

## The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams

by J. F. Weber

The discography of the Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique* in the last issue of this *Journal* served the purpose of illustrating some suggestions on the compilation of composer discographies. While the research was being pursued, several other subjects were examined, including the symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

On the plus side, this exercise holds interest because of the close connection between the publication of most of these works and their availability on records; furthermore, two conductors (Barbirolli and Boult) had some of these works dedicated to them, gave first performances, and made important recordings. On the minus side, it will be evident that these works have hardly entered the mainstream of the orchestral repertory outside of the composer's native England, as the French Berlioz (and even the Russian Shostakovich) have; the exceptional examples, most notably Akiyama's *Sea Symphony*, are of interest.

As luck would have it, recording dates have been found for all but three entries, and useful substitute dates are known for the rest. The sources credited in the previous article furnished comparable information, with major credit to Michael Gray for many of the recording dates. Few of these works fit the LP format neatly; most of the fillers are other RVW works, but the only ones noted here are the other symphonies: London's reissue of Nos. 3 and 5, CBS's reissue of Nos. 4 and 6, RCA's issue of Nos. 6 and 8, and EMI's reissue of Nos. 8 and 9.

### A Sea Symphony (No. 1), 1903-9, revised 1923

1-1>Adrian Boult, Isobel Baillie, Basil Cameron, London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

London set and LL 972-3; set CMA 7205; ACL 247-8; ECS 583 -- rec. 5, 28-31 Dec'53

1-2>Adrian Boult, Sheila Armstrong, John Carol Case, London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

Angel set S 3739; ASD 2439-40; set SLS 780; set SLS 822; ESD 7104; SXLP 30504; set SLS 1547083 -- rec. 23-26 Sep'68

1-3>André Previn, Heather Harper, John Shirley-Quirk, London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra

RCA Victor LSC 3170; AGL 1-4212; SER 5585; set SER 5649-55; GL 43576; set RL 43371; RVC 8083; RCL 1073 -- rec. 9-16 Feb'70

1-4>Kazuyoshi Akiyama, soloists, Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra  
Nippon Columbia OP 7103 -- released July 1974

**A London Symphony (No. 2), 1912-3, revised 1920, revised 1933**

- 2-1>Dan Godfrey, London Symphony Orchestra  
(ac78: Columbia L 1507-8: mx. ) -- released Dec 1923  
N.B. Only 1st mvt. (cut) and 3rd mvt. included.
- 2-2>Dan Godfrey, London Symphony Orchestra  
(ac78: Columbia L 1717-22: mx. AX 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1027,  
1029, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1024, 1025, 1026) -- reviewed April 1926
- 2-3>Henry Wood, Queen's Hall Orchestra  
Decca ACL 255  
(78: Decca X 114-8; 25618-22: mx. ) -- rec. 21-22 Apr'36
- 2-4>Eugene Goossens, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra  
Camden CAL 186  
(78: RCA Victor 11-8375-8379 in set M 916: mx. CS 062506 to 062514)  
-- rec. 19-20 Feb'41
- 2-5>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
London LL 569 and set; CM 9052; LXT 2693; ACL 290; ECS 616 -- rec.  
8-11 Jan'52
- 2-6>John Barbirolli, Hallé Orchestra  
Vanguard SRV 134 (SD); Pye CCL 30134; GGC 4012/GSGC 14012;  
GSGC 2035; KPLC/KSVP 15026 -- rec. 28-29 Dec'57
- 2-7>John Barbirolli, Hallé Orchestra  
Angel S 36478; ASD 2360 -- rec. 11 & 13 Jul'67
- 2-8>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
Angel S 36838; ASD 2740; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083 -- rec. 26-27  
Feb and 1-2 Mar'71
- 2-9>André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra  
RCA Victor LSC 3282; SB 6860; set SER 5649-55; GL 43577; set  
GL 43371 -- rec. 6-7 Jan'72
- 2-10>Vernon Handley, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
Classics for Pleasure CFP 40286; CFP 4144111; MHS 4659 -- rec.  
Jan'77

**Pastoral Symphony (No. 3), 1921**

- 3-1>Adrian Boult, Margaret Ritchie, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
London LL 721 and set; CM 9063; LXT 2787; ACL 311; ECS 607 [+5] --  
rec. 12-13 Dec'53
- 3-2>Adrian Boult, Margaret Price, New Philharmonia Orchestra  
Angel S 36532; ASD 2393; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083 -- rec. 14-16  
Feb'68

3-3>André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra  
RCA Victor LSC 3281; SB 6861; set SER 5649-55; GL 43580; set  
GL 43371; SX 2034 -- rec. 8 Jan'71

**Symphony No. 4, F Minor, 1931-4**

4-1>Ralph Vaughan Williams, BBC Symphony Orchestra  
World Record Club SH 128  
(78: RCA Victor 12182-5 in set M 440; DB 3367-70: mx. 2EA 5800 to  
2EA 5807) -- rec. Oct'37

4-2>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
London set and LL 974; CM 9064; LXT 2909; ACL 315; ECS 612 -- rec.  
2-4 Dec'53

4-3>Dimitri Mitropoulos, New York Philharmonic  
Columbia ML 5158; Philips ABR 4065 (10"); A 01649 R (10"); C.B.S.  
61432 [+6] -- rec. 9 Jan'56

4-4>Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic  
Columbia MS 7177; 72727 -- rec. 21 Oct'65

4-5>Adrian Boult, New Philharmonia Orchestra  
Angel S 36577; ASD 2375; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083 -- rec. 22-23  
Jan and 12 Feb'68

4-6>André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra  
RCA Victor LSC 3178; SB 6801; set SER 5649-55; GL 43581; set  
GL 43371 -- rec. 10-11 Mar'69

4-7>Paavo Berglund, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
H.M.V. ASD 3904 -- rec. 29-30 Oct'79

**Symphony No. 5, D Major, 1938-43, revised 1951**

5-1>John Barbirolli, Hallé Orchestra  
(78: H.M.V. C 3388-92; C 7599-603: mx. 2ER 753-762) -- rec. 17  
Feb'44

5-2>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
London set and LL 975; CM 9095; LXT 2910; ACL 311; ECS 607 [+3] --  
rec. 2-4 Dec'53

5-3>John Barbirolli, Philharmonia Orchestra  
Angel S 35952; ALP 1957/ASD 508; ASD 2698 -- rec. 8-9 May'62

5-4>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
Angel S 36698; ASD 2538; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083 -- rec. 1-3  
Apr'69

5-5>Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra  
RCA Victor LSC 3244; SB 6856; set SER 5649-55; GL 43578; set  
GL 43371 -- rec. 25, 28 May'71

5-6>Alexander Gibson, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
H.M.V. ASD 143441-1 -- rec. 25-26 Mar'82 (digital)

**Symphony No. 6, E Minor, 1944-7, revised 1950**

6-1>Leopold Stokowski, New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra (original version)

Columbia ML 4214; 61432 [+4]

(78: Columbia 12977-80D in set MM 838) -- rec. 21 Feb'49

6-2>Adrian Boult, London Symphony Orchestra (original version)

H.M.V. Treasury ED 290258-2 (3rd mvt. only)

(78: H.M.V. C 3873-6; C 7755-8: mx. 2EA 13623, 13624, 13625, 13626,  
13627-1, 13628-1, 13629, 13630) -- rec. 23-24 Feb'49

6-3>Adrian Boult, London Symphony Orchestra (revised version)

H.M.V. BLP 1001 (10"); H.M.V. Treasury ED 290258-2

(78: H.M.V. C 3873-6; C 7755-8: with mx. 2EA 13627-5, 13628-4) --  
revised score of 3rd mvt. rec. 15 Feb'50

6-4>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra

London set and LL 976; CM 9096; LXT 2911; ACL 289; ECS 602 -- rec.  
5, 28-31 Dec'53

6-5>Maurice Abravanel, Utah Symphony Orchestra

Vanguard VRS 1160/VSD 71160; Philips SGL 5877; 838336 GY -- rec.  
Dec'65

6-6>Adrian Boult, New Philharmonia Orchestra

Angel S 36469; ASD 2329; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083 -- rec. 27  
Feb'67

6-7>Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra

RCA Victor LSC 3114; SB 6769; set SER 5649-55; GL 43579; set  
GL 43371 [all with 8] -- rec. 1-3 Apr'68

6-8>Paavo Berglund, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

H.M.V. ASD 3127 -- rec. 17-18 Jun'74

6-9>Vernon Handley, London Philharmonic Orchestra

Classics for Pleasure CFP 40334 -- rec. Feb'79

**Sinfonia Antartica (No. 7), 1949-52**

7-1>John Barbirolli, Margaret Ritchie, Halle Chorus and Orchestra

H.M.V. ALP 1102; FALP 339; SJB 100 -- rec. 16 Jun and 29 Sep'53

7-2>Adrian Boult, John Gielgud (speaker), Margaret Ritchie, London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

London set and LL 977; CM 9097; LXT 2912; ACL 291; ECS 577 -- rec. 10-11 Dec'53 N.B. The London set was reviewed in *High Fidelity* in August 1954; no issue number was given.

7-3>André Previn, Ralph Richardson (speaker), Heather Harper, Ambrosian Singers, London Symphony Orchestra

RCA Victor LSC 3066; RB/SB 6736; set SER 5649-55; GL 43582; set GL 43371; RVC 2082; RCL 1072 -- rec. 14-16 Sep'67

7-4>Adrian Boult, Norma Burrowes, London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

Angel S 36763; ASD 2631; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083; EAC 30304 -- rec. 18-19 & 21 Nov'69

### **Symphony No. 8, D Minor, 1953-5, revised 1956**

8-1>John Barbirolli, Hallé Orchestra

Mercury MG 50115/SR 90115; Vanguard SRV 184 SD; Pye NCT 17000 (10"); GGC 4061/GSGC 14061; GSGC 2059; PVC 16004 (10") -- rec. 19 Jun'56

8-2>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra

London LL 1642; CM 9189/CS 6078; STS 15216; LXT 5314/SXL 2207; SDD 199; ECS 644 -- rec. 7-8 Sep'56

8-3>André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra

RCA Victor LSC 3114; SB 6769; set SER 5649-55; GL 43579; set GL 43371 [all with 6] -- rec. 20 Mar'68

8-4>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra

Angel S 36625; ASD 2469; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083; ED 290239-1 [+9] -- rec. 23-26 Sep'68, 23 Dec'68 and 26 Mar'69

### **Symphony No. 9, E Minor, 1956-7, revised 1958**

9-1>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra

Everest LPBR 6006/SDBR 3006; Top Rank 40/008; World Record Club T/ST 144 -- rec. 10-13 and/or 26 Aug'58

9-2>Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra

Angel S 36472; ASD 2581; set SLS 822; set SLS 1547083; ED 290239-1 [+8] -- rec. 18, 20, 22-23 Dec'69

9-3>André Previn, London Symphony Orchestra

RCA Victor LSC 3280; SB 6842; set SER 5649-55; GL 43583; set GL 43371 -- rec. 6-7 Jan'71