, <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i>	10 December 1931	Manchester premiere	1 December 1932

premiere of the *Alpine Symphony* on 15 November 1923 and the Hallé premiere of *Enoch Arden* on 19 January 1922. Other performances include the *Burleske* for Piano and Orchestra on 24 October 1929 (its first performance by the Hallé since 1905); *Ein Heldenleben* on 22 February 1923 (its first performance since 1907 and performed seven more times during Harty's tenure); *Don Quixote* on 9 February 1922 (its first performance since 1911 and performed four more times during Harty's tenure); *Also sprach Zarathustra* on 30 October 1924 (its first performance by the Hallé since 1913); *Don Juan* on 14 October 1920 (its first performance since 1913 and performed eleven more times during Harty's tenure); *Till Eulenspiegel* on 18 November 1920 (its first performance since 1914 and performed eight more times during Harty's tenure); *Tod und Verklärung* on 6 January 1921 (which Harty gave seven more times with the Hallé); and *Festliches Præludium* on 18 October 1928 (its first performance since 1914).

Composer	Work	Date	Significance	Repeats
Glazunov	Rhapsody, <i>Tzigane</i>	26 February 1925	Hallé premiere	
	Choreographic poem, <i>Daphnis et Chloé</i>	29 October 1925	Hallé premiere	
	Orchestral suite, <i>Le tombeau de Couperin</i>	23 February 1933	Hallé premiere	
	Ballet : <i>Valses nobles et sentimentales</i>	23 February 1922		1 February 1923
	Orchestral suite, <i>Ma mère l'oye</i>	9 March 1922		10 December 1925
	Solo cello: <i>Habanera</i>	20 November 1930		
	Symphonic poem, <i>The Kremlin</i>	12 November 1925	English premiere	
	Serenade for small orchestra	28 October 1926	Manchester premiere	
	Symphonic poem, <i>Stenka Razine</i>	28 October 1920	Hallé premiere	
	Symphony No. 4 in E Flat	8 December 1927	Hallé premiere	21 January 1929 (Municipal) ²⁰
Sibelius	Symphony No. 6 in C Minor	13 February 1930	last time in 1900	
	Violin Concerto in A minor	21 October 1920	last time in 1906	19 January 1922
	<i>Night Ride and Dawn</i>	20 November 1930	English premiere	
	<i>The Swan of Tuonela</i>	25 November 1926	Manchester premiere	19 December 1932 (Municipal)
	Symphony No. 3 in C	16 October 1930	Manchester premiere	
	Symphony No. 7 in C	10 December 1931	Manchester premiere	
	Symphony No. 5 in E flat	24 October 1929	Hallé premiere	22 January 1931, 10 March 1932, 16 February 1933
Violin Concerto in D minor	31 October 1929	Hallé premiere	5 November 1931	

²⁰ Manchester City Council paid the Hallé Orchestra £1000 to present five Municipal Concerts during the 1924–25 season, rising to £1890 for nine Municipal Concerts for every season from 1925 to 1930. Despite such funding, the Council continued to charge the orchestra rent for use of the Free Trade Hall (£37 10s per concert). The Municipal Concerts were reduced to four in 1933 and after 1939–40 they were discontinued. See Beale, 21, and Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 218.

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Composer	Work	Date	Significance	Repeats
	Symphony No. 4 in A minor	5 December 1929	Hallé premiere	5 November 1931
	Symphony No. 1 in E minor	3 November 1932	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Tapiola</i>	24 November 1932	Hallé premiere	
	Symphony No. 2 in D	25 February 1926	last time in 1905	8 March 1928, 19 November 1931
	Symphonic poem, <i>En Saga</i>	18 February 1926		10 January 1929
	Overture, <i>Finlandia</i>	12 November 1928		19 December 1932 (Municipal)
Respighi	<i>Concerto Gregoriano, for violin</i>	12 January 1928	English premiere	
	<i>Overture, Belfagor</i>	19 January 1928	English premiere	4 December 1930
	Ancient Airs and Dances (Set I)	10 January 1924	Manchester premiere	
	Ancient Airs and Dances (Set II)	16 October 1924	Manchester premiere	
	<i>The Pines of Rome</i>	18 February 1926	Manchester premiere	21 February 1929
	Two Botticelli <i>Pictures: The Magi, Spring</i>	30 January 1930	Hallé premiere	
	Arr. of Bach, Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor	23 October 1930	Hallé premiere	10 November 1932
	<i>The Fountains of Rome</i>	23 March 1922		
Pizzetti	Orchestral suite, excerpts and dances from the ballet <i>La pisanelle</i>	24 February 1921	English premiere	
	<i>Concerto dell'estate, for orchestra</i>	23 October 1930	English premiere	

When Norman's criticism of Harty's programmes was published in the July edition of *The Musical Times* in 1929, it came just after Harty had issued an important statement in *The Daily Express* on 25 May in which he defended his choice of programmes in terms of his own personal tastes and the difficult economic circumstances of late-1920s Britain. Most importantly, the statement signalled a new approach to Harty's programming—taking more chances with the Hallé finances—by introducing even more modern works:

I am going to work on a new policy in the Manchester concerts next year. I know I have been accused in the past of neglecting modern works which Manchester people have a right to hear, and preserving a too conservative outlook. Well, I am going to alter all that. Next season we shall experiment to our heart's content. Previously I have been afraid, partly because I did not think the modern works as good as that music which for convenience we call classical, and partly because I did not feel that the Hallé Society could afford to risk experiments. However, we are going to take our chance.²¹

The editor of *The Musical Times*, Harvey Grace, added to the bottom of Harty's statement, 'We should like to see the Hallé Society take a few chances with Elgar', which is perhaps a surprising request considering that Elgar's Cello Concerto, his last great work, was ten years old at the time.²² During his thirteen seasons with the Hallé, Harty gave only two Manchester premieres of Elgar's music: the arrangement of Bach's Fugue in C minor (two weeks after its premiere in London) and *The Music Makers*. He also presented the Hallé premiere of Elgar's *Dream Children* in 1922, ten years after its premiere in Birmingham. But despite the fact that Elgar may have seemed long past his prime, Harty did revive several of his works which had not been performed by the orchestra since before the War, including *Falstaff*, *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and the Second Symphony, all of which Harty had performed prior to Harvey Grace's appeal in 1929 (see Table 3). *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and the Second Symphony had not been performed by the Hallé in over fifteen years. In fact, Harty performed Elgar's Second Symphony on at least four occasions in Manchester with the Hallé.²³

Harty continued to promote Elgar's music after 1929, presenting the Hallé premieres of the *Froissart* overture (37 years after its premiere in Worcester), *Pomp & Circumstance March No. 5* (seven weeks after its premiere in London), and the *Nursery Suite* (a year after its premiere in London). Harty also gave numerous performances of Elgar's most famous works, most notably his *Enigma Variations*, performed eight times by the Hallé during Harty's thirteen seasons, and *The Introduction and Allegro for*

²¹ *The Musical Times*, 70 (July 1929), 639, quoting word for word Harty's statement in *The Daily Express* of 25 May.

²² Harvey Grace (1874–1944) was the editor of *The Musical Times* from 1918 to 1944 and used the pseudonym 'Feste' for his own contributions to the journal.

²³ Elgar's symphonic study *Falstaff*, last performed by the Hallé on 19 February 1914, was given on 25 October 1928. *The Apostles* was given by Harty on 30 March 1922, its first performance by the Hallé in 18 years, which he repeated on 11 March 1926. Harty also conducted Elgar's Second Symphony on 7 January 1926 and *The Kingdom* on 1 March 1928, both of which were only the second performances since these works' Hallé premieres (on 23 November 1911 and 14 February 1907, respectively). Elgar's Second Symphony was repeated on 21 January 1926, 23 January 1930 and 15 January 1931.

Strings (Op. 47) and *The Dream of Gerontius* each received five performances.²⁴ Furthermore, Harty's letters reveal that, soon after becoming conductor of the Hallé, he hoped for a new composition from Elgar.²⁵ Although Elgar's response was somewhat apathetic, on account of the death of his wife in March 1920, Harty continued to plead with him for a new composition years afterwards, demonstrating his continued commitment and admiration for the composer.²⁶

Table 3

Living British composers presented by Harty during his tenure
 red = world premieres blue = Manchester premieres green = Hallé premieres

Composer	Work	Date	Significance	Repeats
Bantock	<i>The Song of Songs</i>	10 March 1927	World premiere	
	<i>The Sea Reivers</i>	20 January 1921	Manchester premiere	
Bax	<i>November Woods</i>	18 November 1920	World premiere	
	<i>Overture to a Picaresque Comedy</i>	19 November 1931	World premiere	10 December 1931 (requested)
	<i>The Garden of Fand</i>	28 February 1924	Manchester premiere	28 November 1929, 6 November 1930
	<i>The Happy Forest</i>	21 January 1926	Manchester premiere	
	Symphony No. 1 in E flat	4 December 1930	Manchester premiere	

²⁴ Harty performed Elgar's *Enigma Variations* on 28 October 1920, 14 February 1924, 11 November 1924 (London, Queen's Hall), 20 January 1927 (the Hallé's Elgar evening conducted by Elgar), 8 December 1927, 11 December 1930, 25 January 1931 (the fifth Municipal Concert of the season) and 9 March 1933. The *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*, Op. 47, was performed on 16 February 1922, 16 February 1928, 5 December 1929, 5 March 1931 and 17 November 1932. *The Dream of Gerontius* was performed on 30 October 1922, 5 February 1925, 15 March 1926 (the last Municipal Concert of the season), 13 February 1928 (the seventh Municipal Concert of the season) and 26 January 1933.

²⁵ Letter from Elgar dated 18 April 1921: 'Dear Mr Hamilton Harty, No: there is no thought of a new work. It is very good of you to suggest Manchester—but I should think the good people there would be more surprised than pleased if you produced a new work of mine.' Greer, *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music*, 76.

²⁶ Letter from Elgar dated 23 March 1926: 'I fear there is [not] much chance of anything new for some time to come: when the things (or thing) I am engaged upon are presentable I will of course let you know at the earliest.' *Harty Letters*, in the Special Collections, library of Queen's University, Belfast, shelfmark MS14.

Composer	Work	Date	Significance	Repeats
	<i>In a Vodka Shop</i>	6 January 1921	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Motet, Mater ora Filium</i>	7 February 1929	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Symphony No. 3 in C</i>	4 February 1932	Hallé premiere	
Bliss	<i>Mêlée Fantasque</i>	26 February 1925	Manchester premiere	
	<i>Arr. of Purcell, Suite d'Airs et de Dances</i>	15 November 1928	Hallé premiere	
Delius	<i>A Mass of Life</i>	18 February 1932	Hallé premiere	2 March 1933
	<i>Life's Dance</i>	25 February 1932	Hallé premiere	
Elgar	<i>Arr. of Bach, Fugue in C minor, BWV 537</i>	10 November 1921	Manchester premiere	17 January 1929
	<i>The Music Makers</i>	7 February 1929	Manchester premiere	
	<i>Dream Children</i>	26 October 1922	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Overture, Froissart, conducted by the composer</i>	20 January 1927	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Pomp and Circumstance March No. 5 in C</i>	6 November 1930	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Nursery Suite</i>	21 January 1932	Hallé premiere	
Holst	<i>The Planets</i>	23 February 1922	Manchester premiere	
	<i>A Fugal Concerto, for flute, oboe and strings</i>	7 January 1926	Manchester premiere	
	<i>St Paul's Suite</i>	16 January 1930	Hallé premiere	
Ireland	<i>Prelude, The Forgotten Rite, conducted by Goossens</i>	16 December 1920	Hallé premiere	
	<i>Rhapsody, Mai-Dun</i>	13 February 1930	Hallé premiere	
Lambert	<i>The Rio Grande, conducted by the composer, with Harty at the piano</i>	12 December 1929	First concert performance	25 January 1932, 25 February 1932
	<i>Music for Orchestra</i>	29 October 1931	Manchester premiere	
E. J. Moeran	<i>Rhapsody No. 1 in F</i>	24 January 1924	Manchester premiere	
	<i>In the Mountain Country</i>	27 November 1924	Manchester premiere	25 November 1926, 23 March 1928
Vaughan Williams	<i>Symphony No. 1, A Sea Symphony</i>	1 November 1923	Manchester premiere	
	<i>The Lark Ascending</i>	3 February 1927	Manchester premiere	
	<i>Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1</i>	27 October 1927	Manchester premiere	

Hamilton Harty's Legacy with the Hallé Orchestra (1920–1930): a Reassessment

Composer	Work	Date	Significance	Repeats
	Overture, <i>The Wasps</i>	8 March 1923	Hallé premiere	
	Symphony No. 3, <i>A Pastoral Symphony</i>	31 October 1929	Hallé premiere	
	Fantasy on a theme of Thomas Tallis	21 January 1932	Hallé premiere	
Walton	Suite for orchestra, <i>Façade</i> , conducted by the composer	24 October 1929	World premiere	
	Viola Concerto	14 January 1932	Manchester premiere	
	<i>Belshazzar's Feast</i>	17 November 1932	Manchester premiere	

Apart from Elgar, the most popular living British composer that Harty presented during his time with the Hallé was Arnold Bax, a fact that again contradicts the criticism of Norman. Harty performed many works by Bax throughout his thirteen seasons, including eight new works—five before 1929 and three after. These premieres include the first performance of his tone-poem *November Woods* (1920) and the Manchester premieres of his tone-poems *The Garden of Fand* (1924) and *The Happy Forest* (1926). Any suggestion that Harty was not a supporter of Bax can be countered by the fact that Bax himself dedicated his *Overture to a Picaresque Comedy* to Harty, which he premiered in 1931. It is true that during the 1920s Bax turned from the symphonic poem to more traditional formal structures and it was during this time that he composed his seven symphonies, of which Harty presented only the first and the third. But despite *this* neglect, Harty's promotion of Bax demonstrates that he was willing to perform works from those English composers who saw the exclusive use of pastoral themes in composition as too insular and stifling. His promotion of William Walton both during and after his time with the Hallé further illustrates this contrast between Harty's aesthetics and those of the extremist branch of the pastoral movement like Cecil Sharp.²⁷ Furthermore, the criticisms of Harty for his apparent neglect of

²⁷ Harty gave the incomplete premiere of Walton's Symphony No. 1 with the London Symphony Orchestra on 3 December 1934 and the first complete performance on 6 November 1935. The first event presented only the first three movements. 'Negotiations had been going on for some months with the Oxford University Press, publishers of the Symphony, where Hubert Foss was then in charge of the Music Department, for the first performance. Excitement over the new work had risen so high that when the composer found himself unable to complete the last movement in time it was decided to take the unusual step of performing the other three movements only.... It was eventually performed in its entirety at a B.B.C. concert a year later.' Hubert James Foss and Noël Goodwin, *London Symphony. Portrait of an Orchestra. 1904–1954* (London: Naldrett Press, 1954), 145–6.

Vaughan Williams can also be challenged.²⁸ Harty introduced Hallé audiences to most of the major orchestral works that Vaughan Williams had composed by the early 1930s (apart from the *London Symphony*), which included three Manchester premieres. And it should be noted that most of these works were given at concerts with some of the lowest attendances, suggesting that there was little interest in Vaughan Williams's music in Manchester.²⁹

It is clear that the long-accepted view of Harty as an unadventurous conductor who brought little or no 'modern music' to Manchester audiences is inaccurate. On the contrary, he introduced many new works to Manchester by Continental and British composers. More importantly, however, he maintained a very high percentage of living composers in his programmes despite serious economic difficulties and a lack of substantial financial aid from local government, not to mention a lack of support from the Manchester public for certain modern composers like Vaughan Williams.

Harty's ability to raise and maintain the standard of the Hallé Orchestra was evident after he had brought the Hallé to London on numerous occasions throughout his tenure, and a number of favourable comparisons were made with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Wilhelm Furtwängler. The Hallé historian C. B. Rees gives an account of such a visit:

I well remember the Queen's Hall on 13 January 1928, when Sir Hamilton Harty—he had been knighted in 1925 for his services to music—brought the Hallé Orchestra to the Metropolis. There was an atmosphere of considerable excitement and expectation. Visits of foreign orchestras had always precipitated discussions about the comparatively poor standard of orchestral playing in London. Those of us who lived in London were always hearing about the prowess of the Manchester Orchestra; and there was, I think, a certain amount of natural jealousy on the part of Londoners (perhaps one should say southerners) concerning the "competition" from the north. I happened to be in a somewhat enviable position in this matter. Domiciled in London, I had opportunities to hear the London orchestras week after week; professionally I was a member of the London editorial staff of the *Manchester Daily Dispatch*, so that I could not help feeling a more than casual interest in the affairs of the Hallé. This particular concert evoked tremendous

²⁸ See Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 216.

²⁹ The Hallé premiere of *The Wasps* overture on 8 March 1923 was the third lowest-attended concert that season with only £314 9s 3d raised in receipts. The Manchester premiere of *The Sea Symphony* on 1 November 1923 was just as unsuccessful with only £306 0s 7d in receipts, the lowest that season, as was the Manchester premiere of *The Norfolk Rhapsody* (27 October 1927) with only £306 11s 6d raised, again the third lowest sum that season. New works by Vaughan Williams appeared to be financially disastrous for the Hallé. The statistics for receipts and attendance are drawn from the Hallé Archive: the Summary Expenses records 1921–1933 (HS/5/3/1 to HS/5/3/12) and the Annual Reports 1920–1933 (HS/1/8/20 to HS/1/8/34).

enthusiasm from the audience and a series of press notices which, for exuberant praise, I have seldom seen equalled. The unanimous view was that London had not an orchestra to equal this, moreover, comparison was made with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (fairly regular visitors)—and in favour of the Hallé; there was no need any more, it was said, to go abroad to hear superb orchestral performances.³⁰

This indicates perhaps that those in Manchester who continuously criticized Harty for his conservatism and dogmatism did occasionally forget how fortunate they were to have a first-class permanent conductor.³¹ It has even been suggested that the formation of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1930) and the London Philharmonic Orchestra (1932) were the south's reply to this northern domination.³² If this is the case, then the lack of publications and literature on Harty (in comparison to other contemporary British conductors such as Beecham, Wood, Sargent and Boult) is inexplicable. All of these conductors had benefited from close relationships with most British composers, many of whom lived and worked in London and knew each other personally through the RCM and the RAM and had considerable support in the press. Maybe if Harty had been brought up and educated in London, the 'old-boy' network might also have been of great assistance and, consequently, his treatment by music historians would have been very different.³³ Harty's neglect may even be the result of the unfortunate circum-

³⁰ C. B. Rees, *100 Years of the Hallé* (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1957), 62. The programme included Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Wagner's 'Forest Murmurs' (*Siegfried*, Act II), 'Wotan's Farewell' (*Die Walküre*, Act III) and 'Sachs's Monologue' (*Die Meistersinger*, Act III) sung by Harold Williams. 'In offering such a programme Sir Hamilton Harty and his players were aware that a high standard would be expected of them. They gave it, and they sustained it... This concert of well-worn music was fresh, poetical and exhilarating. Masterpieces ought to sound like that but they often do not for reasons which are understandable but let us now be grateful to interpreters who do not appeal to our curiosity but make us deeply content with every note that we know so well. For that is indeed an all too rare experience.' *The Times*, 14 January 1928, 10.

³¹ Rees, 62.

³² Kennedy, *The Hallé, 1858–1983*, 20.

³³ As mentioned earlier, Beecham and Elgar also did not benefit from social connections but the difference was that Beecham was born into an extremely wealthy family and was, for a time, able to fund his own artistic experiments. Although Elgar had the support of his wife and important people like August Jaeger at Novello, Joseph Bennett at *The Daily Telegraph*, Arthur Johnstone at *The Manchester Guardian* and the world-renowned conductor Hans Richter to help him, he was still not recognized by the British establishment until he was 42 with the premiere of his *Enigma Variations* in 1899. When Arthur Sullivan premiered *Caractacus* at the Leeds Festival in 1898, Elgar thanked him for his support stating 'it contrasts very much with what some people do to a person unconnected with the schools—friendless and alone'. See Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renais-*

stances of his departure from the Hallé or the fact that his career was overshadowed by his successor, John Barbirolli, whose personal friendships with C. B. Rees and Michael Kennedy ensured him greater attention in the histories of the Hallé which were published during his term of office (1943–70). Whatever the reason for the neglect of Harty's conducting career, the time seems ripe for a comprehensive reassessment of his legacy.

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sance 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music, second edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 62.