

DEFINING THE BRITISH FLUTE SCHOOL:
A STUDY OF BRITISH FLUTE PERFORMANCE PRACTICE
1890–1940

by

JESSICA ANN RAPOSO

B.M., The University of Michigan, 2000
M.M., The Royal Academy of Music, 2005

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Orchestral Instruments)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 2007

© Jessica Ann Raposo, 2007.

ABSTRACT

The British Flute School went through dramatic change in the twentieth century, as its leading players adopted elements of the French style of playing. These changes caused tensions that have led to a subjective oral history: a history which depicts two camps of flautists vying for the superior style, with one winner in the end.

This document aims to provide a more comprehensive and more accurate history of the British Flute School from 1890 to 1940, and, through this investigation, explore what it means to define a style of playing in terms of both nationality and as a unified school. It will include not only an exploration of the interactions between the French and British flute schools, but also an in-depth examination of the influences of flautists of other nationalities, their career activities, performed repertoire, critical commentary in the press (primarily from *The Musical Times* and the *London Times*), British flute pedagogy, the recording industry, and aspects of the overarching musical culture in Great Britain. A survey of the active flautists of the time includes: John Amadio, Jean Firmin Brossa, Albert Cunningham, Edward De Jong, Louis Fleury, John Francis, Albert Fransella, Philippe Gaubert, Geoffrey Gilbert, Frederic Griffith, René Le Roy, Joseph Lingard, Gareth Morris, Marcel Moyse, Robert Murchie, Vincent Needham, Edith Penville, E. Stanley Redfern, Joseph Slater, and Lupton Whitelock. The document concludes with a proposal for a redefinition of the British Flute School that, like the culture from which it comes, values rather than disparages the diversity of its history.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I The Schools of Flute Playing	7
The French School	8
The British School	11
CHAPTER II The English Musical Renaissance and the Life of Concert Performers	17
CHAPTER III British Flautists and their Work	24
The 1890s.....	24
Frederic Griffith	28
Albert Fransella	34
The 1900s	39
Manchester	40
London	42
The 1910s	45
The 1920s	49
The 1930s	53
CHAPTER IV Pedagogy	59
A Comparative Study: the concepts of Paul Taffanel and Philippe Gaubert, Geoffrey Gilbert and Gareth Morris	67
CHAPTER V Reception and Perception: The Flute and the Press	74
The Flute and Expectations	75
The British Reception of Debussy's <i>Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp</i>	80
CHAPTER VI The Flute and the Recording Industry	86
Side by Side: Gaetano Donizetti's "Mad Scene" from <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>	87
Side by Side: Franz Doppler's <i>Fantaisie pastorale hongroise</i> , Op. 26	89
CONCLUSIONS	94
Bibliography	96

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are in order, as follows:

To God, for bringing me on and seeing me through this journey.

To my committee of advisors and other involved faculty from the University of British Columbia's School of Music: Martin Berinbaum, Dr. Dorothy Chang, Dr. Alexander Fisher, Lorna McGhee, Dr. Vera Micznik, and Jesse Read. Your input into this research has been invaluable.

For their conversation, insight and research assistance, I give special thanks to my professors and colleagues at the Royal Academy of Music and other British flautists: Richard Adeney, Sebastian Bell, William Bennett, Dr. Robert Bigio, Dr. Edward Blakeman, Dr. Amanda Glauert, Kate Hill, Peter Lloyd, Gareth Morris, Patricia Morris, David Nicholson, Bridget Palmer, Peter Sheppard-Skaerved, and Janet Snowman.

Last, but not least, a heartfelt thanks to my family for their love, patience and support. I could not have accomplished this without you.

Introduction

Storytelling provides a unique insight into music history. Tales of musicians about their performances, stories they told their students or their friends, may be seen as not holding enough weight to be considered undisputed facts, yet much music history depends on those tales. They become part of the mythology surrounding the lives of composers and performers, and often give us insights into the past that we would not be able to obtain in any other way.

For those who play the flute in Great Britain, an important story told in lessons and master classes is that of the flautist Geoffrey Gilbert (1914–1989). He started out as a child prodigy who at the age of sixteen won positions in the Hallé Orchestra (Manchester) and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and in 1933, at age 19, joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham.¹ But the tale of a young prodigy with a successful career is not the only thing that keeps his story alive. A few years later, Gilbert undertook a complete style change in his playing: he switched from the wooden flute, then common in England, to a French silver flute and readjusted his tone to emulate the sound of the French Flute School. As the story goes, Gilbert taught this French style to the next generation of British flautists, thus changing the course of flute performance practice in Great Britain.

In light of this story as told, especially by those who studied with him, Gilbert is made into a singular hero who, in the face of those who would reject him, rescued British flute playing from the inferior traditions of the past. By playing (and teaching others to play) in the increasingly popular French style, he is said to have brought flute performance to a

¹ Geoffrey Gilbert, "Geoffrey Gilbert in Conversation with Edward Blakeman," *Pan* 2, no. 3 (September 1984): 8.

standard that would pave the way for him and others to gain recognition and respect on an international level, and not simply within the boundaries of their home country.

In some ways, this characterization is correct, but as many stories tend to exaggerate the reality contained in them, this one does too. Flute playing in Britain did go through a variety of changes in the twentieth century, and Geoffrey Gilbert's enormous talent both as a performer and as a teacher made him a large part of that. But musical life in Britain had been changing and developing since the late nineteenth century, and the changes in flute performance practice that occurred were only a small part of many that shaped British performance and scholarship into the prominent world musical presence they occupy today. More specifically, Gilbert's switch to the French style of flute playing was part of a long list of international influences not only by the French flautists, but by flautists of other European countries. He may have been a pioneer to flute playing, but the road had been mapped out ahead of time.

The subject matter of the British Flute School has been discussed in a variety of sources, though not in any specific and focused way: most of the discussion has been in relation to another topic at hand. Early books on the flute by Richard S. Rockstro² and H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon³ discuss traits of British flute playing; these discussions will be addressed later in this paper. Several early articles or interviews written by or about flautists mention traits of British tone and playing traditions, usually in terms of practical observations and opinions rather than formal study. The 1980s brought two key texts in the documentation of flute history. Claude Dorgeuille's *The French Flute School* of 1983 (translated into English in 1986) gives a detailed history of the development and influences of France's flute

² Richard Shepherd Rockstro and Georgina M. Rockstro, *A Treatise on the Construction, the History and the Practice of the Flute* (London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1928).

³ H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon, *The Story of the Flute* (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd., 1914).

history;⁴ and Nancy Toff's *The Flute Book*, a guide to flute playing and flute history, discusses national styles of playing in relation to the influence of the French school, which she cites as the source of what she calls today's International Style of flute playing.⁵ Her discussion of British flute playing gives a summary of the key flute players that represented the style, of the technical elements that set it apart, and of Gilbert's switch to the French style.⁶

In the 1990s, the Winzer Press in Cedar Falls, Iowa published books about two prominent twentieth century flautists—Trevor Wye's *Marcel Moyse, an Extraordinary Man*⁷ and Angeleita Floyd's *The Gilbert Legacy*.⁸ Floyd interviewed Gilbert on several occasions and compiled testimonies from several of Gilbert's students to create this guide to both Gilbert's life and pedagogical practice. Because such texts are essentially transcriptions of an oral history, like story telling, they tend to reflect the authors' and interviewees' biases rather than to profess historical objectivity. For example, Floyd's claim that Gilbert was responsible for reintroducing works from several Baroque and early Classical masters to the British,⁹ while likely well-intentioned, is one example of how the lack of context presented unsupported opinion: by the height of Gilbert's British career, he was only one among several flautists who have been reviving forgotten works, a practice that had been around for at least fifty years (to be discussed in further detail later). As Moyse's playing was the primary impetus that persuaded Gilbert to change his playing style, his story is narrated in

⁴ Claude Dorgeuille, *The French Flute School, 1860–1950*, trans. and ed. Edward Blakeman (London: Tony Bingham, 1986).

⁵ Nancy Toff, *The Flute Book*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 102–3.

⁷ Trevor Wye, *Marcel Moyse, an Extraordinary Man: a Musical Biography* (Cedar Falls, IA: Winzer Press, 1993).

⁸ Angeleita Floyd, *The Gilbert Legacy: Methods, Exercises and Techniques for the Flutist* (Cedar Falls, IA: Winzer Press, 1994).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

both books. When discussing the impact of Moyse's playing on the British flautists, however, Wye reduces the British opinion of Moyse's playing to being effeminate and "too pretty," and the French style in general as unmanly.¹⁰ While such statements provide strong insight into the prevalent opinions and discussions at the time, the lack of a specific source and the extremity of the statement make it difficult to take seriously.

Ardal Powell's *The Flute*, published in 2002,¹¹ contains the most thorough history of the British flute to date; certainly, it has acted as a launching pad for this study. While Powell gives his history of the British style of playing within the context of the overarching musical culture and does not resort to heavy generalization, his list of all the major London flautists who "scorned" the French sound¹² with no real description of how they reacted slightly raises concerns such as those brought by the Wye and Floyd texts. Of course, a look at the modern journal profiles of the British players makes it difficult to find any argument against either the French or British style of flute playing. Since the inception of *Pan* (the journal of the British Flute Society) in 1983,¹³ numerous profiles of British flautists have been published—both those who studied under Gilbert, Rampal or Moyse, and those who continued in the British tradition. Any animosity that might exist regarding differences in style choice is smoothed over, even avoided: John Francis, when writing about his discovery of the benefits of a relaxed embouchure in 1983, is very careful *not* to assert a definitive connection between the relaxed embouchure and either the French school or Gilbert. He only "thought" the

¹⁰ Wye, *Marcel Moyse*, 60.

¹¹ Ardal Powell, *The Flute* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹² *Ibid.*, 237.

¹³ *Pan: the Journal of the British Flute Society*, 1983–present.

technique might have emanated from France, and that it spread in Britain through Joseph Lingard, Gilbert's teacher in Liverpool.¹⁴

While taking into consideration all the previous literature, this study is a re-evaluation of flute performance practice in Great Britain roughly between the years of 1890–1940, leading to a thorough, more comprehensive, and more nuanced assessment of various extant sources, some of which have been previously discussed, some newly assessed. The choice of 1890 as a starting point comes from the early career of the Welsh flautist Frederic Griffith, who studied with Paul Taffanel in Paris for one year. 1940, besides being the first full year of the tragedy that came with World War II, also marks the beginning of Geoffrey Gilbert's career as a "French-style" flautist. By re-investigating the history of flute performance practice in Great Britain during this time, I hope to do justice to some areas of information omitted in the stories that came down to us, and rectify some misperceptions of the inter-influences between the British and French schools of flute performance. I will research and discuss the origins and activities of Britain's leading flautists through the writings of both the press and of their own contemporaries, and through the recordings they left behind. The patterns of concert activity, repertoire choices, and review commentary will provide a closer, more accurate picture of British flute playing. In the process, I will also address the question of how "unified" each of the British and French schools can realistically be seen, and of the possible role of national preferences in the perception of the different characteristics of the two schools. In light of this re-consideration, I hope to show the British school of flute playing before, and including, Gilbert, in a new light: not as a separate and inferior style to

¹⁴ John Francis, "Teaching the Flute in Schools and After: the Importance of a Relaxed Embouchure," *Pan* 1, no. 2 (July/August 1983): 18. For further discussion on Francis and the relaxed embouchure, see chapters 3 and 4.

that of its Continental neighbor, but as a developing practice influenced by tradition and nationalism, yet international in its acceptance of foreign contributions.

Chapter I

The Schools of Flute Playing

Stereotypes from oral history define the early twentieth century French and British styles of flute playing. In extremely general terms, these “schools” of playing are given parameters as follows:¹⁵

French School:	Use of silver flutes Use of consistent vibrato in the tone Play with a relaxed embouchure Even, homogeneous tone throughout the different registers.
British School:	Use of wood flutes Use of a straight tone Play with a firm embouchure, with the lips stretched into a smile Large, reedy tone in the lower registers, and a thin high register.

Although these definitions seem to have become the ingrained opinion, as we shall see, the great deal of cross-pollination between the two styles does not justify such a drastic separation of the individual characteristics of each school. As the following analysis will suggest, this exaggeration of the differences was not present all along during the period in question, but it varied according to the increase and decrease in the tensions created at various times by the spirit of competition among the French and British nations, which in turn launched on each side biased nationalistic support for the respective style definitions.

¹⁵ These definitions stem from this writer's experiences studying at the Royal Academy of Music from 2002 to 2004, based on the consistent commentary of both the RAM flute professors and other visiting British flautists.

The French School

The above description of the French Flute School applies only to the second part of the nineteenth century, namely beginning with the career of Paul Taffanel (1844–1908). Taffanel is the undisputed “father” of the French Flute School.¹⁶ He took the Premier Prix at the Conservatoire de Paris in 1860¹⁷ just before his 16th birthday and thus began a very illustrious career in Paris that later expanded throughout Europe, first as a performing flautist and later as conductor of the Société de Concerts and of the Opéra.¹⁸ The longevity of both his history and his impact lies in the serendipitous timing of the arrival of both his talent and other changes already developing in flute history and musical culture in Paris.

From the eighteenth century, cultural ideas in France reflected trends found throughout Europe that amounted to changes in philosophies, social classes, and political systems. While a new middle class was emerging, Europe entered the age of Enlightenment. France spent the end of the eighteenth-century and a majority of the nineteenth-century in political flux while it sought to establish a new national identity.

Despite its frequent political changes, France was thriving both as an empire and as a republic, and Paris was an important European center for musical development. However, the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 (and the subsequent loss of political power in Europe against a now-unified Germany) brought to France’s citizens a rise in nationalism, which extended, of course, to its musicians. Composers and performers alike sought to develop and promote what they considered a French sound or a French tradition. It is this philosophy that dominated at the time Taffanel started flourishing as a musician in Paris.

¹⁶ Dorgeuille, 11.

¹⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹⁸ Ibid., 68.

Aside from these general changes, a more direct contribution to the key change in nineteenth-century flute playing was the physical development of the flute. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century European flutes were made of wood with bored holes placed to fit the spread of the fingers.¹⁹ Most flutes were tuned in D, and chromatic notes were achieved through half-covering holes and embouchure adjustments. The resulting inconsistencies in intonation led to a variety of innovations. One modification involved splitting the body of the flute into an upper and lower joint. Flute makers added keys to work holes outside the finger-spread, beginning with the D# key as early as 1660. By the time of Jean-Louis Tulou (1786–1865; Paris Conservatoire professor 1826–1860) a standard flute included eight keys and could have as many as ten keys. Still, problems and inconsistencies continued. The German flautist and flute-maker Theobald Boehm (1794–1881) began a series of design changes to the flute that are still in use today. His new, more acoustically accurate scale combined with a new key system provided better intonation, and the change from a conical to a cylindrical bore produced a stronger tone.

First made in France in 1837 and then with a modified design in 1847, the new Boehm system flute had a shaky start in Paris.²⁰ The firm of Godfroy and Lot held the exclusive patent on production of the Boehm flute in France.²¹ They quickly standardized the key work to make it simpler to manufacture, and quickly began producing Boehm flutes in both wood and silver. However, the Boehm flute did not become the primary choice of flute until the retirement of Tulou and the subsequent appointment of Louis Dorus (1812–1896) as flute professor at the Conservatoire in 1860. Dorus had long supported the Boehm flute in

¹⁹ This and the following history summarized from Nancy Toff, *The Flute Book*, 42–57.

²⁰ Powell, 170–76.

²¹ Tula Giannini, *Great Flute Makers of France: The Lot and Godfroy Families, 1650–1900* (London: Tony Bingham, 1993), 134.

Paris and immediately made it the official flute of the Conservatoire.²² By this point he had also switched to a silver instrument, having played on wood until 1855.²³ Dorus had also taken a different turn as to performance repertoire: while the leading performers such as Tulou and Jules Demersseman (1833–1866) followed the trend of performing light, virtuosic fantasias and “grand” solos, Dorus instead chose to focus on chamber music, performing the works of composers such as Beethoven, Reicha, and Weber.²⁴ While he did also play those popular solos, this wider range of musical interest would have an impact on his most famous student, the young Paul Taffanel.

Taffanel’s performance choices made a lasting impact on the flute’s potential as a solo instrument. Like Dorus, he sought out music from the earlier generations that by his time had become the serious, “high music” repertory, reintroducing pieces by Bach, Mozart, and Handel. He was a founding member of three key musical societies in Paris: the Société nationale de musique (February 1871), which in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871) aimed to cultivate the composition and performance of French music;²⁵ the Société classique (November 1871–1875), a collection of wind and string players which endeavored to revive the neglected chamber music of the great composers of the past and encouraged the composition of new works by modern composers;²⁶ and the Société de musique de chambre pour instruments à vent (1878–1893), which sought to raise the performance standard and raise public awareness of chamber music for wind instruments.²⁷ This last organization was a pet project of Taffanel, and his enthusiasm for encouraging the

²² Edward Blakeman, *Taffanel: Genius of the Flute* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

music of his instrument led his students Philippe Gaubert, Georges Barrère, and Louis Fleury to pursue similar projects in the early years of the 1900s, not to mention the similar societies that were created in London, Madrid, Boston and New York.²⁸ Furthermore, as flute professor at the Paris Conservatoire, Taffanel made it a policy to commission new works for the annual Concours exams, expanding the solo repertoire in addition to the chamber music of his wind society.

Taffanel's innovative concert programming alone would not have given him the authority to increase the popularity of the flute had he not been a performer of unequalled perfection. No fault could be found in his playing by his colleagues, students, and the press. His tone was often described as full and refined, his finger technique flawless, and his style of playing elegant and sensitive.²⁹ Taffanel's biographer, Edward Blakeman, discusses extensively the influence of the singing voice on Taffanel's concept of flute tone, specifically through the voice of soprano Adelina Patti.³⁰ Patti was renowned for her pure and natural tone and expressive delivery, traits that also became identified with Taffanel. These traits, along with his attention and faithfulness to the score in performance, came to define the French Flute School more accurately than the list given above.

The British School

Just as Paul Taffanel is considered the father of the French Flute School, Charles Nicholson (1795–1837) must be considered the father of the British Flute School. No other pre-twentieth century English flautist enjoyed the heights of his reputation. The son of a flute-player in Liverpool, Nicholson held the principal flute position of every major orchestra

²⁸ Ibid., 94.

²⁹ Dorgeuille, 16.

³⁰ Blakeman, *Taffanel*, 23, 29, 35.

in London: the Philharmonic Society, the Italian Opera, and the Drury Lane Theatre.³¹ Nicholson's reputation was one of unparalleled popularity³² and, like Taffanel, rarely a week passed when his name did not appear in the London press.³³ His strong, powerful tone and innovations in flute design inspired Theobald Boehm in the development of his own flute.³⁴ Nineteenth-century flautist Richard S. Rockstro, in his treatise *The Flute*, wrote of Nicholson's ideal tone, which "ought to be as reedy as possible; as much like the hautboy [oboe] as you can get it, but embodying the round mellowness of the clarionet."³⁵ This tone, "the very antithesis of the French school,"³⁶ formed the basis of the sound in the British school of playing. The comparison to reed instruments is striking, when contrasted to the influence of vocal production on Taffanel's French sound. One could speculate on the effects of these descriptions on musical performance—while an instrument has the potential to be either expressive or flat, the voice has a human quality embedded in its very nature. To strive for the tone quality of another wind instrument only seeks a type of tone color; to strive for the tone quality of a beautiful, natural voice creates the promise of higher levels of expression. This is not to say that the British, in designing their tone towards a reed instrument, did not desire the ability to perform expressively, but it does take the study of tone from a position of utmost importance and reduces it to one part of a variety of technical abilities used to achieve that.

A mixed set of writings casts doubt on what exactly the priorities of the British school of playing were. Nicholson, in his *School for the Flute* (originally published in 1836),

³¹ Fitzgibbon, 208.

³² Ibid..

³³ David William Eagle, "A Constant Passion and a Constant Pursuit: A Social History of Flute-Playing in England from 1800 to 1851" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1977), 103.

³⁴ Boehm, "An Essay on the Construction of Flutes," in *Readings in the History of the Flute*, ed. Robert Bigio (London: Tony Bingham, 2006), 276.

³⁵ Rockstro, *The Flute*, 608.

³⁶ Fitzgibbon, 208.

claimed that articulation was second only to tone in importance.³⁷ Rockstro, on the other hand, presents a list of what he considered the most important aspects of flute-playing, which he gives in order of importance (paraphrased here):

1. Strict time-keeping.
2. Note accuracy.
3. Perfect intonation in equal temperament.
4. Correct "accentuation".
5. Judicious respiration.
6. Neat articulation.
7. Varied, but always refined style.
8. Ability to produce "a pure, flexible and powerful tone, of the true flute character."
9. Neat, rapid and fluent execution.
10. Perfect posture and hand position.
11. Sight-reading ability.³⁸

Tone here takes eighth position compared to Nicholson's first. Perhaps the priorities of later flautists or the requirements of a changing performance life influenced the change when Rockstro wrote this list in 1890. However, at the same time in Paris, Taffanel was teaching his students that tone, purity of sound and intonation must come before fingering concerns.³⁹

The difference in the timing of Nicholson and Taffanel's careers is not the only factor affecting the different path of each country's style of playing. The French school had a lot of consistency that the English school did not. France's musical culture emanated from the Conservatoire, with its graduates filling the orchestral and teaching positions located around the country. All of Taffanel's students, per Conservatoire requirement, played on Louis Lot

³⁷ Charles Nicholson, *School for the Flute, Altered and Adapted for the Modern Flute* by J. Radcliff, ed. John Radcliff (London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1873), 44.

³⁸ Rockstro, 411-12.

³⁹ Paul Taffanel and Philippe Gaubert, *Méthode Complète de Flûte: En Huit Parties* (Paris: A. Leduc, 1923), 3.

flutes,⁴⁰ and essentially all new flutes (at least 70%⁴¹) were made in nickel or silver, not wood. At that time, Britain had no centralized musical centre that could compare to the Conservatoire. Its musicians either immigrated from foreign countries or were locally trained with private instruction. England's flautists were always in search of an improved flute design. Boehm credits the flute sound that inspired his changes to the enlarged tone holes of Nicholson's flute, and the crescent keys developed by William Gordon, a captain of the Swiss Guards of Charles the Tenth, inspired the ring keys that became an essential part of his new flute mechanism.⁴² Even as Boehm's flute (both the 1832 and 1847 versions) gained popularity in England during the nineteenth century under production by the firm of Rudall and Rose, flautists Giulio Briccialdi, William Card, Richard Carte, John Clinton, John Radcliff, Robert Pratten, Robert Rockstro, Abel Siccama, and Cornelius Ward all enthusiastically promoted their own flute designs, whether "improvements" to the Boehm system or a separate flute design. Even as late as 1927, the *Musical Times* advised a correspondent that the eight-keyed flute, first developed one hundred years earlier, was still in use.⁴³

The focus in the London musical field was more on competition and less on promoting a common instrument. Even so, by the end of the nineteenth century most of the leading British players used some type of a Boehm system flute, though not all used wood as tradition tells us. While the surviving records from Rudall Carte (Britain's leading flute-making firm of the nineteenth-early twentieth century) only begin in 1869, it is likely that

⁴⁰ Vincent Hypolite Godfroy and Louis Lot dissolved their firm in 1854 and continued producing flutes separately. Louis Dorus chose to endorse Lot's flutes. See chapters 6-8 of Giannini for the detailed history.

⁴¹ Giannini, 192.

⁴² Boehm, 276.

⁴³ "Answers to Correspondents," *The Musical Times* 68, no. 1018 (December 1927): 1136.

before 1872 they sold more metal flutes than wood ones⁴⁴—more metal ones survive from this period. It is thus likely that metal flutes were more popular (or at the very least more economical) with amateur players than wood. Among the professionals, Oluf Svendsen (principal flute of the Philharmonic Society in London), Walter Stuart Broadwood (London flautist, from the piano-maker family of Broadwoods), and Jean Firmin Brossa (flautist of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester) all owned silver Louis Lot flutes.⁴⁵ Albert Fransella (principal flute of the Queen's Hall Orchestra) famously ordered a gold flute from Rudall Carte in 1895.⁴⁶ Twentieth-century players Lupton Whitelock (active in Leeds from the 1910s) and Joseph Slater (active in London from the 1920s) also played on silver flutes. This is all not to say that the use of wood flutes did not dominate among the profession—John Francis said in a 1984 interview that when he began performing professionally in the 1930s, Slater was the only flautist who played on metal.⁴⁷ However, the belief that an important part of the British Flute School's definition is determined by the exclusive use of wood flutes simply cannot be supported.

While the individual traits of the British style present problems in defining a unified style, one could even dispute whether or not there exists a British school of flute playing in the sense of a *nationally* unified style. While the flautists of the Paris Conservatoire were by no means exclusively French, those students of Taffanel who led more active, more international careers, were. The leading flautists of Britain had a much more diverse pedigree: Edward de Jong and Albert Fransella were Dutch; Oluf Svendsen was Norwegian; and Jean Firmin Brossa was Swiss, and had studied in Paris. Their impact will be discussed

⁴⁴ Robert Bigio, interview by author, 6 December 2005.

⁴⁵ Giannini, 178. The question is, of course, about how frequently they actually used them in England. Different pitch settings might have made this impossible.

⁴⁶ Robert Bigio, "Albert Fransella: the Paganini of the Flute," *Pan* 12, no. 2 (June 1994): 20.

⁴⁷ John Francis, "John Francis in Conversation with Edward Blakeman," *Pan* 2, no. 2 (June 1984): 8.

in more detail later; in the meantime, it must be noted that their wide range of life experiences impedes any assertion that they represent the sound of a specifically British flute. Still, in the next considerable piece of writing on the flute since Rockstro, Macaulay Fitzgibbon in 1913 wrote an entire chapter comparing the British style of performance to those of France, Italy and Germany:

The English school (founded by Charles Nicholson) differs from that of most continental players chiefly in its vigour and robustness of tone, especially on the lower notes. In the hands of unskilful [sic] players of this type there is a certain tendency to coarseness of tone, and a lack of refinement and delicacy of expression. The French and Belgian flautists aim chiefly at producing silvery purity and sweetness of tone rather than volume—quality rather than quantity....⁴⁸

Three possible reasons for such a specific comparison exist. The first is that the described style of playing actually was the way the majority of British flautists, both professional and amateur, played. While the leaders of the field might act as exceptions, the only comparison Fitzgibbon might have had was one with France's top players, the ones who traveled to Britain to perform. For all we know, the French amateur may have continued on wood flutes in a pre-Taffanel style long after the modern French school had been established. The second possible reason for Fitzgibbon's comparison relates to the differences in the respective concepts of the ideal flute sound—the British seeking a reedy quality, the French seeking a vocal quality. Finally, it is possible that a more deep-seated need to identify this style in terms of nation existed.

⁴⁸ Fitzgibbon, 217.

Chapter II

The English Musical Renaissance and the Life of Concert Performers

The flautists of 1890–1940 performed in the middle to late years of what has come to be known as the English Musical Renaissance. Various writers outline the timeline within different years, but as early as 1882 writers labeled this new path of music in such a way as to connect it to the sixteenth-century Renaissance, the “Golden Age” of English music.⁴⁹ The roots of this revitalization of English music can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century. The Great Exhibition of 1851, designed “to enshrine the fusion of art and science,” led to plans for a “permanent centre of knowledge” that included a music school, what eventually became the Royal College of Music.⁵⁰ The Royal Academy of Music had been established as early as 1822, but continuous financial troubles and an inability to create a high required standard of performance kept it from taking its place amongst the leading conservatories of Europe. The aim of the Royal College was to create a center of music instruction that could match the training of Leipzig and Paris. Furthermore, it was to provide a center to cultivate and promote English music.⁵¹

These last two points outline what became the pivotal issue around the development of this new music: whether the new English music should aim to contribute to the progress of music as a unique branch to the superior German tradition, or if it should take a new, fresh approach to musical composition that was uniquely English. Both positions had their turn within different generations of composers. Frank Howes in 1966 outlined the Renaissance’s

⁴⁹ Meirion Hughes and R. A. Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 42-3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

progress in three stages: the beginnings under Hubert Parry (1848–1918) and Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) who led the music history and composition faculties respectively at the new Royal College of Music; the first generation of RCM-trained composers, led by Gustav Holst (1874–1934) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958); and the unique contribution of Edward Elgar (1857–1934) that spanned both generations.⁵² In 1979, just thirteen years after Howes' book, Peter J. Pirie considers the first stage of the Renaissance as beginning with Elgar and Frederick Delius (1862–1934), reducing the work of Parry, Stanford and their contemporaries to the role of gestation rather than new contribution.⁵³ Howes' stages acknowledge the strides of the German-influenced Parry and Stanford as a part of England's new musical identity; Pirie, in choosing to identify the true beginning of the Renaissance with the more innovative music of Elgar and Delius, reduces the importance of Parry and Stanford's contributions to "founders" rather than innovators.

In the Renaissance's first stage, the music composed by Parry and Stanford, along with that of Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900), Alexander Mackenzie (1847–1935), and Edward German (1862–1936), is typically cast in a German light—heavy influences of all the great nineteenth century German composers are found in their combined works. (Edward German, though younger than the others listed, produced most of his music between 1890 and 1910.) Of this group only Arthur Sullivan is remembered in general public knowledge today, and this is the result of his operettas, not his "serious" music. The first substantial work to gain any sort of longevity in European art music is Elgar's *Enigma* Variations, which premiered in 1899. The distinctive use of major and minor tonalities and unusual motives of the theme must have caught the ears of its London audience, and the variations, each designed to

⁵² Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 23–5.

⁵³ Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 20ff.

represent musically someone in Elgar's life, were lauded by the *London Times* as "clever, often charming, and always original, and excellently worked out."⁵⁴ The *Musical Times* expended much more ink on this new work:

Our opinion of Mr. Elgar's gifts is by this time known to our readers, but after making ourselves thoroughly acquainted with his latest work, and listening to a splendid performance under the greatest living conductor, we say more emphatically than ever: Here is an English musician who has something to say and knows how to say it in his own individual and beautiful way. He does not pose as a "profound" and learned master of his craft; he writes as he feels, there is no affectation or make-believe. Effortless originality—the only true originality—combined with thorough *savoir faire*, and, most important of all, beauty of theme, warmth, and feeling are his credentials, and they should open to him the hearts of all who have faith in the future of our English art and appreciate beautiful music wherever it is met.⁵⁵

The review continues in detail for another half-page. Within just a few years the *Enigma* Variations and his *The Dream of Gerontius* were performed in Europe and the United States. As Elgar was essentially a self-taught musician rather than the product of any music college, he hardly could have been influenced by any sort of musical school of thought, which put him in the unique position of defining the new school of music emanating from England that was recognized elsewhere.

While Elgar's work marked a departure point for English music, it was the use of folk song melodic style that came to be the defining characteristic of the new English music.⁵⁶ The use of folk music was not new to European art music—the tradition of fantasias or variations on popular tunes had been in use throughout the nineteenth century. Both Parry

⁵⁴ "Richter Concerts," *The Times* (London), 20 June 1899.

⁵⁵ "Richter Concerts," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 40, no. 677 (1 July 1899), 464.

⁵⁶ Hughes and Stradling, 166.

and Stanford used traditional tunes in their works. But it was the work of Vaughan Williams, First name? Holst, Percy Grainger (1882–1961), Arnold Bax (1883–1953), and others who took the familiar folk tradition and used it to develop innovative and different music, rather than restricting these melodies to an earlier genre format. They also often wrote new “folk songs,” using the melodic language and idiom from tradition in creating new melodies and themes for their works.

As composers struggled for recognition while determining their compositional path, the performing profession saw an increase in the number of active performers and an improvement in playing ability. In addition to the opening of the Royal College of Music in 1883, England saw the opening of the Trinity College of Music (1872), the Guildhall School of Music (1880), the Athenaeum School of Music in Glasgow (1890—now the Royal Scottish Academy), and the Royal Manchester College of Music (1893—now the Royal Northern). More formal training centres led to an increase in professional musicians: in only fifty years the numbers grew from 25,500 (1881) to 48,500 (1931), with the largest concentration in London.⁵⁷ In addition, it was quite common to find amateur music societies in both cities and regional towns, whether affiliated with a community or a place of employment. Despite these high numbers, Great Britain could not boast an orchestra that matched the talents and reputation of Vienna’s Philharmonic or Paris’ Société des Concerts. While the Hallé and Crystal Palace orchestras had existed since the middle of the nineteenth century, they only maintained short seasons throughout the year and could not provide contracted positions to their members.⁵⁸ The Philharmonic Society and St. James’ Hall also presented limited orchestral series in London. This freelance status kept by working

⁵⁷ Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985), 235–7.

⁵⁸ Stuart Scott, *Hallé Flutes: Flautists of the Hallé Orchestra 1858–1993* (Cheshire, UK: author, 1998), 3.

musicians allowed for diverse activity, but not the consistency or security to give one ensemble the ability to develop its individual skills into a cohesive whole. Sir Henry Wood, conductor of the Queen's Hall Orchestra, lamented the state of maintaining an orchestra in London, with musicians often sending deputies to rehearsals and concerts so they could take higher paying jobs elsewhere.⁵⁹ Not until the founding of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1930 did Great Britain have an ensemble that could offer contracts to its members for full-time work, all but guaranteeing their presence for rehearsals and concerts. The London Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 1932 by Thomas Beecham, also briefly contracted its players in its first few years of existence.⁶⁰ While the contracts provided some security, low funds meant less rehearsal time—thus while improving quality through regular attendance, plenty of potential was available to maximize.

Several chamber orchestras within London and in the provinces also provided part-time work to orchestral musicians. Local provincial festivals, typically held during the summer or early fall, meant work both in festival orchestras and chamber music during the off-season. Several towns and cities had a Bach society, which performed concerts entirely of Bach's orchestral, chamber and choral music. Other choral societies also hired orchestras and soloists for their larger concerts. Musicians could supplement their income from orchestral work with chamber music concerts, teaching, and cinemas, providing music for the silent films that were so popular until the arrival of "talking pictures" at the end of the 1920s. The more popular players could also mount their own solo recitals, though most typically had "guests" or "friends" to play or sing other works. The major stars, typically singers such as Luisa Tetrazzini or Nellie Melba, toured both within the various provinces of Great Britain

⁵⁹ Bigio, "Albert Fransella," 22.

⁶⁰ Powell, 236.

and internationally; chamber orchestra musicians more often than not made up a part of the entourage. While not able to provide guaranteed job security, freelance work was at the very least diverse.

Concerts themselves mostly followed what today we call a gala style. One ensemble or soloist was the principal performer, and then other musicians joined for chamber or other solo works. Almost every single concert had at least one singer on the program; Britain's most beloved music was always song. The main repertoire staples found in British concerts came from both popular song and works from the canon: Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Musicians were enthusiastic in performance of new works, especially those by British composers, but because of the need for popular programming they rarely seemed to make daring, more controversial works a regular concert item. New works that came into vogue might be found in concert listings for a few years, but often faded away to make room for the next novelty. More often than not, British works premiered in Europe—mainly Germany, then Austria and France—before finding an audience in Britain itself.⁶¹

In her memoirs, the Australian singer and international star Nellie Melba lamented the reserve of British audiences:

Do you realise that the provinces are asking for exactly the same things in music as they demanded forty years ago? Do you realise that when I go to big towns which possess, according to popular tradition, such excellent taste, I am compelled time and again to sing the same old songs, and that whenever I endeavoured to put something new on the programme, I am regarded as positively eccentric?...I try Debussy, I try Duparc, Ravel; I try anything and everything which strikes me as beautiful and fresh, and always I am greeted with the same response; enthusiastic, it is true, but tame compared with the positive uproar which I receive when I sing the old favourites.... When I come to America, when I sing in

⁶¹ Hughes and Stradling, 126.

Paris, or in Italy, I am overwhelmed with requests to sing works by hitherto unknown composers. None of these requests ever come to me in England. We are conservative to the point of madness.⁶²

For a performer of her stature, Melba's experience is a sombre one. While the precepts of the Renaissance allowed composers to progress in their art form, the flautists of 1890–1940 faced this conservative audience when making their programming choices. Their concert listings and reviews reflect a repertoire that, while not ignoring the new works of both British and Continental composers, is based on the works preferred by earlier generations. The issue of conservative programming was not an exclusively British concern, but there is a substantial difference when comparing it to Taffanel and his students in France. When Taffanel played old Baroque and Classical works, they were in a sense new—they had not been a staple part of the flute repertoire for several generations. His students continued this promotion of these older works that had disappeared while encouraging a considerable number of new compositions through not only the wind societies but through the Conservatoire commissions as well. By comparison, we shall see that such developments in Britain were negligible at the time, and did not in fact occur until much later.

⁶² Nellie Melba, *Melodies and Memories* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1925), 232.

Chapter III

British Flautists and their Work

This chapter aims at refining the history of the British Flute School by examining the flute performances between 1890–1940. Unless otherwise indicated, the observations or conclusions made about flute or concert trends are based on patterns found in concert reviews from *The Musical Times*, a monthly music journal, and *The Times*, one of London's daily newspapers.⁶³ Within this period, concert accounts, various writings, and recordings paint a colorful picture of the different talents and accomplishments of those flautists who witnessed the changes. The use of the term “flute school” will refer to the original parameters of the British and French schools given on page 4. As discussion progresses, the information about each flautist's training, concert activity, repertoire choices, and press coverage—both the presence and absence of actual critique—will not only help delineate the actual characteristics of British flute playing but will also show how the perception of the flute displayed in various writings may have influenced the development of the definition passed on to us thus far.

The 1890s

In 1890, two of the most well-known London flautists were John Radcliff (1842–1917) and Alfred P. Vivian (1855–1903). Radcliff is likely the best representation during this time period of the sound of the British flute school. His obituary states that he studied under

⁶³ More exact references will be given below for each source.

Joseph Richardson,⁶⁴ who had studied with and succeeded Charles Nicholson at the Royal Academy of Music. Fitzgibbon described Radcliff's tone as "remarkably powerful, recalling that of Charles Nicholson."⁶⁵ His primary employment was as solo (principal) flute with the Italian Opera at Covent Garden, where he was held in much esteem. In addition to performing, Radcliff designed his own model flute in 1870 (based on Richard Carte's 1851 system)⁶⁶ and edited a new edition of Charles Nicholson's *School for the Flute* in 1894,⁶⁷ complete with updated fingering charts for his flute.

Less is known about Vivian. He studied with Oluf Svendsen (1832–1888) at the Royal Academy of Music, where he became the flute professor after his teacher's death. Fitzgibbon states that he "inherited much of the manner of his master,"⁶⁸ having in previous pages described Svendsen's beautiful tone on his silver flute:

The great features in his playing were his exquisite, artistic phrasing and the singing effects he produced.⁶⁹

Svendsen himself had studied in Copenhagen and at the Brussels Conservatoire with Anton Reichert before going to London in 1855.

Though Vivian held no known solo flute post, he was an active freelance performer in London. Of special interest, however, is that in 1889 he became a part of a new organization called the Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society.⁷⁰ Likely modeled after Taffanel's *Société de musique de chambre pour instruments à vent*, this society presented an annual series of concerts from 1889–1893 at the Royal Academy of Music designed to feature solo

⁶⁴ "Obituary: John Radcliff," *Musical Times* 58; no. 890 (April 1917), 160.

⁶⁵ Fitzgibbon, 214.

⁶⁶ Powell, 189.

⁶⁷ Andrew Fairley, *Flutes, Flautists and Makers* (London: Pan Educational Music, 1982), 103.

⁶⁸ Fitzgibbon, 214.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁷⁰ "Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society," *Times* (London), 18 November 1889, 4.

and chamber works composed for various combinations of wind instruments. Reinecke's "Undine" Sonata, Saint-Saëns' *Caprices on Danish and Russian Airs*, and Beethoven's *Serenade* are among the several foreign and British works played by Vivian with the society. The London *Times* followed the progress of the Wind Instrument Society, with the first concert of the 1891–92 season prompting the following commentary:

The programme of the first concert of the series announced by this society, which took place on Friday evening, showed in a striking manner the large repertory of music for wind instruments which has been hardly touched as yet in England. It is to be wished that the society would occasionally give a public concert instead of remaining in the semi-privacy necessitated by the choice of the Royal Academy room. Those who have at heart the interests of this class of music will deeply regret the action taken by a party of players who, apparently wishing to establish a monopoly such as already worked too much harm to English music, have not only refused the offer of an engagement for four out of the six meetings arranged by the society, but have formed a rival scheme of their own.⁷¹

These three points create a striking account of the impact of the society. The first is that it had tapped into a type of music that had yet to find a niche in London concert life, and its efforts were appreciated at the very least by the *Times* critic. However, the society struggled to find a sustainable audience, as evidenced by the letter to the editor published shortly after the above review:

Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society, To the Editor of the *Times*:

Sir,—The appreciative notice of this society and its work that appeared in your issue of yesterday expressed regret that our concerts are not given in a public hall.

⁷¹ "Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society," *Times* (London), 23 November 1891, 11.

Will you allow me this opportunity of making it known that the reason for this is want of adequate support, both from wind instrument players and from music lovers in general?

Until the number of our subscribers justifies us in increasing our expenditure, we must continue to use the room which the kindness of Dr. Mackenzie and the directors of the Royal Academy of Music places at our disposal....⁷²

While there were those who recognized the need for wind music in London concert pursuits, the society never did find the support it needed, even from its own practitioners. The "party of players" who formed another wind group is G. A. Clinton's Wind Instrument Society, which, according to writer-critic George Bernard Shaw, stated that:

Preparation for the Society's performances cost these gentlemen so much time that, to secure an adequate return, they found it necessary to stipulate that they should be engaged for all the concerts.⁷³

Quality control and programming must have been serious concerns. By the fourth concert of the series, given on February 12, 1892, the London *Times* criticized:

That these lovely pieces failed to make as good an impression as on a former occasion [that] must be attributed to the rendering, which was far from perfect.... A concertante by J. Hasselmans for flute and horn with piano accompaniment would have been better postponed until the players knew it; during a cadenza, it was found necessary to stop and apologize to the audience. The programme was, as usual, far too long; yet the wisdom of the committee in dispensing with vocal music is open to question, since the tone of the wind instruments without relief becomes wearisome sooner than that of almost any other sound-producing agent.⁷⁴

⁷² "Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society," *Times* (London), 27 November 1891, 15.

⁷³ George Bernard Shaw, *Shaw's Music: the Complete Musical Criticism in Three Volumes*, ed. Dan H. Laurence, vol. 2 (London: Bodley Head, 1981), 573.

⁷⁴ "Wind Instrument Society," *Times* (London), 15 February 1892, 10.

The society was apparently in a dismal condition. Before the new season it was announced that Frederic Griffith, the flautist of Mr. Clinton's wind quintet, would be taking over the directorship of the Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society,⁷⁵ though only one more season would pass in which they performed.

Frederic Griffith

Frederic Griffith (1867–1917) was born in Swansea, Wales. With a recommendation from John Rutson, an active supporter of music in London, he studied the flute at the Royal Academy of Music with Oluf Svendsen from 1884 to 1888, earning bronze, silver and gold medals and a Certificate of Merit.⁷⁶ It is possible that while living in London he heard a recital by the popular composer and pianist Camille Saint-Saëns at the St. James' Hall on June 4, 1887. For this recital Saint-Saëns brought players of the oboe, clarinet, and flute, who each performed a solo work along with Saint-Saëns' *Caprices on Danish and Russian Airs*. That flautist was Paul Taffanel.⁷⁷ After Svendsen's death, while Vivian took over Svendsen's teaching duties at the RAM, Griffith went to Paris to study with Taffanel for one year, with Rutson's continued support.⁷⁸

Taffanel seemed to think quite highly of his Welsh student. His biographer Edward Blakeman reprinted a portion of a letter the great master sent to Rutson to report on Griffith's progress in October of 1888:

I am very pleased with him. He is very attentive, punctual, he understands and makes every effort to succeed. I believe he has it in him to be a good performer. The "expressive" side of his

⁷⁵ *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 33, no. 596 (1 October 1892), 613.

⁷⁶ Royal Academy of Music. *Prize Lists, 1876-1892*.

⁷⁷ *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 28, no. 533 (1 July 1887), 410.

⁷⁸ Blakeman, 123.

playing is not yet very evident; but I don't doubt that it will appear one day, because it is there.

The quality of his tone is good. The pursuit of loudness has somewhat distorted it in the low register, we have just about managed now to make the sound even in all registers. When studying our instrument we must beware that in aiming for *quantity* of sound rather than excellence of *timbre* we do not make the flute into an instrument which is no longer true to itself.

To sum up, I have great hopes for his progress, but one cannot learn everything in a few days, and I would like to keep him here as long as possible.⁷⁹

Taffanel's faith in his pupil is obvious, along with his credible insight into the possible disadvantages of the English style of playing. The distorted low register could be a parallel to the coarseness of tone described by Fitzgibbon (see pages 11–12).

Griffith's studies with Taffanel, however, did bear fruit, as upon his return to London he quickly became one of the finest flautists the city had seen. Beginning in 1892, he performed a yearly series of solo concerts in London—his entry in the *Grove Dictionary* of 1906 says as many as twenty-five⁸⁰—along with frequent guest performances as a solo and chamber music performer in concerts of his colleagues. Both *The Musical Times* and the *London Times* gave him high praise. One review in particular paints a striking contrast to the earlier commentary on the Wind Instrument Society:

There was certainly no lack of variety in the programme, and yet the almost constant participation of the flute throughout would have inevitably produced an effect of monotony had the instrument been played by a less consummate artist than Mr. Griffith, whose phrasing and delicate execution of the most trying passages it would be impossible to praise too highly.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., 124.

⁸⁰ *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Frederick Griffith."

⁸¹ "Mr. Griffith's Recital," *Times* (London), 24 November 1894, 7.

Where before the consistent sound of a wind instrument was wearisome, here Griffith's playing surpassed all monotonous tendencies. Griffith's talents were later described in Fitzgibbon's writings on the flute:

He excelled as a soloist, belonging to the style of the French School....(He was) probably the greatest flautist Wales has ever produced, who by practising always *pianissimo* attained exquisite delicacy of tone.⁸²

These two reviews are not the only praise of Griffith's sensitive tone and musicality; such compliments make a common theme from his critics. The lessons which Taffanel sought to impart in his Welsh student seemed to have worked—as his student, Griffith truly is the first British flautist of the French style, some fifty years before Gilbert's reported switch of style.

While many pieces of Griffith's performed repertoire came from foreign composers, such as Reinecke, Widor, Kuhlau and Saint-Saëns, he also frequently played the solo flute and chamber works of Edward German, an English composer who had studied at the Royal Academy at the same time as Griffith. German dedicated both a Suite and a *Saltarello* to Griffith, and often performed with him during his recitals. In 1900 Griffith wrote to Taffanel, who by now had become the conductor of the *Société des concerts*, to promote the interests of his friend, describing him as “the most gifted composer and beautiful orchestrator that we have over here. In fact he is quite different to any other English composer, whose works generally I confess I do not care for.”⁸³ This conscious choice to perform substantial works rather than the popular virtuosic pieces surely contributed to Griffith's success as a soloist.

⁸² Fitzgibbon, iii and 215.

⁸³ Blakeman, *Taffanel*, 124; from Papiers Paul Taffanel 6, letter from Frederic Griffith, 9 April 1900.

In addition to his direction of the Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society, Griffith often acted as external examiner for the Royal Academy of Music's final exams. In 1895 he was appointed solo flutist with the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, a position he held until around 1900.⁸⁴ *The Musical Times* printed a remarkable review in July of 1896:

On Saturday, the 20th ult., Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" served to illustrate Madame Melba's extraordinary accomplishments as a *bravura* singer. When *Lucia* goes mad, in robes of white accordion pleating, to the pyrotechnic accompaniment of the flute—an admittedly hopeless form of insanity—Madame Melba simply defies criticism. The audience were stirred to unwonted frenzy, and were not appeased until the *prima donna* had repeated her wonderful performance, in which, let us hasten to add, she was splendidly backed up by Mr. Frederic Griffith, the brilliant young Welsh flautist.⁸⁵

This reflects a small credit, to be sure, but significant from a tradition where the diva received all the accolades and the members of the orchestra undervalued in their often difficult support. The famous singer Dame Nellie Melba preferred to use the *Lucia* cadenza developed by her teacher Mathilde Marchesi, who wrote it in collaboration with Taffanel.⁸⁶ This is likely the cadenza performed by Melba and Griffith at Covent Garden. Griffith's collaboration extended beyond the opera house: he toured with her throughout the British provinces as early as 1893, and in 1902 was a part of her tour to the Australasian colonies.⁸⁷

While his duties in the Royal Opera prevented him from performing as often as a soloist, Griffith kept busy in a variety of ways. Writing credits include several pieces for flute

⁸⁴ John Wion, "Orchestral Principal Flutists," <http://hometown.aol.com/johnwion/orchestra.html>, accessed 14 May 2007.

⁸⁵ "Royal Opera, Covent Garden," *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 37, no. 641 (1 July 1896), 455.

⁸⁶ Melba, *Melodies and Memories*, 177.

⁸⁷ British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of Musical Artists, Authors and Composers, s.v. "Frederic Griffith."

and piano, and the editing of the compilation *Notable Welsh Musicians*, in 1897.⁸⁸ Sadly, no reviews are to be found on Griffith between 1896 and 1904, the year when he gave a recital in Steinway Hall⁸⁹ and was also briefly mentioned as a performer for the Gloucester Choral Society.⁹⁰

Upon the death of Vivian, Griffith obtained the post of professor of flute at the Royal Academy of Music in January of 1904.⁹¹ He was selected from a group of applicants that included John Radcliff, Albert Fransella, Eli Hudson, and Daniel Wood. The most prominent of the students he inherited was Emil Medicus, an American flautist who returned to the US after his studies and eventually became principal flute of the Cincinnati Symphony.⁹² Unfortunately, Griffith's tenure only lasted around eighteen months. The minutes from the RAM's management committee on May 10, 1905 record a problem with Griffith's attendance to orchestral activities in the academy:

The Principal took occasion to mention another professor (Mr. F. Griffith) whose work and attendances were not so satisfactory as they should be. While no definite resolution was passed there was a general understanding that it might be desirable to make a change...at an early date and the matter was left in the hands of the Principal for further consideration.⁹³

At the following meeting on May 17, the committee recorded Griffith's response, sent from a hotel in Swansea:

⁸⁸Frederic Griffith, ed., *Notable Welsh Musicians* (of today), with portraits, biographies and a preface on the condition of music in Wales at the present time, (London: Goodwen, 1896).

⁸⁹ "Concerts," *Times* (London), 12 May 1904, 11.

⁹⁰ "Music in Gloucester and District," *Musical Times* 45, no. 735, (May 1904), 320.

⁹¹ Royal Academy of Music, Minutes of Committee of Management, Oct. 1902-Oct. 1906, 142.

⁹² Wion, "Orchestral Principal Flutists," internet.

⁹³ Royal Academy of Music, *Minutes*, 275.

Dear Mr. Renaut,

I regret to have bad news from you. My health has been the cause of the action Sir A. C. Mackenzie has taken.

As far as my pupils were concerned I did all that is in my power to raise the standard of playing the flute. With regard to the Orchestra, I am not the only professor that does not play in it. As I say, if I felt well enough I should have played in the Orchestra directly I was appointed to the professorship.

I hope that the Committee will take a kind view of the case, and, as I suggest, appoint another professor who will play in the orchestra until I feel quite well. The weather here is fine now and I am getting stronger every day.

I have given the most earnest attention to my pupils and I trust that you will influence Sir Alexander to keep my name on the list, and engage a deputy until I return. I am greatly concerned about your letter.

Yours faithfully,
Frederic Griffith⁹⁴

Nothing in the records show what issue Sir A. C. Mackenzie might have had with Griffith other than his absence from the RAM orchestra, nor what action he took between the two committee meetings. Whatever the action, the committee decided that to wait for Griffith's health to improve was not a viable option, and promptly replaced him with Daniel Wood.

The effects of ill health put a severe restriction on Griffith's career; no evidence of him performing or teaching is to be found after his departure from the RAM for several years, when the London *Times* posted the following review:

When Mr. Griffith, the eminent flute player, was compelled to give up his work in England and to seek for renewed health in the Far East, it would have seemed impossible that he should ever give a concert to anything but an overflowing audience, so high was the position he had won for himself. But in the years that have passed other men, English and foreign, have taken his vacant place, and skilful flute *virtuosi* are by no means uncommon in the present day.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 278. Transcription of a letter sent to the committee dated May 14, 1905.

At his recital given last night in Broadwood's rooms... [he] showed that he is still a highly-accomplished and artistic player. Here and there the nervousness inseparable from a reappearance after a long absence made itself felt...but there was charm and a feeling for musical beauty in all that Mr. Griffith played.⁹⁵

The lack of popular acclaim referred to here is more evident in the *Musical Times*. That journal, which had once been so effusive in its praise of Griffith, gave a one-line notice of the concert's occurrence.⁹⁶ No other performance reviews in either *The Times* or *Musical Times* exist, nor any obituary notice. Different sources give different years for his death, some saying 1914 and others 1917. In fact, the *International Who's Who in Music* of 1918 listed Griffith as still teaching at the RAM.⁹⁷ The flautist who made such waves at the beginning of his career left the world without a sound.

While Frederic Griffith could be considered the first British "French style" flautist—his training and accounts of his playing certainly support this possibility—there are no known recordings of Griffith or orally passed stories to help make this claim. The flautist who led the more remembered career of the time was one of Griffith's colleagues, a man named Albert Fransella.

Albert Fransella

Albert Fransella (1865–1935) was born in Amsterdam.⁹⁸ After studying the flute with his father and earning his first orchestral position at age 15, Fransella moved to London in 1884. He quickly built an active freelance career, and in 1892 was appointed principal flute

⁹⁵ "Mr. Frederic Griffith's Recital," *Times* (London), 27 April 1911, 10.

⁹⁶ "Chamber Concerts," *Musical Times* 52, no. 820, (July 1911), 397.

⁹⁷ *International Who's Who in Music*, 1918 ed., s.v. "Frederick Griffith."

⁹⁸ This and other biographical information in this paragraph (unless otherwise noted) from Bigio, "Albert Fransella," 19–25.

of the Crystal Palace Orchestra. Henry Wood considered it a conquest in 1895 to have persuaded “that great flautist Albert Fransella to give up his work with August Manns at the Crystal Palace and join the Queen’s Hall Orchestra.”⁹⁹ He later also played with the Philharmonic Society.

The activity and longevity of Fransella’s career compensated for the briefness of Griffith’s. His performance of Godard’s *Suite* with the Queen’s Hall Orchestra at their very first Promenade concert in 1895 marked the first of several solo appearances with that orchestra. He formed several chamber groups including a flute quartet and the Philharmonic Trio, in which Fransella, oboist Leon Goossens, and pianist Francesco Ticciati performed several concerts and radio broadcasts in the 1920s. Of special note are two projects of his from the late 1890s—the Fransella Orchestra and his chamber concerts for wind music.

The *Musical Times* reviewed the premiere concert of the Fransella Orchestra, which occurred on November 25, 1898. While not saying much about the concert itself, it gives an explanation to the formation of the ensemble:

The chief aims of Mr. Fransella are to supply amateur choral societies with a competent orchestra for their public performances, and to supplant the foreign bands in variegated costumes at garden parties and “at-homes.” Judging by the excellent performances at the opening concert, Mr. Fransella should have little difficulty in achieving his objects.¹⁰⁰

While creating a chamber orchestra might only seem like one of several such projects, the more important part of this project lies in its mission. In a musical culture that thrived on choral music, the accompanying orchestra was often compiled of freelancers brought together for that specific occasion alone, a practice which does not encourage quality

⁹⁹ Wood, *About Conducting*, 181.

¹⁰⁰ “The Fransella Orchestra,” *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 671, no. 40, (January 1899), 26.

playing. By assembling an ensemble that would play together regularly and thus produce more refined performances, Fransella offered a group that would not only raise the standards of performance for those who hired it, but provided a competitive alternative to whatever foreign groups with which he needed to contend.

What followed that next year was also a series of chamber concerts, most or all of which concerned music for wind instruments. Almost all the works were new or unknown to London audiences, written by composers from England, Scotland, France, Germany, and the United States. By June of 1899, the *Musical Times* posted the following notice:

Mr. Albert Fransella proposes to establish a Society for the cultivation of wind instrument music. Those who are interested in the welfare of this important branch of instrumental music are invited to communicate with....¹⁰¹

Once again, a London flautist attempted to secure and promote the underrepresented winds, after the somewhat successful yet extinct Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society and G. A. Clinton's Wind Instrument Society. Sadly, no other reference to the proposed society was found.

The entirety of Fransella's quite enterprising career is peppered with projects such as the ones described above. After the turn of the century he was a member of the London Chamber Concert Association and the Queen's Hall Woodwind Party, whose members came from the Queen's Hall Orchestra and gave the support to wind repertoire that an independent society had not been able to achieve. Concert listings give his performances in places as close as the London suburbs of Chelsea, Richmond, and Bromley to the farther, larger cities of Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle. His most popularly performed solo works were the

¹⁰¹ "Miscellaneous," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 676, no. 40, (June 1899), 409.

Godard *Suite* and Bach's *Suite in B minor*, and he gave the British premieres of York Bowen's flute suite, Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro*, and Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp*. Like most flautists, he performed quite a bit of Bach's music, and yet the majority of his repertoire mixes music of Bach and Mozart with classics of the nineteenth century such as Reinecke, while still performing much unknown or new music, both British and foreign.

While the reviews list numerous concert appearances by Fransella, actual descriptions of his playing are vague. Descriptions are short, and usually of the type such as "played to perfection" or "excellent soloist." One review of an individual recital remarked that he "employed those musicianly as well as executive abilities that place him in the front rank of flautists."¹⁰² Fransella was popular and held in high regard, yet no one really described his playing beyond his level of achievement—no discussion of tone or phrasing can be found.

What did raise the *Musical Times*' interest was Fransella's debut of a gold Boehm-system flute, which he commissioned from Rudall Carte in 1895:

The middle and lower registers of the instrument certainly possess a fine tone, somewhat suggestive of a saxophone, but the instrument must be heard in an orchestra before the artistic value of the adoption of its costly material can be truly gauged.¹⁰³

The saxophone has the ability to sound sharp and metallic but also warm and sweet, so the implication of the comparison between the two instruments is not exactly clear. Since the writer needed to hear the flute in an orchestral setting it is likely he believed the tone to be more metallic, which would blend less ably than the wood flute. No mention of the flute is

¹⁰² "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 50, no. 798, (August 1909), 534.

¹⁰³ "Miscellaneous Concerts, Intelligence, &c.," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 37, no. 637, (March 1896), 191.

given in later reviews, so it is unknown whether Fransella continued to use the flute regularly. He sold it in 1905.¹⁰⁴

The question of flute tone arises in George Bernard Shaw's article "Wanted: A Flute that is a Flute," first published in *The World* on March 7, 1894. While the article mainly deals with the issue of how improvements to instruments change the sounds away from what composers intended—a beacon to the practitioners of historical performance soon to arise—his comments on a performance by Fransella with the Crystal Palace Orchestra provide insight into Fransella's sound:

Mr. Fransella sacrifices boldness of style to delicacy of tone and perfection of execution. He takes his instrument as it is, and does not enlarge the holes to get a big tone, or otherwise spoil it for all ordinary players, and trust to his power of lip to make it practicable for himself. What we got from him therefore was the normal modern orchestral flute, very well-played.

But I should like to have met the ghost of Mozart at that concert in order to ask him whether Mr. Fransella's instrument was what he would call a flute. I am convinced that he would have declared it a quite new instrument. He would, no doubt, have been delighted with the accurate intonation and the fascinating peculiarity and beauty of the lower octave; but I think he would have repudiated the higher notes as having absolutely no flute quality at all, the quality aimed at by the manufacturer being apparently that of the harmonica, though really, no doubt, that of the clarinet....¹⁰⁵

Though Shaw commends Fransella's choice to present a more refined performance, which he equates with the "modern orchestral" sound, he does not seem to like the typical flute tone found in the concerts which he frequented. The comparison of the higher register to the harmonica and the clarinet hearkens back to Rockstro's definition of Charles Nicholson's

¹⁰⁴ Bigio, "Albert Fransella," 24.

¹⁰⁵ Shaw, *Shaw's Music*, vol. 3, 152.

flute tone; it is the sound that defined the British flute school. With the earliest stages of the French influence comes the earliest stage of dissent regarding the British style.

Still, the 1890s were quite kind to the flute. Griffith and Fransella made advanced strides in opening up the possibilities of the flute as a solo instrument, not just as the odd novelty concerto in an orchestral concert but in solo recital settings as well. They brought repertoire to their London and provincial audiences that had not been heard, showing that quality solo and chamber music did not have to be limited to the piano and strings. The press rewarded this work by granting them more space than what was seen in the decades to come. Perhaps they did their job only too well—eventually hearing talented flute-playing became commonplace, as implied by Griffith's critic in his 1911 return.

The 1900s

Concert life was booming at the beginning of the new century. The *Musical Times*, which gave the most thorough coverage of musical performances throughout Great Britain, limited its space discussing the performances of Britain's prominent flautists to basic concert information—name, titles of pieces, locations, and so forth—so that as many of the ever growing number of concerts as possible could gain mention. Only the infrequent, vaguest comments about the quality of the performances are ever presented, leaving few precious comments on what type of performances flautists gave. However, the number of different flautists now appearing in concert listings increased dramatically; the flute had become a popular addition to orchestral and chamber music programs. In comparison to the 1890s, when Griffith and Fransella performed frequent solo recitals, only four are reviewed in the first decade of the twentieth century. The 1900s also saw the resurgence of Bach in concert

programs: of the roughly 100 concerts including flautists recorded, over 30 of them included a work of Bach's (unlike the three found in the 1890s). The most popular of these was the *Suite in B minor*, followed by the three Brandenburg concerti that include flute—nos. 2, 4 and 5—and the occasional flute sonata or aria with flute obbligato.

Manchester

In Manchester, the Hallé Orchestra had provided the north with a solid foundation of classical music for over half a century. The original principal flautist, Edward de Jong (1837–1920) continued to perform throughout the provinces in the 1900s. De Jong went to England after growing up in Holland and studying at the Cologne and Leipzig Conservatories.¹⁰⁶ It is likely de Jong was trained in a German style, which was very similar to the British.¹⁰⁷ After twelve years with Hallé, de Jong embarked on a long career as both a flute soloist and conductor, leading a series of Popular Concerts in Manchester for several years.¹⁰⁸ Fitzgibbon described his abilities generously, saying that “in his hands the flute almost becomes articulate; it literally sings, especially on the lower register.”¹⁰⁹ A 1906 recording of de Jong supports this: his tone is thick and strong with a consistent vibration. De Jong's ten appearances of the 1900s included works of Bach, Beethoven, Godard, Widor, and his own compositions.

At the opening of the Royal Manchester College of Music in 1893, de Jong and Jean Firmin Brossa became its first flute professors. Brossa (1839–1914) hailed from Switzerland via Paris; he had studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Louis Dorus, an impassioned

¹⁰⁶ Fairley, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Fitzgibbon, 218.

¹⁰⁸ Stuart Scott, “Edward De Jong: Hallé's First Flute,” *Pan* 11, no. 1 (March 1993), 18.

¹⁰⁹ Fitzgibbon, 214.

promoter of the Boehm-system flute and the teacher of Paul Taffanel, and had played flute quartets with Taffanel and the flutist-composer Donjon. Records from the Louis Lot flute makers in Paris show that he purchased a silver Boehm flute from them in 1863,¹¹⁰ which can be seen in a photo in Stuart Scott's book on the Hallé flautists.¹¹¹ Brossa became principal flute of the Hallé upon de Jong's departure. The influence of the French school is found in Fitzgibbon's description of his playing: "...he possessed [a] wonderfully pure, delicate tone and a marvelous *pianissimo*."¹¹²

Scott cites several reviews from the Manchester press praising Brossa's pure tone and strong execution, both traits that could be sourced to his Parisian training.¹¹³ As a result, both de Jong and Brossa brought an international mix to Manchester both in performance and in teaching. They collectively taught Albert W. Arlom, G. A. Brooke, Alfred Halstead and Vincent Needham, all names of performers found in the early twentieth century.

Arlom came from the northern town of Huddersfield and, other than a brief time as principal flute with the Bournemouth Symphony, based his career in northern England during the early part of the century. His five *Musical Times* reviews might be a small number, but all reflect quality flute repertoire: Bach, Mozart, Widor and Popp. Arlom eventually emigrated to Australia, playing and teaching in Sydney and New South Wales. G. A. Brooke also left England, moving to the United States and playing in the Boston Symphony with Georges Laurent. Before this, however, the *Musical Times* lists him as a performer three times in the town of Sheffield: in 1903 and 1908 he participated in concerts of wind repertoire, and in 1911 he performed the 5th *Brandenburg Concerto* with the Amateur Instrumental Society.

¹¹⁰ Giannini, 178.

¹¹¹ Scott, *Hallé Flutes*, 14.

¹¹² Fitzgibbon, 214.

¹¹³ Scott, *Hallé Flutes*, 15–16.

Alfred Halstead's career kept him active in Glasgow, both as a soloist and as principal flute with the Scottish Orchestra. All his listed solo performances are of Bach's music, a reflection of limited interest in a diverse repertoire by either Halstead himself or by Glasgow audiences. In his performance of the 4th *Brandenburg Concerto* he was joined by Alfred Picton, another Glasgow flautist, who eventually played principal flute in the BBC Scottish Orchestra.¹¹⁴ Vincent Needham is the only one of this first generation of Royal Manchester flautists who remained in Manchester. Originally from Liverpool, Needham held the principal flute positions in both the Liverpool Philharmonic and the Hallé Orchestra (after Brossa). Other than two *Musical Times*-listed performances of Demersseman fantasias, Needham almost exclusively performed works of Bach. However, his artistry of Bach rose above the average performance, with one critic hailing his playing of the Bach *Suite in B minor* as the best Bach playing ever heard in Manchester.¹¹⁵

London

In Britain's capital a new generation of flautists grew to prominence. Fransella continued his active career, joined by his son Henry in 1908. Henry had trained intensively as a child and his talent was "thought to have exceeded his father's."¹¹⁶ Sadly, he died of tuberculosis in 1917 at age 27. Daniel Wood (1872–1927), the original principal flute of the new London Symphony Orchestra (1904), studied at the Royal College of Music.¹¹⁷ He eventually became professor of flute both at the RCM and the Royal Academy of Music, where he was appointed after Frederic Griffith. Fitzgibbon described Wood playing with "a

¹¹⁴ Fairley, 97.

¹¹⁵ Scott, *Hallé Flutes*, 32.

¹¹⁶ Bigio, "Albert Fransella," 24.

¹¹⁷ "Obituary," *The Musical Times* 69, no. 1019 (January 1928): 79.

full, rich tone and faultless execution.”¹¹⁸ With the LSO Wood performed the Bach *Suite in B minor* and the 2nd and 4th Brandenburg concerti as a soloist, and played the flute obbligato of Meyerbeer’s “L’Etoile du Nord” for Luisa Tetrazzini. In 1911 he was privileged to play for King George V’s coronation, and in 1923 played one of several performances of the new *Fugal Concerto* by Gustav Holst. Despite the belief claimed by the *Musical Times* that playing the flute helps to strengthen the lungs,¹¹⁹ lung trouble forced Wood to reduce his performances and eventually led to his relatively early death at age fifty-five.

The 1900s also saw the early performances of two young flautists in training. Robert Murchie received his first *Musical Times* notice in 1907 from a Bach concert at the RCM, where as a student he performed on a cantata performance under Charles Villiers Stanford.¹²⁰ Across town, Edith Penville performed in two RAM concerts in 1909, where she studied with Daniel Wood.

While most of the concerts listed reveal nothing unusual to flute performances, the first decade of the 1900s saw the introduction of Louis Fleury (1878–1926) to Great Britain. This Parisian flautist had been a student of Taffanel’s and became one of the most popular flautists in Europe. His most famous dedicated work is Debussy’s *La Flûte de Pan*, later to become known as *Syrinx*. Considered the scholar of the French Flute School,¹²¹ he published in both *Music and Letters* and *The Chesterian*, writing about flute repertoire and his experiences performing the various European premieres of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*. Before this, however, he made his first English appearance with Dame Nellie Melba in Birmingham in 1905. He returned again in 1907, playing the Mad Scene from *Lucia di*

¹¹⁸ Fitzgibbon, iii.

¹¹⁹ “Answers to Correspondents,” *The Musical Times* 44, no. 725 (July 1903): 485.

¹²⁰ “A Bach Concert at the Royal College of Music,” *The Musical Times* 48, no. 774 (August 1907): 541.

¹²¹ Blakeman, 181.

Lammermoor with Elizabeth Dodge in London, beginning a pattern of at least yearly appearances that lasted until 1912. He returned again in 1919, 1920, 1923 and 1924. Two of the four solo recitals reviewed in the London *Times* were Fleury's. *The Times* called him "a highly accomplished flautist with a fine taste for musical archeology,"¹²² because of his programming of several Baroque works, and all French as well. After his second recital it reported that Fleury "understands where the best possibilities of his instrument lie, and he never forces the tone or aims at display at the expense of genuine expression."¹²³ Fleury also participated in several "French concerts" in Manchester, including a performance of Fauré's *Fantaisie*, with the composer at the piano.¹²⁴ While helping to promote French music in a German-heavy musical culture, Fleury also recognized the need to identify well-written British music for the flute. He does just that in his article "The Flute and British Composers," first published in the *Chesterian* in 1919.¹²⁵

Fleury's extensive presence in Britain marks the first consistent body of influence of the French School on British audiences. While Griffith did play in a French style, his Welsh background and London training and activity blurred the lines between whatever separations might have been between the two as yet undefined schools of playing. By promoting not only the music of his own country but also giving credit to the efforts of British composers to the flute repertoire, Fleury aided even further the contributions of the flute as a solo instrument. As a result, the reputation and popularity of the flute during the 1900s built on the strong foundation given to it by Griffith and Fransella in the previous decade. While repertoire remained on the conservative side with the numerous Bach performances, the concerts of

¹²² "M. Fleury's Concert," *Times* (London), 10 July 1908, 13.

¹²³ "M. Fleury's Concert," *Times* (London), 13 July 1909, 13.

¹²⁴ "Music in Manchester," *The Musical Times* 50, no. 791 (January 1909): 44.

¹²⁵ Louis Fleury, "The Flute and British Composers," *The Flutist* 7, no. 2 (February 1926): 33–6.

Arlom, Brooke and Fleury continued Griffith's and Fransella's promotion of music of a superior quality. The increase in demand and higher appreciation for the flute prepared its audience for the changes to come in the 1910s: more concerts, new repertoire, more French flautists, and London's first major female flautist.

The 1910s

The First World War brought much change to European life, but despite worries, concert life in Great Britain continued. Over 150 concerts are to be found that include the flute during this decade, with the majority of these in 1910–14. The general types of concerts in which flautists performed did not change: orchestral concerts, chamber and choral societies, and performer recitals continued to feature the flute and its repertoire.

Several flautists join the roster of those frequent performers. J. Warner Hollis (1862–1926), a student of Radcliff and Svendsen and flautist in the Italian Opera,¹²⁶ performed with the Bach Choir, for King George V's coronation (with Daniel Wood), and again with Wood on the two-flute obbligato of Meyerbeer's *L'Etoile du Nord*, with Luisa Tetrazzini and the LSO. A Mr. Graeme Brown debuted the alto flute in a concert of the Loreley Choral Society in 1914, which "won immediate approval, both by its tone and by its practical qualities."¹²⁷ Jean Gennin, principal flute with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra from 1911,¹²⁸ performed at least seven times with that orchestra between 1912 and 1917.

E. Stanley Redfern (1866–1921) had been active as a flautist since 1881 beginning in Liverpool, later holding positions in the Bournemouth Symphony and Royal Opera before becoming principal flute of the Hallé Orchestra in 1916. While pictured holding a wood

¹²⁶ Fairley, 61.

¹²⁷ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 55, no. 854 (April 1914): 257.

¹²⁸ Wion, "Orchestral Principal Flutists," internet.

Boehm-system flute, he also for a time played on a gold Conn flute, presented to him during a tour of the United States with Dan Godfrey's band around the turn of the century.¹²⁹ He played 2nd flute to Vincent Needham in performances of the 4th *Brandenburg Concerto* in 1904 and 1910, and on Berlioz's trio from *L'Enfance du Christ* in 1911. In Liverpool he often performed as soloist, though no specific repertoire is listed; in 1918 he played obbligati for the Donizetti "Mad Scene" and Cyril Scott's *Blackbird Song* in a Liverpool Philharmonic concert. Fitzgibbon felt Redfern possessed "a rich, smooth tone and remarkable technique."¹³⁰

London's first major female flautist, Edith Penville, completed her studies with Daniel Wood at the Royal Academy of Music in 1911.¹³¹ At the RAM she performed a piece by fellow student Nellie Fulcher in 1910, and in 1912 performed another work of Fulcher's for the inauguration of the RAM's new building on Marylebone Road. *The Times* recorded another performance by Penville at the RAM on February 23, 1910:

Other instrumentalists who were heard in the course of the afternoon were...Miss Edith Penville, who showed that she possesses remarkably good technique in Widor's Suite for flute and piano, which she played with Miss Nellie Fulcher, but left the hearer regretting that something could not have been chosen for her to play which had a little more value as music.¹³²

Regrettably, her concert reviews do not describe that remarkable technique, leaving no insight into aspects of tone, finger ability, or expression.

¹²⁹ Scott, *Hallé Flutes*, 42 (photo) and 44.

¹³⁰ Fitzgibbon, 215.

¹³¹ RAM student register G, p. 419.

¹³² "Royal Academy of Music," *Times* (London), 24 February 1910, 13.

Penville's talents struck more than just the critics. In 1909 Daniel Wood dedicated his *Valse-Caprice* "to my pupil Edith Penville."¹³³ Neither *The Times* nor the *Musical Times* lists her performing live after 1913, but a series of pieces published by Rudall Carte in the 1920s called *The Flute Player's Journal* was publicized as "from the repertoire of Edith Penville."¹³⁴ These pieces contained both Baroque concert works and the popular encore-type pieces that alternate pretty melodies with virtuosic passages. While Penville's live concerts may have been limited—or at the very least poorly publicized and reviewed—she found high success as a broadcast artist. Between 1924 and 1939, *The Times* printed no less than 65 notices of her broadcasts, including a live studio recital on September 2, 1925 (Chaminade's *Concertino*, George Brun's *Romance* and de Jong's *Rondo Capriccioso*)¹³⁵ and another on May 8, 1931, programmed from 7:45-8:00pm.¹³⁶

The principal flute of the Leeds Symphony Orchestra, Lupton Whitelock, is said to have played a silver flute.¹³⁷ His concert appearances begin in 1911, and in 1913 he started an annual tradition of solo recitals that were reviewed until at the earliest 1915 in the *Musical Times*. Whitelock's reviews show a wide variety of repertoire, ranging from Blavet and Mozart to d'Indy, Cui, and Bowen, though give no description of his playing. Interestingly, the *Musical Times* does *not* list any Bach in his concerts. Of the seven solo recitals listed in the *Musical Times* during this decade, three were given by Whitelock; the others were performed by de Jong (1910), Griffith (the aforementioned 1911 recital), and Fransella (1911 and 1912).

¹³³ Daniel S. Wood, *Valse-Caprice for Flute and Pianoforte* (London: Rudall & Carte, 1909).

¹³⁴ George Frideric Handel, *Menuet, arranged for Flute and Piano by Roland Revell* (London: Rudall & Carte, 1928).

¹³⁵ "Flute Recital from London," *Times* (London), 2 September 1925, 10.

¹³⁶ "A Flute Recital," *Times* (London), 8 May 1931, 4.

¹³⁷ Bigio, Interview, 6 December 2005.

Taffanel's students continued to cross the English Channel from France to England for British performances. Fleury returned five times, three as a guest artist for English artists or societies, and one time each with the Société des concerts français (1910) and the Société des concerts d'Autrefois (1912). Philippe Gaubert (1879–1941), considered Taffanel's direct successor on the flute,¹³⁸ first performed with Dame Nellie Melba in London in 1903 and traveled to London to record obligati with her in 1904.¹³⁹ He returned again with Melba in 1912 for concerts in both London and Liverpool.¹⁴⁰ Georges Barrère (1876–1944), another Taffanel student, appeared in London with his Trio de Lutèce at the Bechstein Hall in 1914, an ensemble he had formed with Paul Kéfer (cello) and Carlos Salzedo (harp) upon moving to New York. The *Musical Times* stated that "the players showed that with skill and good study high artistic results can be obtained from the combination."¹⁴¹

This combination of flute, string and harp reached a high level of popularity during the 1910s. After the English premiere of Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* in 1907, several concerts of old and new repertoire alike began to appear: Needham and Redfern's above-mentioned Berlioz performance in 1911 is a work scored for two flutes and harp; Victor Borlée, second flute with the Queen's Hall Orchestra, performed the Ravel with harpist Miriam Timothy and premiered Eugene Goossens' *Phantasy* for three winds, harp and string quartet (1914) and his *Suite* for flute, viola and harp (1915); and Dame Ethel Smyth composed a set of songs accompanied by flute, harp, piano and string trio in 1915. The crowning piece of the repertoire, however, is Debussy's *Sonata* for flute, viola and harp (1915), which made its London debut in 1917 at a London String Quartet concert, with

¹³⁸ Blakeman, *Taffanel*, 140.

¹³⁹ Nellie Melba, *The Complete Gramophone Company Recordings, Vol. 1*, Naxos 8.110737, 2002, CD.

¹⁴⁰ "A Melba Concert," *Times* (London), 7 October 1912, 4.

¹⁴¹ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 55, no. 857 (July 1914): 472.

Fransella on the flute part.¹⁴² The piece, now a staple of the flute's chamber music repertoire, was generally disliked and did not again appear in London until 1924 with the visit of a Russian harpist,¹⁴³ then in Edinburgh in 1927¹⁴⁴ and London in 1929.¹⁴⁵

While flute performance had undergone several interesting developments in the 1910s, the war did reduce the actual amount of this activity in Great Britain. Both the lower number of concerts and the inadequate content of reviews make it difficult to know in any detail how exactly these performers sounded. Certainly the increase of French performers, combined with the French style of Griffith and the metal flutes of Redfern and Whitelock, opened up the ears of their audiences to show that not all flute performances required wood flutes and a straight tone. With the restoration of peace the number of performances slowly began to rebuild in the 1920s. Fortunately, the development of gramophone recordings and radio broadcasts helped to both expand classical music's audience even further and began to change the priorities of what the British came to value in the sound of the flute.

The 1920s

The Golden Twenties that followed the post-Great War recession found the first stable body of flute activity in Great Britain. The decline of concerts with flute that occurred with the war quickly picked back up so that the decade saw approximately the same number of concerts that the previous decade saw. A part of the return had to do with a surge in Bach performances, which had suffered during the war. While the flute repertoire of the 1910s

¹⁴² "Debussy's Sonata," *Times* (London), 3 February 1917, 11.

¹⁴³ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 66, no. 983 (January 1925): 64.

¹⁴⁴ "Music in Scotland," *The Musical Times* 68, no. 1008 (February 1927): 168.

¹⁴⁵ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 71, no. 1043 (January 1930): 69.

was just under 22% Bach,¹⁴⁶ the master's music made up over 37% of the repertoire of the 1920s. In the 1930s the ratio dropped down again to just over 25%. Of course, the nineteen performances of the *Suite in B minor* and the seventeen performances of the Brandenburg concerti that use the flute (Nos. 2, 4 and 5) make up the majority of these numbers; however, the solo and trio sonatas are well-represented, and in 1929 the *Partita* (BWV 1013) received its first listed public performance in London. Though Bach was a familiar concert name, the expansion of the Bach flute repertoire gave the public something new or that they had not heard in a while.

While the chamber works for flute by Eugene Goossens continued to carry a British thread through the repertoire, the favorite new British work was by far Gustav Holst's *Fugal Concerto* for flute, oboe and strings. First performed at the Promenade Concerts in London by Robert Murchie and Léon Goossens with Holst conducting on October 11, 1923, the *Musical Times* listed 13 more performances in the following eight years—three in the following December alone.

Robert Murchie (1884–1949) moved from Scotland to study the flute at the Royal College of Music in London. While his performing career had a slow beginning—only two post-RCM reviews between 1910 and 1920—Murchie was appointed principal flute in the Queen's Hall Orchestra after Albert Fransella, circa 1922; the shift of the core Queen's Hall Orchestra to the new BBC Symphony Orchestra made Murchie a founding member of London's first contracted orchestra. In addition to his orchestral, solo and chamber music work, Murchie taught at both the Trinity College of Music and the Royal College of Music. His most famous student was Gareth Morris. Both Murchie and Morris came to represent the

¹⁴⁶ All Bach statistics based on listings in *The Musical Times* from 1910-1939.

British School of playing as described at the start of this paper.¹⁴⁷ Murchie played a wooden Rudall Carte flute with a straight, thick tone and amazing dexterity. Former students and colleagues tell of Murchie's unfortunate problems with alcohol that eventually led to the decline of his career. Other than one concert listing for a children's concert in 1946, his last professional review occurred in May of 1938, when he performed the 2nd *Brandenburg Concerto* under Toscanini.¹⁴⁸

Shortly after Murchie's appointment to the Queen's Hall Orchestra came Britain's next imported flautist, John Amadio (1883–1964). Amadio was born in New Zealand, began his career in Australia, and was first reviewed in the London press in 1924. While most of Britain's leading flautists held an orchestral position, Amadio worked freelance during his time there, leaving him free to play numerous chamber concerts, tour the world both with sopranos Nellie Melba and Luisa Tetrazzini and as a soloist, and make recordings. Though Amadio was foreign, his style strongly identified with the stereotypical British school; he played on a wooden flute with a tone that was extremely thick and dense in the low register while small in the top register, and he used a completely straight sound with no hint of vibrato. Amadio also had a tendency to prefer the flashy music more commonly found on programmes of the nineteenth century, making him something of a showman. Two of his recordings currently available today are of Briccialdi's *Il carnevale di Venezia* and Doppler's *Fantaisie pastorale hongroise*,¹⁴⁹ which though both enjoyable are hardly considered serious repertoire. Such a preference made a review of his recording of a Mozart Concerto all the more significant:

¹⁴⁷ When the debate of British versus French playing began, Murchie and Morris supported the British style; their career prominence made them representatives of the British school. See Powell, 236–7.

¹⁴⁸ "London Music Festival: Second Toscanini Concert," *Times* (London), 24 May 1938, 14.

¹⁴⁹ *The Flute on Record, 1902–1940*, compilation by <http://recordings.flutehistory.com> FP001, CD, tracks 12 & 13.

We have all admired John Amadio's dexterity and most of us have wished that he would display it in music more worthy than the show pieces he has usually selected. It is pleasant, therefore, to hear him in a couple of movements from a Flute Concerto by Mozart—tuneful stuff, delightfully played.¹⁵⁰

Amadio eventually returned to Australia and played principal flute in the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

The advent of recording and radio created a valuable new medium not only to widen classical music's audience, but to allow very specifically the public to hear more readily the flautists of the day. While gramophone recordings had been available since the turn of the century, the beginning of the BBC gave flute music to the masses for simply the cost of the radio. A glance at the broadcast listings in the London *Times* that begin in 1923 finds nineteen listings for the flute; by 1925 that number reached 117, and peaked in 1928 at 169. What proved to be more significant than the increase in exposure to Britain's favorite flautists, however, was the use of broadcasts and recordings to hear the famous French flautists who consistently travelled to Britain to perform. Louis Fleury, who had returned to perform in Edinburgh, Aberystwyth (Wales) and London at least six times during the 1920s, was first broadcast in January of 1926¹⁵¹ and then again in March before his death in June.

The Times named René Le Roy (1898–1985) as the “worthy successor” of Fleury.¹⁵² Though Le Roy had appeared in broadcast listings from Paris as early as 1924, he first performed in London at a Music Society concert on November 12, 1928:

His is a wonderful technique such as enables him to phrase with as much subtlety as a violinist. In Honegger's “La Danse

¹⁵⁰ “Gramophone Notes,” *The Musical Times* 69, no.1029 (November 1928): 994.

¹⁵¹ “The Programmes,” *Times* (London), 9 January 1926, 18.

¹⁵² “The Music Society,” *Times* (London), 13 November 1928, 18.

de la Chèvre,” one of the most effective and satisfying pieces ever written for unaccompanied flute, the tone was at one moment shaded off into the next thing to silence and at another was marking the rhythm with hammer-like blows. In Bach’s fifth flute sonata, M. le Roy showed that he is no mere virtuoso, but appreciates breadth and dignity.¹⁵³

The program also included the London premiere of Gabriel Pierné’s *Sonata de camera* for flute, cello and piano, which was composed in memory of Fleury.

These two stars of the French Flute School brought to Great Britain not only the standard fare of Bach, Beethoven, Handel, and Mozart, but performed numerous works of their fellow countrymen: the names Blavet, Busser, Caplet, Cartan, Casella, Couperin, Debussy, d’Indy, Fauré, Hahn, Honegger, Hüe, Inghelbrecht, Milhaud, Pierne, Polignac, Rameau, and Roussel all appear on their concert listings. They were followed shortly by Marcel Moyse, who performed the 5th *Brandenburg Concerto* under Adolph Busch in 1935¹⁵⁴ and then brought the Marcel Moyse Trio to the Aeolian Hall in London in 1939.¹⁵⁵ French stations that broadcast in Britain featured other French flautists whose sound would begin to influence their British contemporaries. Continued French flute presence in performance and repertoire set the stage for the style change to come.

The 1930s

While one might assume that with the Depression came a reduction in concert entertainment, the number of concert listings showing flautists actually rose slightly during

¹⁵³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵⁴ “London Concerts,” *The Musical Times* 76, no. 1113 (November 1935): 1031.

¹⁵⁵ “London Concerts,” *The Musical Times* 80, no. 1152 (February 1939): 141.

the 1930s, numbering around 160.¹⁵⁶ The number of Bach performances returned to around 25% of the repertoire played, and the Mozart concerti and quartets kept their consistent presence in concert programs. A striking interest in other Baroque and early Classical flute music prompted numerous listings of flute works by Handel, Haydn, and Quantz, none of which had been listed in concert announcement or reviews since 1909. English music saw a smaller yet notable progression. Less of Goossens' chamber music was performed, but Holst's *Fugal Concerto* continued to find an audience. Dame Ethel Smyth's *Two Interlinked French Folk Melodies* (composed in 1929) received at least five performances in its flute, oboe, and harp arrangement.

The biggest public increase of new works including flute by one composer came from Sir Arnold Bax, who though less-known today played a significant role in English Renaissance composition. After the *Sonata for Flute and Harp* in 1928, Bax arranged his violin sonata into a *Nonet* for flute, oboe, clarinet, harp, string quartet and double bass for performance in the Bradford Chamber Music Festival in 1930, which met with resounding success:

In the latest compositions [of Bax], and especially in this Nonet, both [his] tendency to develop themes at too great length and the tendency to deck them out too richly are strictly controlled.... This new and more parsimonious style places in a much more favourable light the gifts that we always acknowledged to be his...material that is of our own day yet wholly free from wilful (sic) extravagance. No wonder the Nonet made an exceptionally good impression....¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ This increase is even more significant considering the change in review style in *The Musical Times*: fewer concerts were reported, but those that were received much more detailed review.

¹⁵⁷ F.B., "Bradford Chamber Music Festival," *The Musical Times* 71, no. 1053 (November 1930): 1034.

Bax's increasing success would also come to include the arrangement of the flute and harp sonata into a concerto for flute, oboe, harp and string quartet in 1936. His *Elegiac Trio* of 1917 also received its first listed performance (by the Philharmonic Ensemble in 1939) since 1921. But while Bax's trio returned, the earlier romantic "hits" of the turn of the century had disappeared: Widor and Reinecke's flute works had not been seen in concert listings since 1919 and 1920, respectively; and Godard's *Suite* for flute and orchestra, made so famous by Albert Fransella at that first Promenade Concert in 1895 and last programmed by him in 1922, had only one performance, at the Trinity College of Music in 1937.

Listed personnel frequently included René Le Roy, Robert Murchie, and Lupton Whitelock, and occasionally Joseph Slater (BBC Symphony, of the aforementioned silver flute) and Charles Souper (member of both the Covent Garden and Queen's Hall orchestras and flute professor at the RCM with Murchie). A new crop of flautists joined the roster of concert listings, which would become a part of a generation soon forced to question what it valued in flute sound:

George Ackroyd (Trinity College of Music; future Royal Opera)
 William Alwyn (Royal Academy of Music; future London Symphony and
 noted composer)
 Harold Clarke (TCM; future Royal Opera)
 Arthur Gleghorn (Royal College of Music; future Philharmonia Orchestra and
 Hollywood studios)
 Gerald Jackson (future BBC Symphony and London Philharmonic Orchestra)
 Wilfrid Smith (RAM)
 Gordon Walker (London Symphony Orchestra)

Two important names are left out of this list so that they may be given more attention. The first is John Francis. John Francis Cook (1908–1992) began playing the flute at age 17,¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ This and all the following biographical information from John Francis, "John Francis in Conversation," 8–12.

and after studying privately with Robert Murchie entered the Royal College of Music. Francis was a founding member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Gerald Jackson and also played with the BBC Symphony. As a chamber musician, Francis formed the Sylvan Trio (flute, oboe, piano) with Sylvia Spencer and future wife Millicent Silver while still at the RCM, and was a founding member of the Philharmonic Ensemble, whose flute, clarinet, string quartet, and harp instrumentation allowed for a variety of combinations that resulted in acclaimed performances. During his time at the RCM and in his early career, Francis credited a change in his approach to tone, which he called the “relaxed embouchure,” to hearing early French and Belgian radio broadcasts and experimenting on how to imitate that sound.¹⁵⁹ To be sure, the broadcasts and live performances of Le Roy and Moyse alone would have opened up the possibilities of tone potential.¹⁶⁰ Francis became one of several flautists who would change their style to sound more like their continental brethren.

The one who has earned more notoriety for changing his style, however, is Geoffrey Gilbert. After a successful early career in Manchester and Liverpool, Gilbert became principal flute of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1935. That same year, the French flautist Marcel Moyse came to London and played the 5th *Brandenburg Concerto* with Adolph Busch; the performance was part of a project that involved the recording of all the Brandenburg concerti.¹⁶¹ As Gilbert tells it:

At this time Adolph Busch came over to this country to record the Brandenburg Concertos and he engaged a couple of English oboe players and a trumpet player, but two French flute players (Marcel Moyse and his son). I thought this was unfair and so I talked to the recording manager, Gaisberg. He told me pretty

¹⁵⁹ John Francis, “Teaching the Flute in Schools and After,” 18.

¹⁶⁰ The London Times listed 19 Le Roy broadcasts and 6 Moyse broadcasts between 1930 and 1939.

¹⁶¹ Geoffrey Gilbert, “Geoffrey Gilbert in Conversation with Edward Blakeman,” *Pan* 2, no. 3 (September 1984): 10.

firmly that my sort of playing, and English flute playing in general, was not acceptable to the Gramophone Company.... He just said that we didn't play the same – my style was not an international style and Moyse's was.¹⁶²

For the first time, musical globalization made a serious impact on British flautists. No longer would they be able to simply coexist with those who used the French sound. The larger audience of the recording and the radio demanded a different standard for the increase of available work, and British flautists were now required to make a serious reevaluation of tonal priorities in order to continue. In response to this change, Gilbert accepted Gaisberg's invitation to listen to Moyse's Brandenburg recording at the studio, which turned out to be a "revelation" for Gilbert.¹⁶³ Maturity and career concerns had changed his opinions since his studies with Albert Cunningham. Though he was unable to arrange lessons with Moyse due to scheduling concerns, he did manage to set up lessons with Le Roy during an extended London visit. Thus began a series of changes to his playing that in turn created an impact on British flute performance practice that lasts to this day.¹⁶⁴

British flautists of 1890–1940 led an active professional life. While few presented solo recitals and no full-time, contracted orchestra existed, flautists kept working as members of chamber orchestras, collaborators in other solo and chamber recitals, and as broadcast and recording artists. They performed music from a variety of time periods, though the earlier music of Bach and somewhat also of Mozart made up the majority of the repertoire. Based on the limited critical information available, they seem to have performed on both wood and

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ An area deserving of further study is that of the relative benefits of the French style as to recording. Mixed opinions exist on whether microphones pick up the French sound more favorably than the British. Further acoustical study is needed to determine this.

metal flutes, with a variety of different approaches to tone. A look at how these flautists taught and were taught, through their study methods and repertoire, will show another side to the priorities of this British school. A closer look at the press reviews will give better direction as to how to incorporate the press' effect on both the value of the British school and the direction of change it took. Finally, a study of the recordings made by both the British and French flautists that were available to British consumers will give insight into exactly how these flautists sounded, and either confirm or contradict the definitions we have been given thus far.

Chapter IV

Pedagogy

The generation of John Francis and Geoffrey Gilbert is only now leaving us. Many remain who remember their stories, and well-documented are the articles and interviews they wrote and gave. A key part of the history they left behind is the story not only of the flute they performed, but the flute they learned and then taught. A tradition only becomes a tradition when it can be passed on to others, and the legacy which began so long before with Frederic Griffith came to fruition with Geoffrey Gilbert.

Young British players who wished to study the flute needed only two things: a flute and someone or something to teach them the flute. Not much has changed since then. However, between 1890 and 1940 there were a great many options that are not nearly as viable now. The wide variety of flutes available at the time—Boehm systems, modified Boehm systems, and other multi-key systems—meant that young players might easily have learned one type of flute in youth and needed to switch systems when upgrading to a better instrument. As late as 1927, the *Musical Times* told a correspondent that the eight-keyed flute was still in regular use, and recommended an appropriate flute tutor.¹⁶⁵ Coincidentally, John Francis began on an eight-keyed flute in 1927, and then used a silver Louis Lot flute before finally switching to a wood Rudall Carte.¹⁶⁶ Many of the other flautists discussed thus far began on an old system flute and switched to a Boehm flute at a later date.

¹⁶⁵ "Answers to Correspondents," *The Musical Times* 68, no. 1018 (December 1927): 1136.

¹⁶⁶ Francis, "John Francis in Conversation," 8.

Early flute tutors were numerous, but some found more longevity than others. Charles Nicholson wrote three flute tutors: *Nicholson's Complete Preceptor, for the German Flute* in 1816; *C. Nicholson's Preceptive Lessons for the Flute* around 1825; and *A School for the Flute* in 1836. While the first two books were geared toward absolute beginners, complete with the most basic information on playing, the *School for the Flute* provided exercises for more advanced technical development. In 1873 John Radcliff published a new edition of Nicholson's *School for the Flute*, with an updated fingering chart that worked for the Radcliff flute. The tutor begins with information on how to read music, and provides exercises and fingering charts through all the major and minor keys. Towards the middle of the book there is a section on articulation, which begins saying that "this is a subject on which I am most anxious, as its vast importance (on all instruments) renders it next in consideration to tone."¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, nothing in this volume actually refers to proper tone production. The *Preceptor* and *Preceptive Lessons* did, but were not in print at this point.

Otto Langey published his own *Tutor for the Flute* around 1889, which went through several reprints and is still available through Boosey & Hawkes. Early editions give multiple sets of fingerings: one edition for the 8-keyed, Siccama, closed G# Boehm, and 1867 Pattern flutes; and the 1934 edition gives charts for the 8-keyed, closed G# Boehm, open G# Boehm, 1867 Pattern, and Radcliff model flutes. The directions on how to produce a sound are one of the earliest modern descriptions of British tone production:

This can scarcely be explained; the assistance of a teacher is absolutely necessary; the only rules given here, are that the under lip should cover the embouchure a little less than one half, the mouth being drawn as though in the act of smiling; but the lips must be pressed firmly together, except just in the middle, from whence the current of air must be directed against

¹⁶⁷ Nicholson, 44.

the inner surface of that part of the embouchure which is opposite the aperture of the lips. The tone is produced by directing the air against the mouth-hole and striking the tongue against the palate as though pronouncing the syllables *Too!* or *Doo!* according to the quality of tone required and carefully avoiding expectoration.¹⁶⁸

F. B. Chapman's *Flute Technique* of 1936 gives similar instructions:

Keeping the lips gently closed, extend them a little towards the corners as when half smiling, care being taken not to turn them inwards at all during the process. The 'smile', rather a sardonic one perhaps, should draw in the cheeks against the teeth at the sides and the muscular action will produce a firmness of the lips towards the corners.¹⁶⁹

When changing registers (achieved through the natural harmonics of the instrument), Chapman instructs the reader to press the lips together, thus reducing the size of the lip opening and consequently increasing the pressure of the air stream.¹⁷⁰ The instructions continue with information on specific pitch production, always emphasizing the use of lip adjustments to produce notes and insisting that the breath support remains the same.

If Chapman or other teachers were consulting any other documents to support personal experience, they likely would have turned to R. S. Rockstro's treatise *The Flute*, first published in 1890 and then in a revised edition in 1928. This 660 page tome provides information on practically everything to be known about the flute at the time of its publication. Verbosity aside, Rockstro took into consideration everything that might cause a question for the player or the teacher. A sample follows:

¹⁶⁸ Otto Langey, *Practical Tutor for the Flute, in Four Systems, New Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (London: Hawkes and Son), 4.

¹⁶⁹ F. B. Chapman, *Flute Technique* (London: Oxford University Press), 5.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

The Management of the Lips and the Lower Jaw. The theory of sound-production in the flute has been explained in chapter III, 84 to 112. We have now to regard the subject from a practical point of view, and to consider the means by which to obtain a tone possessing every desirable quality, and free from any objectionable admixture of extraneous sound.

If the front teeth be even and of moderate length, the lower incisors falling naturally behind those of the upper jaw; if the lips be of average thickness, and endowed with strength, flexibility, and smoothness of surface; if, also, the chest be capacious, Nature may be considered to have conferred every physical requisite for the production of perfect tone. By perseverance, however, the ill effects of most of the common impediments may generally be, to a great extent, surmounted. The least inconvenient of these are abnormal receding of the lower jaw, and excessive thickness of the lips: the most serious are the projection of the lower beyond the upper teeth; weakness, thinness, or insurmountable roughness of the lips, and, worse than all, shortness of the upper lip combined with excessive length of the teeth.¹⁷¹

This half-page introduction makes way for further detail on how to attempt to surmount these potential obstacles, from adjustments of jaw position to using cold cream for rough lips.¹⁷²

The instructions on forming a correct embouchure cover details such as the relationship between the lips, the length of the opening between the lips, and the regulation of the stretching of the top lip "according to its thickness."¹⁷³ The comparison to smiling occurs here as well. Once the air has started and a sound is being produced, Rockstro presents a variety of factors to consider adjusting in the pursuit of a better tone quality:

1. Varying the tension of the lips.
2. Turning the mouth-hole inwards or outwards.
3. Raising or lowering the flute on the lip.
4. Altering the deflection of the air-reed (airstream).

¹⁷¹ Rockstro, 431.

¹⁷² Ibid., 432.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 433.

5. Increasing or diminishing the opening of the lips, by greater or less compression.
6. Increasing or diminishing the force of the breath.¹⁷⁴

With so many factors to consider, each with varying degrees, Rockstro has shown that the ultimate trait needed to becoming a true artist of the flute is flexibility of approach. To the flute scholar, such a comprehensive method towards finding true refinement of technique is priceless. To a young beginner looking for help when no teacher is to be found, the sheer volume of information to process is a hindrance rather than a helpmate. For this reason, tutors like the Langey or the Chapman were preferred, at the expense of losing all the minute detail of refinement required by more sophisticated guides. This presented a danger: the next generation of players, taught by these young beginners growing up in small towns, playing in the local band and teaching other young children without further study of technical enhancement, would all play with the same rudimentary approach to the flute, never seeking an improvement to what has become the standard level of accomplishment.

Such a scenario is certainly not limited to flute practice in England, nor anywhere else, nor even to overall performance practice—cultural development itself is subject to these possibilities when considering the expansion of knowledge. But when those flautists who had received the opportunity to listen to Fleury, Le Roy, and Moyse subsequently questioned the value of the tone they were used to hearing and using, they had this backdrop of relatively substandard playing with which to compare it. They were hearing the cream of Parisian flute playing, not the equivalent performances such that might have come from the smaller cities and towns of France. It is quite possible or even likely that the amateur flautists of provincial

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 436.

France were—for lack of a better term—bastardizing the refined sound from Paris the way that Fitzgibbon implied “unskillful players” did in Britain.¹⁷⁵

This speculation is not directed towards detracting from the value of the French Flute School and indirectly the impact it has had on performance practice. However, it might help to understand why reactions such as the effects of Moyse’s playing on Gilbert were so strong. There existed no regular practice of teaching tone in Britain at the time, according to John Francis:

When I was a student, if one had a good tone one was considered lucky and said to have a good embouchure (implying it was something one was born with), much as people say of a singer that they have a good voice. There seemed not to be any idea that a good embouchure was something that could be acquired.¹⁷⁶

Gareth Morris (1920–2007), arguably the ultimate representative of the best of the English Flute School (as it is currently considered), told many stories of his first lessons with Robert Murchie, yet only one of them involved the tone of the flute. Morris had taught himself the flute with the help of a tutorial book until then, and so at his first lesson Murchie had to show him how to put the flute together properly, thus helping him to produce a good sound for the first time.¹⁷⁷ Geoffrey Gilbert, on the other hand, did have a teacher who tried to pass on the habits of finding a better tone. Albert Cunningham, flute teacher at Liverpool College, attempted to teach Gilbert advanced tone work with slow practice and melodic studies, which Gilbert did not value at the time:

I didn't think he was teaching me what I needed to know. His emphasis was on music and I felt I needed to learn to play the

¹⁷⁵ Fitzgibbon, 217. Complete passage in chapter 1.

¹⁷⁶ Francis, “Teaching the Flute in Schools and After,” 18.

¹⁷⁷ Gareth Morris, Interview by author, 7 December 2005.

flute! Now of course I realise I did him a great injustice, because he was trying to make me a musician and I was content to try to make myself a flute player. I didn't realise the two things were synonymous, or should be, because he played in a style that wasn't accepted at the time.... He played exactly like a French flute player on a wooden flute - vibrato and everything - very musically, and I couldn't see it then.¹⁷⁸

There is little information available on Cunningham, so there is no way of knowing how or why he chose to use a French style of playing, especially if it caused aversions such as Gilbert's. Interestingly, the use of slow, melodic studies to develop tone and expression was (and is) the basis of the French flute training. This type of style choice was likely through more contact with the French school than by simply listening to recordings, concerts, or broadcasts and trying to imitate the sound as John Francis had done. Gilbert found what he believed was a more satisfactory training in Joseph Lingard (Royal Manchester College of Music), who taught Gilbert scores of exercises and studies with only two requirements: that there be no wrong notes, and that all the notes be in tune. Helped, perhaps, by the non-vibrato style, flawless finger technique and accurate intonation were—and still are—the benchmarks of British flute playing. In a career culture where there was no fundamentally stable employment, solid technique and high sight-reading abilities were crucial.

Yet for those who had heard the French sound on records or the radio, those lessons that did not emphasize the study of expression and tone turned them away from such teaching. William Bennett (b. 1936, international soloist) has described his early lessons with Joseph Slater as lessons in the wrong tone.¹⁷⁹ Slater was very impressed with Bennett at his “audition” lesson, and gave Bennett a tone exercise to practice for a week. After Bennett returned and showed amazing progress, Slater took his flute and played an excerpt from

¹⁷⁸ Gilbert, “Geoffrey Gilbert in Conversation,” 9-10.

¹⁷⁹ Entire story from William Bennett, Interview by author, 29 November 2005.

Bach's *Suite in B minor*, so that Bennett could "get the right sound." Bennett went home that day and told his mother that he would not take any more lessons with Slater, because he played with the wrong sound. The culprits were the recordings of Marcel Moyse, which Bennett had heard and on which he based his tone preferences.

Richard Adeney, former principal flute with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, had a variety of experience with the different styles of tone. One early teacher, Frank Butterworth, played in the French style and on a silver flute. His teaching combined with the impression of Moyse's recordings "got him practising."¹⁸⁰ His lessons with Murchie at the RCM, however, caused problems. He hated Murchie's sound, and did not find Murchie helpful or open to developing a different type of tone. Murchie was only concerned with clean finger technique, much as Joseph Lingard had been with Gilbert.¹⁸¹

John Francis had also studied with Murchie at the RCM, but did not have such a strong reaction against him. Upon hearing the French sound over the radio Francis simply began to experiment with his embouchure until he found a way to create the tone he sought. He dubbed his method the "relaxed embouchure,"¹⁸² and though he does not try to claim to be the first to use it, the initiative he took to discover it is unique. As a teacher himself, Francis typically would have his students spend the first months relearning their embouchure. He then had them work through a vigorous program of practice: Moyse's *de la Sonorité* for tone, the Vivian scale book and Moyse's *Daily Exercises* for technique, and a series of etude books by Kohler, Boehm, Andersen, and Paganini. Repertoire included the Handel sonatas (which were learned before the Bach), and the orchestral study books of Wilfred Smith.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Robert Bigio, "Richard Adeney at Eighty," *Pan* 19, no. 1 (March 1992): 16.

¹⁸¹ Richard Adeney, Interview by author, 8 December 2005.

¹⁸² Discussed in Francis, "Teaching the Flute in Schools and After."

¹⁸³ Francis, "John Francis in Conversation," 11-12.

This organized method of developing a balanced flautist reflects the pursuit of both the French tone and the British technique.

A Comparative Study: the concepts of Paul Taffanel and Philippe Gaubert, Geoffrey Gilbert and Gareth Morris

Since the foundation of the debate over the different styles of playing was based in tone production, let us compare the writings of Taffanel and Gaubert,¹⁸⁴ Gilbert,¹⁸⁵ and Morris.¹⁸⁶

Taffanel had collected several pages of notes on playing the flute with the intention of producing a book on the subject. He died before completing the project, and so two of his students—Philippe Gaubert and Louis Fleury—took it upon themselves to finish it. Fleury's work became an entry in Albert Lavignac's *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire* of 1926, and Gaubert's version became the noted *Méthode Complète pour Flûte*, a staple of flute teaching methods today.

The opening pages of the *Méthode* provide guidelines to tone production. The introductory remarks state that:

When practising all exercises or studies whatever the degree of difficulty, the student will always remember this rule: tone, purity of sound and intonation must go before concern in fingering.¹⁸⁷

The pages go on to describe the use of lip and air direction changes to obtain higher pitches, the positive benefits of legato practice, and approaches toward intonation correction. These

¹⁸⁴ Paul Taffanel and Philippe Gaubert, *Méthode Complète de Flûte: En Huit Parties* (Paris: A. Leduc, 1923).

¹⁸⁵ Floyd, *Gilbert Legacy*.

¹⁸⁶ Gareth Morris, *Flute Technique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁸⁷ Taffanel and Gaubert, 3.

instructions, while reliable, read like any standard flute tutor. The purpose of all these details comes later in the text:

The breath is the soul of the flute, and the culminating point in the art of playing. The disciplined breath must be a docile agent, now supple, now powerful, which the flutist should be able to govern with the same dexterity as that with which a violinist wields his bow. It is the motion force behind the sound and the spirit which animates it, gives it life and becomes a voice capable of expressing all the emotions. The lips, the tongue, the fingers are only its servants; it is by the breath alone that the artist can communicate to the world outside the most exclusive nuances, the thousand inflections of the music with its infinite variety.¹⁸⁸

While such a description is rather poetic, it does give the inspiration behind all the technical work—the end that drives the means. The practice required to gain the skills necessary for such higher-level musicianship is not found in scales and studies, but in the development of an expressive language. The early British tutors by Langey or Chapman never present such a goal to their readers.

Two books provide insights into the teachings of Gilbert and Morris.¹⁸⁹ Angeleita Floyd compiled information from interviews, master classes, and student recollections to write *The Gilbert Legacy*, which not only outlines Gilbert's biography but gives a detailed account of his pedagogical practices. Morris wrote his book himself, *Flute Technique*, published in 1991, and which represents his pedagogical views on flute playing. Morris sat as principal flute of the Philharmonia Orchestra from 1948 to 1972 and served as professor of flute at the Royal Academy of Music from 1945 to 1985.¹⁹⁰ Morris played a wooden flute

¹⁸⁸ Taffanel and Gaubert, 185.

¹⁸⁹ Portions of this analysis taken from Raposo, Jessica. *Geoffrey Gilbert and the English Flute Tradition*. Unpublished.

¹⁹⁰ Powell, 241.

throughout his entire career, and is considered the strongest exponent of the British flute tradition in the twentieth century. However, his playing was considered “less severe and more ‘expressively’ and elegantly phrased”¹⁹¹ than that of his more traditional colleagues. A look at his teaching on the flute embouchure, production of dynamics, and vibrato provide a strong contrast to Gilbert’s teaching in Floyd’s *Legacy*.

Before continuing, one note: in conversation, Gareth Morris would become very resolute in one thing: he did not subscribe to the idea of flute schools. He sought to play music, not to represent a supposed national ideal.¹⁹² Furthermore, playing on a wood flute was not a stylistic choice; it was simply what people played when he began. The sound produced depended on the player, not the material of the flute. To prove his point, Morris told a story of a trip to Bill Lewington Music, where he was helping a student choose an instrument. He asked Mr. Lewington if he would like to hear him play a silver flute—and produced the silver flute sound on a wooden flute. He then switched the instruments and created a wooden sound on the silver flute. The tone of the flute was a means of expression to Morris, not the result of a formula. Interestingly, it is the man considered the cream of British flute style who disagreed with the concepts behind the stereotypical British flute school. For Morris there was no British flute or French flute; there was simply music.

Morris taught an embouchure that consisted of lips drawn back in a slight smile and held firmly against the teeth.¹⁹³ When making adjustments for notes in the third octave of the flute range, he advised using a small upward lip movement to decrease the opening of the lips.¹⁹⁴ No other change should occur—the venting allowed by the special fingerings used in

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁹² Gareth Morris, Interview by author, 1 December 2005.

¹⁹³ Morris, *Flute Technique*, 12.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

this octave would accommodate any other needs for the notes. Dynamics are achieved through adjustments in the firmness of the corners of the lips and position of the jaw.¹⁹⁵ In contrast, Gilbert taught a relaxed embouchure with lips in a neutral position; in fact, he expressly stated that the embouchure should be the exact opposite of a tight, smiling position.¹⁹⁶ He believed that the upward jaw movement—as taught by Morris—actually cut off the air stream in the upper register, adversely affecting the sound. The lips should always be relaxed and flexible, and it is the combination of flexible lip movements and variety of air pressure that will support the different registers and dynamics of pitch.¹⁹⁷ It should be noted that Morris stressed that the embouchure must not be tight or tense; he advocated firmness of the embouchure, but recognized that tension would harm the tone rather than help it. Still, the differences between Morris and Gilbert's respective teachings point to the differences in both their concepts of proper flute tone and the needs of the instruments on which they played.

The questions over vibrato—should or should it not be used, should it be constant or carefully applied, is it natural or practiced—are also a key part of the debate over the styles of playing.¹⁹⁸ The standard depiction of the debate bases the divide on the premise that the new-style players believed in using a constant but variable vibrato, while the old-style players felt that vibrato should not be used at all. To read the comments by both Taffanel and Gaubert and Morris is thus striking. Taffanel and Gaubert wrote:

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁹⁶ Floyd, 53.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁹⁸ The definition of “vibrato” creates a problem in defining terminology. Often “vibrato” and “expression” are used interchangeably, implying a vibrato that is not a specific ornament as found in early music performance practice, but is an inherent element of musical content. It is possible that the vibrato (or expression as called by the French-style flautists) refers to the vibrating resonance which comes from the use of a relaxed embouchure and air passage; the tighter embouchure of the British impedes this resonance. This entire issue and its role in phrasing deserves its own area of study.

There should be no vibrato or any form of quaver, an artifice used by inferior instrumentalist and musicians. It is with the tone that the player conveys the music to the listener. Vibrato distorts the natural character of the instrument and spoils the interpretation fatiguing quickly a sensitive ear. It is a serious error and shows unpardonable lack of taste to use these vulgar methods to interpret the great composers. The rules for their interpretation are strict: it is only by purity of line, by charm, deep feeling and heartfelt sincerity that the greatest heights of style may be reached. All true artists should work towards this ideal.¹⁹⁹

Here is Morris' opinion:

As with most facets of flute technique, vibrato is the servant of the music; the paramount consideration is to restrain it from becoming obvious. Fastidious taste is offended by its extravagant use, which makes a generous contribution to the cloying style of playing that is so unworthy of this instrument....

A perpetual vibrato is to be discouraged, because its cultivation is at the expense of interpretation and destroys the true sound of the flute. Irritating to the listener and annoying to players of other instruments, it often verges on absurdity, yet only the most heartless flautist manages with none at all and it is an integral part of a fine artist's style. Such a natural element of the sound cannot be acquired, and its absence is a rare phenomenon suggesting a sad lack of musicality.²⁰⁰

The fact that Taffanel and Gaubert state explicitly that there should be *no* vibrato contradicts not only those who base their definition of the French style on this aspect of tone, but contradicts the French flautists themselves: recordings of Gaubert, Barrère, Moyse, and Le Roy reveal a consistent vibrato in their tone. Somehow they considered there to be a distinction between a tone that included an affected vibrato versus a tone that in its expressiveness exuded a vibrating resonance. Vibrato coming from musical expression was

¹⁹⁹ Taffanel and Gaubert, 186.

²⁰⁰ Morris, *Flute Technique*, 48.

allowable; vibrato for the sake of vibrato was not. Morris' writing reveals a similar position. He was not against vibrato; he was simply against what he considered to be *bad* vibrato—vibrato that did not match the shapes and colors of the musical phrase. Morris could not understand why decent players would choose to go to France and return “ruined,” with a wobbly sound and a new silver flute,²⁰¹ as though these things could create better technique. These changes would not guarantee better musicianship by themselves; they could only be used as tools in developing better musicianship. This is a subtle distinction, and one that may not have been understood by some of those who decided to imitate that French expression. Morris' playing supports his words: both his recording of *Afternoon of a Faun*²⁰² and his recording of Bach's *Suite No. 2 in B minor*²⁰³ (both recorded in the 1950s) display a tone where most of the tone is straight, but some vibrato enters at higher points within the different phrases. An article discussing vibrato in British playing tells of Morris' BBC broadcast of the Poulenc *Sonata*, when he used a varied, diaphragmatic vibrato throughout the piece.²⁰⁴ His tone was not colorless, and not without the resonance associated with vibrato; it simply was not comprised of one continuous wave without consideration of musical phrasing.

This philosophy of vibrato is not too different from Gilbert's. He also believed that vibrato should be inherent in the sound, and would occur naturally when the breath support was sufficient. However, he also believed that vibrato needed to be taught carefully rather than be left to develop on its own:

²⁰¹ Morris, interview, 1 December 2005.

²⁰² Johann Sebastian Bach, *Bach Suites*, Philharmonia Orchestra (London: Angel Records, 2005), LP.

²⁰³ *Homage to Diaghilev: the Music of his Famous Ballets*, Philharmonia Orchestra (London: Angel Records ANG 35151–35153, 1954), LP.

²⁰⁴ Lis Lewis, “Did the ‘English’ Style use Vibrato?” *Pan* 23, no. 2 (June 2004): 16.

I have found from experience that the French temperament is such that most French flutists play with vibrato naturally. On the other hand, the English are trained almost from birth not to reveal their emotional involvement. Therefore, it has been necessary for me to teach the mechanics of playing with vibrato because the English are not so inclined to be expressive naturally.²⁰⁵

Perhaps Gilbert believed that an absence of vibrato meant an absence of emotion, that the two are one and the same. His recordings reveal an always-present vibrato within the sound, best exemplified in Gluck's *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* and Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp*. Interestingly, Gilbert reduced his vibrato use when playing in orchestra; his recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, while revealing a distinct difference from the straight sound of the second flutist, shows his concern and sensitivity to the blend of the woodwind sound. While the audible differences in the two different styles are obvious, the philosophy behind the vibrato production is surprisingly similar. Their aims were the same, but the tone colors they valued were different.

²⁰⁵ Gilbert, during a private lesson in 1982. Quoted in Floyd, 91.

Chapter V

Reception and Perception: The Flute and the Press

The press has always had the power to guide and shape public opinion on all facets of societal culture, and music makes no exception. The term “English Musical Renaissance” itself was coined by a journalist in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1882, giving credence to an as yet not wholly defined movement that sought to carve out a place for itself in European music history. Meirion Hughes has written the only comprehensive study of the work of the papers and journals whose editors worked to promote English composers and performers.²⁰⁶ His work discusses how the structure and tone of musical criticism both affected and reflected the goals and desires of those who wished to prove that England was not a land without music.

As the flute experienced its own Renaissance, in a sense, the writing and criticism regarding its practitioners give insight into the public among which these performers strove to survive. A selection of articles and notices from *The Musical Times*, England’s leading music journal, and *The Times*, England’s leading newspaper, paint an absorbing image of what attitudes and even biases affected these careers. While *The Times* gives strong opinions on a performance or a composition when called for, *The Musical Times* entries tend toward a general veneer of polite approval for the sake of preserving a positive image. This dichotomy of opinion might seem to show a lack of honesty in musical criticism, but actually it gives a

²⁰⁶ Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, 1850–1914: Watchmen of Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

more honest view of what influences would have led flautists to make the performance choices that they did.

The Flute and Expectations

The reviews of Frederic Griffith included earlier in this paper show the obvious favor given to this young performer. Yet even the smaller listings regarding Griffith's concerts show that his performances were not simply illustrative of Griffith as a flautist, but of larger issues. A recital announcement in the *Musical Times* concludes "there can be no doubt that the young Welsh flautist deserves support in these efforts to make known the good music which has been written for his instrument."²⁰⁷ Not only does Griffith bear the responsibility of promoting the value of his instrument, but he also is a representative of the Welsh musician.

The duty itself of promoting the virtues of the flute and its performance presented an uphill battle. Below the above concert announcement was a notice about a lecture given in California by Professor H. Clay Wysham, saying that he "recently lectured at Berkeley (Cal.) on 'Musical Echoes of Home Songs,' and 'illustrated the popular tunes of the nations upon seven different varieties of flutes.' Shade of Cherubini!"²⁰⁸ The reference to Cherubini, the early nineteenth century composer and former director of the Paris Conservatoire, invokes a popular story: one posed a question to Cherubini, asking what was worse than one flute, to which the composer promptly and nonchalantly replied, "two." While meant lightly, the reference does intimate a predisposition towards a general negative opinion on the flute. Professor Wysham, sadly, did not take this jest lightly. Two months later, the "Facts,

²⁰⁷ "Facts, Rumours, and Remarks," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 33, no. 597 (November 1892): 662.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Rumours and Remarks" column included a lengthy entry from the editor regarding a letter he had received from Wysham, of which "the contents were quite hot on arriving."²⁰⁹ The entry did not include the entire letter but gave samples of the language used, in a way, to dress down the journal for its insensitivity in publishing such a remark:

He takes it for granted that our "ignorance is as dense as a Hottentot's," and that we are "simply mean and malicious." He sends us some "literature" (from his own pen) with an injunction to study it as the beginning of our education....

How can we associate the warbling flute, that solace of melancholy and minister of resignation, with wrathful Mr. Wysham? of whom it may be said, with Dryden, "Tempests and whirlwinds through his bosom move." Every flautist's crest should be a dove....²¹⁰

Such a statement indicates a set of personality traits identified with flautists at the time: sentimental, passive, peaceful—hardly traits found in the defiant Mr. Wysham.²¹¹ The exchange continued in subsequent journals, with Wysham's behavior attracting further reproach from the editor. While anyone reading this would know that Wysham reflects an extreme character irrespective of specialty, the editor's doubt as to the association between him and the flute shows that the instrument creates a behavioral expectation against which Griffith, Fransella and others were subconsciously held.

A May 1895 article also began a series of letters regarding the place of wind instruments in the concert repertoire. A correspondent from Leeds wrote a letter lamenting

²⁰⁹ "Facts, Rumours, and Remarks," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 34, no. 599 (January 1893): 19.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ This language, of course, invites gender implications connected with the flute and flute playing. It seems that the flute was indeed perceived as an "effeminate," non-manly instrument. However, it remained solely a man's instrument in the US until the 1950s, the UK until the 1960s, and even later in Germany and Austria. These traits could easily have been based in Victorian propriety or even religious beliefs on behavior. This area of research would be worth exploring further.

both the lack of new works for winds, and the lack of their performances, prompting this commentary:

The complaint is not a new one, but no one who knows the facts of the case will deny that, in spite of recent efforts, it is still amply justified. Even in London the admirable performances of chamber music for wind instruments, which were started about five years ago and seemed about to establish themselves on a permanent basis, are no longer given; and at other Concerts the number of pieces played in which a wind instrument figures is very small indeed. It should in justice be said, however, that the fault lies in large measure with the great composers, whose noblest utterances in the region of music for the chamber have rarely been confided to the wind instruments. The septet of Beethoven, the octets of Mendelssohn and Schubert, the Clarinet Quintet of Mozart, and one or two others are exceptions, the enormous popularity of which proves that no prejudice exists in the public mind against the instruments on behalf of which our correspondent pleads. Excepting these few favoured works, it is impossible to overlook the fact that all the greatest pieces of chamber music extant have been written for pianoforte, or strings, or both.²¹²

The ensuing discussion through letters provided fodder for Fransella's continued efforts to promote wind instrument music a few years later.

While wind instruments received support overall and individual performances received praise, the flute itself somehow remained in an almost inferior state of opinion. A notice in September of 1895 states that:

Emperor William is said to be taking lessons on the flute. Well, that is harmless, at any rate, and possibly soothing.²¹³

²¹² "Occasional Notes," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 26, no. 627 (May 1895): 306.

²¹³ "Facts, Rumours, and Remarks," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 36, no. 631 (September 1895): 600.

On a less flippant note, nine entries in the "Answers to Correspondents" column between 1928 and 1937 recommend the flute as the best instrument to choose for beginning amateurs. While commonly listed reasons are that it is pleasant to listen to and is in possession of a good body of repertoire, almost all the entries make some reference to the flute being the easiest instrument to learn within a limited amount of time. Other instruments might inspire higher levels of musicianship while overcoming the difficulties of learning them, but the ease of learning the flute enables the amateur to be satisfied with only the most basic levels of skill.

Still, the overall tone of reviews was positive, if vague. The commentary rarely discussed aspects of playing that could have produced interesting discussion regarding performance practice, choosing instead to use simple platitudes. It is possible that the large number of concerts to list led the editor to keep the reviews simple, giving recording personnel and repertoire, date and location, with the occasional sentence or descriptive adjective:

- ...considerable success in the B minor Suite for flute and strings...²¹⁴
- The latter is sung as you expect it to be, and voice and flute have a pretty encounter...²¹⁵
- The clever flute playing of ... should be mentioned.²¹⁶

or sometimes the occasional:

- Would have been better postponed until the players knew it...²¹⁷

²¹⁴ "Music in Scotland," *The Musical Times* 66, no. 983 (January 1925): 72.

²¹⁵ "Gramophone Notes," *The Musical Times* 66, no. 984 (February 1925): 136.

²¹⁶ "Royal Academy of Music," *Times* (London), 2 February 1909, 11.

²¹⁷ "Wind Instrument Society," *Times* (London), 15 February 1892, 10.

- ...both unusually interesting from the point of view of tone-colour.²¹⁸

All display a lack of detail, with no supporting statements to explain the opinions rendered. Thus the reviews reveal very little about how the performers played.

In October 1922, *Music & Letters* published an article by Louis Fleury entitled “The Flute and its Powers of Expression.”²¹⁹ In it Fleury outlined the history of the flute’s changing popularity. It had started out well, with excellent repertoire by Handel, Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, but “the moment flautists tried to compete with violinists, giving themselves over to fireworks and the expression of hectic sentiment, people of good taste would have no more to do with them.”²²⁰ Fleury then continued with the story of Taffanel and his work to revive the flute’s popularity by both finding and performing the vast old repertoire and by encouraging modern composers to write works for it. After a lengthy repertoire discussion, Fleury outlines the characteristics of the flute—melancholy sweetness, pathos, wit and gaiety—using examples from the repertoire that emanate such expression. The overall tone of the article is, in a sense, a cry for change: a call to end the low expectations of flutes and flautists alike on the part of the public and a challenge to the performers to be worthy of those new expectations. The French had managed to achieve this, and Fleury presented how they did so as a model for other countries to do the same.

By the mid-1920s, the *Musical Times* began writing longer reviews of concerts, selecting a few to stand out amongst the lists of performances. With the new review style, it seems as if the primary concerts selected for full review were those of Le Roy and Moyse. Le Roy’s first London concert, discussed earlier with a *London Times* review, also received a

²¹⁸ Alfred Kalisch, “London Concerts,” *The Musical Times* 62, no. 937, (March 1921): 183.

²¹⁹ Louis Fleury, “The Flute and its Powers of Expression,” *Music and Letters* 3, no. 4 (October 1922): 383-393.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 384.

full column in the *Musical Times*. Moyse's concert with the Marcel Moyse Trio in 1939 received a particularly descriptive review:

Long ago Saint-Evremond recognized that the French prize above all things grace and finesse in composition and execution. Here were examples to prove this true—pieces for flute, violin and piano ranging from Couperin's 'Apothéose de Lulli' to 'Musique de Cour!' by Jean Françaix, a Trio by Rabaud, a 'Petite Suite en 3 mouvements' by Honegger, and a Trio by Duruflé, besides Debussy's Sonata for violin and piano. France, too, is famous for her wood-wind players. Here was Marcel Moyse, a charming artist on the flute, worthily upholding these traditions. The 'Duo pour flûtes,' in which M. Moyse was seconded by his son Louis Moyse, was the revelation of the evening. Whoever said (was it Cherubini?) that the only thing worse than one flute is two flutes, was a curmudgeon. The rounding-out of tone when they play in consort is delicious.²²¹

The technical comment—that "rounding-out of tone"—is slight, but a part of a review that gives a positive and complimentary perspective on French music and musicians. By associating the flute playing of the Moyses with that tradition, the critic positions the flute in a place that is more worthy of detailed attention than what it had received in the past. No review of a British flautist of the time inspired such a statement. That everlasting curse cast by Cherubini still continued to lurk in the collective opinion but yet, somehow, the French helped the British learn to love the flute.

The British Reception of Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp*

A key part of Paul Taffanel's career and the subsequent development of the French Flute School was the promotion of new works by French composers. As the expressive

²²¹ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 80, no. 1152 (February 1939): 141.

elements of flute technique developed, the need arose for music composition to develop in order to exploit those elements. The Impressionist music composed by Debussy and Ravel thoroughly took advantage of the palette of flute colors available to them, most evident in the principal flute parts to *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Daphnis et Chloé*. Yet for both performers and audiences unfamiliar with the new French flute style, such color demands could create difficulties in the realization and appreciation of the score. The opinions of the British press toward some of this music reflect this problem.

Claude Debussy's *Sonate pour Flûte Alto et Harpe* (1915) is now considered one of the most significant chamber works in the flute repertoire. Debussy, the self-titled "Musicien Français," composed this sonata at a difficult time in his life—outside, his beloved country was overrun with the tragedies of war; personally, his body was overrun with the tragedy of cancer. The need to celebrate, honor and memorialize both his country and his contribution to its culture was acute. In London, however, several years passed before it began to earn value to British audiences. The first performance in London occurred on the 2nd of February 1917 in the Aeolian Hall, with Albert Fransella on flute, Miriam Timothy on harp, and one of the London String Quartet on viola.²²² The *Musical Times* kept its review of the work short, as though to avoid conflict: "It elicited various opinions."²²³ The *London Times*, however, chose not to mince words:

Debussy seemed to be supremely conscious of the limitation imposed upon him by such a choice of instruments. The unicolour of the flute as a treble and the inadequacy of the viola as a bass, hardly relieved by the harp, which did not amalgamate, demanded something exceptionally interesting as the subject of their conversation. What he provided, however, was cleverness; and when three very clever people get talking the result is sometimes dull for the listeners. If there had only

²²² "Chamber Music: Debussy's Sonata," *Times* (London), 3 February 1917, 11.

²²³ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 58, no. 889 (March 1917): 130.

been a "Brandenburg" *tutti* to dissect and discept [sic] and occasionally to applaud what was said, the *conversatione* would have been more human. The individual parts were beautifully played, but quite coldly, as it was impossible to get any warmth into such music.²²⁴

At first glance, the critic seems to be censuring the composition and not the performance, especially with the ending stipulation that the performance was cold "as it was impossible to get any warmth into such music." The comparison to a clever conversation does fit the piece; a rousing chorus interspersed with organized statements is not reflective of a true conversation, but of a clearly planned speech or debate. But while the "individual parts were beautifully played," the critic never heard the blend of colors that Debussy's instrumentation made possible. Modern performers and audiences understand the great emotion and warmth inherent in this work, however, so why the lack of feeling? What might have been a critique of the composition could also have been a critique of the performance, highlighting the performers' inability to capture the variety of sound within the work. But most obvious is the prejudice of the British critic against modern French music, a prejudice that, rightly or not, colored also his perception of the performance.

The sonata next entered the press in 1924, with the concert of a newly-arrived Russian harpist, Maria Korchinska. Again, both reviews reflect different opinions. The *London Times* notes:

The group was completed by the Sonata for flute, viola, and harp, which was one of Debussy's last works. It was admirably played by the concert-giver, with Mr. C. Kony...and Mr. Raymond Jeremy. But nothing could conceal the weakness of this music, in which there is neither continuity of idea nor real inspiration.²²⁵

²²⁴ "Chamber Music: Debussy's Sonata," *Times* (London), 3 February 1917, 11.

²²⁵ "Recitals of the Week: the Harp as Solo Instrument," *Times* (London), 5 December 1924, 12.

And the *Musical Times* offers the following:

The concert was not all harp, a disposal much to the credit of the player's good sense. She called in Mr. C. Kony (flautist) and Mr. Raymond Jeremy (violist) to vary the monotony of her poetic instrument, and they joined in the rarely heard Sonata of Debussy for those three instruments—one of the latest of his compositions, and one that seems to speak of lassitude and a destroyed serenity.²²⁶

Though *The Times* continued to dislike the work, at least the critic did not elaborate, choosing to simply compliment the performance, and the *Musical Times* critic found a performance that communicated more of the tragic inspiration to the work.

Not until a recital by René Le Roy in 1929 did the sonata gain a positive opinion both in composition and performance. In his November 27 recital at the Wigmore Hall, Le Roy performed Bach, Handel, and Mozart before the Debussy. Both reviews show a change of attitude towards the work (beginning with the *Times*):

The danger of monotony, which must present itself at a flautist's recital, was cleverly evaded by Mr. René Le Roy at Wigmore Hall on Wednesday.... (In) Debussy's Sonata Mr. Pierre Grout (viola), Mr. Pierre Jamet (harp), and the recitalist achieved the delicate balance required for this work, in which the problems of an unusual and difficult combination are so beautifully solved.²²⁷

The critic from the *Musical Times* actually has the opposite opinion from that of the first review in 1917:

A flute recital does not, on the face of it, sound enticing, but Mr. René Le Roy managed to make it so.... Debussy's Sonata for flute, harp and viola, of which a very beautiful performance

²²⁶ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 66, no. 983 (January 1925): 64.

²²⁷ "Recitals of the Week," *Times* (London), 29 November 1929, 12.

was given...is an extraordinarily successful piece of purely decorative music. Nothing particular is said, and nothing happens, but we are kept entranced by the dissolving colours of the three instruments so exquisitely blended by the composer.²²⁸

The work, which had been hindered by the limits of its instrumentation that resulted in a cold performance, is now entrancing in its exquisite blend of colors. Both reviews also had specific comments on Le Roy's musicianship, with *The Times* claiming "His tone was always round and mellow, and quite free from the breathiness which some flautists are unable to avoid"²²⁹ and the *Musical Times* complimenting his "mellow tone and lovely phrasing."²³⁰ Perhaps it was Le Roy's expressive French style of playing, combined with a higher level of acceptance of modern music that had developed in London since the sonata's British debut, which made this performance of the Debussy Sonata a critical success.

One more performance of the sonata appears in review before 1939, at a Wigmore Hall concert of the Quintette Instrumentale de Paris on May 22, 1933. With René Le Roy at the helm, this quintet of flute, violin, viola, cello and harp performed several chamber works including two new pieces and, of course, the Debussy. The *Musical Times* placed more emphasis on an unsatisfactory Rameau trio, saving the modern works for the end:

The 'Variations libres et Finale' by Pierné, and the Suite by d'Indy—both dedicated to René Le Roy and the Quintette Instrumental de Paris—had that tinge of dulness (sic) often associated with *pièces d'occasion*. Debussy's Sonata for flute, violin, and harp was on all counts the gem of the evening.²³¹

²²⁸ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 71, no. 1043 (January 1930): 69.

²²⁹ "Recitals of the Week," *Times* (London), 29 November 1929, 12.

²³⁰ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 71, no. 1043 (January 1930): 69.

²³¹ "London Concerts," *The Musical Times* 74, no. 1085 (July 1933): 641.

This is a short review, to be sure, but positive support nonetheless. The London *Times* does not even mention the work in its review, choosing instead to focus on the Rameau and Mozart trios; the Pierné is given one sentence to commend the polish of the ensemble work and the d'Indy is only mentioned as a part of the program.

These reviews show a wide spectrum of opinion regarding both the work itself—its compositional organization and its instrumentation—and the various aspects of performance. Conflicts of opinion are divided both by the origins of the performers (the Dutch-British Fransella versus the Russian Kony and the French Le Roy) and over time. As audiences gained more exposure to modern music they also became familiar with different performance traditions, and a piece like Debussy's *Sonata* was no longer so foreign or cold. These changing currents were aided not only by the increased variety of live music, but by the popularity of the gramophone and its dissemination of music to all corners of the United Kingdom.

Chapter VI

The Flute and the Recording Industry

Little did Thomas Edison know that when he invented his cylinder phonograph in 1877 he would change the face of music's cultural impact. With both the gramophone and the wireless radio, people living in the most remote parts of the country became a part of the classical music audience. The Gramophone Company was created in Great Britain in 1897, and the flute was a part of its very early history: Albert Fransella recorded several pieces for them as early as 1898.²³² Other British flautists who took advantage of this new medium were English soloist Eli Hudson (1877–1919); John Lemmoné (1861–1949), Australian solo flautist and friend and manager to the soprano Dame Nellie Melba; and Edward de Jong. By the 1920s, flautists John Amadio, Edith Penville, and Robert Murchie all recorded and broadcast flute music regularly.

In Paris, the students of Taffanel created records of their own. Adolphe Hennebains (1862–1914)²³³ recorded the *Badinerie* from Bach's *Suite in B minor* in 1905, and Philippe Gaubert, Marcel Moyse, and René Le Roy left behind several records. (Unfortunately Taffanel had already retired from playing when the market for recordings grew, and for some reason Louis Fleury never recorded anything.) These recordings found a market throughout Europe, and whether aware of it or not, their English audience incorporated that sound into their own definition of what a flute sounds like.

²³² Powell, 225.

²³³ Officially, Hennebains never studied with Taffanel at the Paris Conservatoire; he studied with Henry Altés. However, after one year of playing with Taffanel in the *Opéra*, Hennebains claimed that Taffanel was "his true teacher." See Blakeman, 98.

One of the most telling stories from this time is that of Dame Nellie Melba's London recordings of 1904. Despite having performed with Frederic Griffith and Albert Fransella, Melba had the Gramophone Company bring a young Philippe Gaubert to London from Paris for her first set of recordings, playing on the "Mad Scene" from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and "Sweet Bird" from Handel's *Il Penseroso*.²³⁴ Several of the best early flute recordings are actually of obbligati played with the famous sopranos of the time: Melba recorded with Fransella and Lemmoné²³⁵ in addition to Gaubert,²³⁶ Luisa Tetrazzini with Fransella²³⁷ and Murchie,²³⁸ and Austrian soprano Selma Kurz with Amadio.²³⁹

Side by Side: Gaetano Donizetti's "Mad Scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor*

Two of Europe's leading sopranos at the turn of the century made lengthy recorded collections of the most popular arias and songs of their day during the early 1900s. Dame Nellie Melba, long-established in London, opened her home to the Gramophone Company in March 1904, recording amongst other works the "Mad Scene" from *Lucia* with Philippe Gaubert on the famous obbligato duo.²⁴⁰ In December 1907, shortly after her Covent Garden premiere, Luisa Tetrazzini began her own set of recordings; her "Mad Scene" is with Albert Fransella.²⁴¹ As Fransella had sold his gold flute in 1905, we can assume that he played on a wood flute while Gaubert played his silver Louis Lot. Some fundamental differences exist between the two recordings: Melba recorded from her home with a piano accompaniment,

²³⁴ Melba, *The Complete Gramophone Recordings, Vol. 1*, tracks 7–9, 22.

²³⁵ Nellie Melba, *Soir Païen* by Georges Hüe, recorded 19 May 1910, London: British Library Sound Archives 1LP0143687, accessed 8 December 2005.

²³⁶ Nellie Melba, *The Complete Gramophone Company Recordings, Vol. 2*, Naxos 8.110738, 2002, CD.

²³⁷ Luisa Tetrazzini, *Luisa Tetrazzini – The London Recordings, Vol. 1 (1907–1914)*, Vocal Archives VA1122, 1996, CD.

²³⁸ Luisa Tetrazzini, *Luisa Tetrazzini*, Pearl GEMM CDS 9920, CD, disc 3, track 8.

²³⁹ "Gramophone Notes," *Musical Times* 65, no. 981 (November 1924): 1007.

²⁴⁰ Melba, *The Complete Gramophone Recordings, Vol. 1*, track 7.

²⁴¹ Tetrazzini, *The London Recordings, Vol. 1*, track 2.

while Tetrizzini worked from a studio with an orchestra behind her. The balance between the two instruments is uneven on Melba's recording (with the focus on the singer), while Tetrizzini and Fransella are balanced as a duo. Despite these differences, however, the listener can hear two different and distinct types of flute tone.

Both Gaubert and Fransella play with delicacy and vitality. The florid passagework in duet with the soprano takes a considerable amount of work in rehearsal to achieve complete accuracy, and the continuous third intervals during the cadenza demand perfect intonation. Both performers do all this. The main difference between the two recordings is in the tone of the flutes, and the differences are subtle. Fransella plays with a full, round tone; the core of the tone is direct in the bottom register but thins out a bit towards the top, helping to match the voice more closely. There is no vibrato to the tone, but there is what Taffanel might call *expression*—a slightly vibrating resonance in the tone which can vary to create shapes in the phrasing. It is everything that is light and pretty while impressive at the same time.²⁴² Gaubert's tone, on the other hand, rings with direction; the vibrato, while not heavy, fills out the sound and gives the impression of constant musical intent. Such differences are slight, but audible nonetheless.

Of course, such observations are tinged with the bias of modern ears; the dissemination of the French Flute School into worldwide practice means that any listener familiar with the flute might very easily determine that Gaubert gave the more musical performance. That does not mean, however, that a British listener from the time would have felt the same way. Both performances would have received accolades, but there is the possibility that the people who bought these records might have started to recognize a

²⁴² Certainly, this description serves to show how Fransella's sound may have varied from the traditional British style, rather than represented it. For the purposes of this paper, it does show once again that the definition of the British flute school is not as absolute as believed.

difference in expression, which, in turn, might have altered their future standards of evaluation.

Side by Side: Franz Doppler's *Fantaisie pastorale hongroise*, Op. 26

This nineteenth century work, still popular with flautists-in-training today, was recorded by Philippe Gaubert in 1919 and John Amadio in 1929. A gap in listed recordings occurred during World War I, and in addition to the Doppler Gaubert recorded his *Madrigal* that same year. In the following decade recordings by Murchie and Amadio began appearing in England, and Moyse and Le Roy began recording in France.

Amadio's wooden flute recordings have already been introduced (see page 51–52), and the complimentary Mozart review from 1928 pays tribute to his talent. His previously mentioned recordings of Briccialdi and Doppler date from 1921 and 1929 respectively; other recordings include an earlier recording of the Doppler with Terschak's *La Sirene* (1924), Godard's Waltz from the flute suite (date unknown), and obbligati with Selma Kurz (Taubert and Handel, 1924) and Elisabeth Schumann (Air from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, 1928). While most of his reviews contain one-line references to his virtuosity on fantasia-like pieces, most telling is the review of a 1923 Aeolian recording:

An amazing bit of virtuosity is John Amadio's playing of a couple of solos on what a three-year-old gramophone enthusiast at my elbow calls the flupe?. Like so many childish slips it is a happy one. Change the spelling and the word exactly describes the music of these solos. They are mere flop: a poor song with brilliant superficial variations by Boehm and a *Polonaise* by Busé. Yet I must admit enjoyment, though it was confined to the dexterity of Mr. Amadio. What a pity an instrument so well adapted to pure melody, and with so much beauty in its lower register as the flute, should be so badly treated by soloists! How often do we hear really first-rate

music played by flute virtuosos? They must always be exceeding the speed limit with pieces about bees, or will-o'-the-wisps, or with twiddley-bits written round some air for which no other use can be found. A pity!²⁴³

While the performance of the Doppler piece contains its share of fast-running “twiddley-bits,” the fantasia introduction provides an opportunity to listen to the flautist’s melodic playing. Amadio’s recording on the wooden flute reveals a thick, dense tone full of dark colors—the sound resembles a reed instrument (perhaps a saxophone). The phrasing is extremely rubato—as called for by the piece—and moves through the entire range of the instrument. The dark tone of the flute partially carries into the middle register, and Amadio does change to a clearer, purer sound towards the very top of the required range. He preferred the bottom, however, as evidenced at the end of the fantasia, where he eliminated the last little 3rd register cadenza of harmonics and rewrote a cadenza with a set of flourishes in the lowest octave. In the dance portion of the recording, Amadio’s fingers rush through torrents of notes in a dazzling display of virtuosity. Yet while his tone remains assertive, it does thin out in the third register of the flute; the accompanying orchestra even briefly drowns out his tone in louder *tutti* sections. The impressive performance reinforces the typical description of the elements that made the English Flute School defined as it is.

In contrast, Gaubert’s sliver flute tone is less dense and more pure on his version of the Doppler (though he does not shy away from using a dark tone). The reduction of “edge” to the sound allows it to stay more even and homogeneous as he moves higher in the register. The air support creates a vibrato that makes the tone more resonant than Amadio’s, yet does not sound like the heavier vibrato that came from Moyse, Le Roy, and Geoffrey Gilbert in later years. Gaubert’s phrasing incorporates more dynamics than Amadio’s and uses a

²⁴³ Discus, “Gramophone Notes,” *The Musical Times* 64, no. 961 (March 1923): 192.

different rubato. Upon entering the dance section of the piece, Gaubert displays just as much ability to fly on his instrument as Amadio does, but creates a different impression because of the full sound that comes through within the entire range. To be fair, Gaubert is accompanied by a piano and not an orchestra, but there is no doubt that his sound would carry through that setting as well.

These recordings give clear examples of the different styles of playing that defined the received views on the English and French flute schools. Yet a quick survey of other recordings will show that not all the British sounded the same, nor the French:

1. Adolphe Hennebains,²⁴⁴ “Badinerie” from Bach’s *Suite in B minor*:²⁴⁵ very “dramatic” sound- heavy vibrato, with every note given weight and purpose. Silver flute.
2. Eli Hudson, Boehm’s *Variations sur un air allemande*, Op. 22:²⁴⁶ thick low register, though not as thick as Amadio’s; maintains the thickness within the middle register in melodic passages, but becomes thin when moving quickly. Wood flute.
3. John Lemmoné, obligato to Melba on Hüe’s *Soir Païen*:²⁴⁷ thick, edgy low register; fast yet inconsistent vibrato; hard finger technique that sometimes creates a banging sound. Wood flute.
4. Georges Barrère, “Minuet” from Bizet’s *L’Arlésienne Suite*:²⁴⁸ consistently ringing sound, with very fast vibrato; lacks the darkness found in Gaubert, Moyse and Le Roy’s sound. Silver flute.
5. Robert Murchie, Rucquoy’s *Les échos d’Alsace*:²⁴⁹ not as dense a tone as Amadio; bottom octave is dark but not thick; higher registers are clear; in melodic lines uses a thin and intense vibrato. Wood flute.

²⁴⁴ Hennebains, who graduated from the Paris Conservatoire in 1880, was a colleague of Taffanel at the Opéra in 1890, an experience he considered invaluable to his development as a flautist. See Blakeman, *Taffanel*, 98–9.

²⁴⁵ *The Flute on Record*, track 5.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, track 2.

²⁴⁷ Melba, *Soir Païen*.

²⁴⁸ *The Great Flautists*, Pearl GEMM CD 9284, 1992, CD, track 10.

²⁴⁹ *The Flute on Record*, track 15.

6. Edith Penville, Andersen's *Fantaisie caractéristique*, Op. 16:²⁵⁰ edgy low register, though not as dense-sounding as Amadio; higher register supported to produce a thin wave of vibrato; heavy, directed articulation; virtuosic. Wood flute.
7. Marcel Moyse, Dvorak's *Humoreske*, op. 101/7:²⁵¹ huge tone throughout the range; varies the depth of the low register—in some places he makes it dark and edgy, in other more round and pure; a deep vibrato throughout provides resonance. Silver flute.
8. René Le Roy, Bach's *Sonata* in Eb major:²⁵² also a huge tone throughout the range; has a more solid core to the tone that slightly resembles the density of Murchie or Amadio; also a deep vibrato, but resulting in a different type of resonance than Moyse. Silver flute.

Compared to the original set of national characteristics (page 3), this list presents quite a few contradictions. The Frenchmen—Hennebains, Gaubert, Barrère, Moyse and Le Roy—all have very different tone quality and varying levels of vibrato. The British²⁵³—Fransella, Hudson, Lemmoné, Amadio, Murchie and Penville—play with mixed and often varying levels of vibrato, and no argument could be defended that stated that Fransella, Murchie and Penville had thin, weak high registers. Perhaps the recordings are not so similar that they could be interchangeable, but the differences are not so split based on nationality and certainly cause conflicts with the current assumed definitions of the two flute schools.

While the differences between the different listed players exist, the contrast between the sound of Moyse and Le Roy compared to their English contemporaries is substantial. Moyse chose to believe that he created the vibrato we hear on his records:

My tone had no life. What to do? Somebody suggested waving the tone. But no, I refuse. Better to go to a farm and imitate the

²⁵⁰ Ibid., track 17.

²⁵¹ *The Great Flautists*, track 2.

²⁵² Ibid., tracks 6–8.

²⁵³ The issue of the international personnel in the British Flute School is discussed in chapter 1. Since Fransella, Lemmoné and Amadio based quite a bit of their careers in Britain, they are, for now, treated as British.

noise of sheep. But what I developed was the vibrato. I was the first man to introduce vibrato, not only in a flute, but in a woodwind!²⁵⁴

Moyse's claim to be the first to use vibrato is weak, but the deeper, thicker wave he used was new to even the French sound, nothing like the thin vibrato of Hennebains or Barrère (though resembling that of Gaubert). This was the type of sound imitated and developed by Gilbert. While the *Musical Times* gramophone critic felt the flute recorded well,²⁵⁵ Moyse was not the first to find he did not like the sound of his tone over the recording (thus prompting the new vibrato). The whole reason the Gramophone Company brought Moyse and Le Roy from Paris to record instead of using Gilbert and his English colleagues was that their tone sounded better over the microphone.

Once younger flautists had access to these recordings and could hear the difference in flute tone, the authority of England's flute teachers came into question. William Bennett, Richard Adeney, John Francis, and Peter Lloyd all heard Moyse or Le Roy in live performances or via gramophone recordings and heard the sound they wished to make. Standards had changed, and the "British School" would become more diversified than ever.

²⁵⁴ Jack Hiemenz, "Marcel Moyse, Master Flutist: 'I Imitate Caruso,'" *High Fidelity/Musical America* 25, no. 1 (January 1975): 14, quoted in Powell, 232.

²⁵⁵ "Gramophone Notes," *The Musical Times* 65, no. 977 (July 1924): 631.

Conclusions

Unlike the belief that the French Flute School was the redeemer of English flute playing, the changes to flute performance practice begun in Britain between 1890 and 1940 came as a result of a number of different types of influence. Concert life and its critics had a large impact on performance development. While new and innovative endeavors met with encouragement, the public did not always provide enough support for any sustained change. Numerous efforts to promote the music composed for wind instruments, though admirable, never truly found success. Music for flute, wind, strings and harp found better support, but local works such as Eugene Goossens' *Suite* or Holst's *Fugal Concerto* were far more successful than a piece like the Debussy *Sonata*. The national audience, despite all intentions to be a moving force behind modern art music, remained conservative in its tastes.

Issues of national identity did not only affect flautists—they were the driving force to musical development in England throughout this time period. While France had a decidedly anti-German stance toward culture following the Franco-Prussian War, the English Musical Renaissance never completely resolved the issue of the interaction between German and English music. Definitions of performance styles took a nationalistic air, with differences between players of different countries highlighted. When those performances are studied in recordings, however, the differences in ideal tone and use of vibrato are more individually drawn and not separated by nation. The conservatism found in concert culture likely contributed towards the animosity that developed between the advocates of each school of playing which prompted this study. As the myth of two bands of flautists battling over who

used the superior method of flute technique grew, the sides took a nationalistic angle: the flautists seeking to preserve what belonged to their country against the flautists who would choose a foreign style over their own.

The trouble with the way the concept of the British Flute School came into being is the exclusivity that it created in the process. By definition, the pre-1940 British Flute School indicated that all British flautists played on wooden flutes with a straight tone that was dense in the lower register and thin in the higher register. The limits this definition imposes do not correspond with either the true descriptions of British flute style that we have seen in this study or the fundamental basis of British culture overall. The English language is a mix of Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Celtic, and other influences. British music reflected not only the folk song of its countries but the Romanticism of the German tradition and even the Impressionist colors of the French tradition. The British Empire not only brought their civilization to the world, but brought the world to Britain. The British Flute School cannot be defined in the exclusive terms it has been given but must include all the variants of style presented by Radcliff, Vivian, Griffith, Fransella, de Jong, Brossa, Hudson, Needham, Redfern, Arlom, Brooke, Wood, Halstead, Picton, Hollis, Souper, Penville, Murchie, Whitelock, Gennin, Gleghorn, Heard, Slater, Ackroyd, Alwyn, Clarke, Smith, Francis, Jackson, Walker, Morris, and Gilbert. This inclusivity will allow British flautists today to continue to celebrate the contributions of the French style to British flute playing while also celebrating the rich accomplishments of those who played the flute before it.

Bibliography

Adeney, Richard. Interview by author, 8 December 2005.

Bennett, William. Interview by author, 29 November 2005.

———. "William Bennett in Conversation with Edward Blakeman." *Pan* 3, no. 1 (March 1985): 12–16.

Bigio, Robert. "Albert Fransella: the Paganini of the Flute." *Pan* 12, no. 2 (June 1994): 19–25.

———. "Gareth Morris at Eighty." *Pan* 19, no. 4 (December 2000): 26–33.

———. Interview by author, 6 December 2005.

———, ed. *Readings in the History of the Flute*. London: Tony Bingham, 2006.

———. "Richard Adeney at Eighty." *Pan* 19, no. 1 (March 2000): 14–20.

Blakeman, Edward. "Rene Le Roy (1898–1985): an Appreciation." *Pan* 3, no. 2 (June 1985): 8–9.

———. *Taffanel: Genius of the Flute*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Brown, James D. *British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of Musical Artists, Authors and Composers, Born in Britain and its Colonies*. Birmingham: S. S. Stratton, 1897.

Chapman, F. B. *Flute Technique*. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

Dorgeuille, Claude. *The French Flute School, 1860-1950*. Trans. and ed. Edward Blakeman. London: Tony Bingham, 1986.

Eagle, David William. "A Constant Passion and a Constant Pursuit: A Social History of Flute-Playing in England from 1800 to 1851." Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1977.

Ehrlich, Cyril. *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Fairley, Andrew. *Flutes, Flautists and Makers*. London: Pan Educational Music, 1982.

Fitzgibbon, H. Macaulay. *The Story of the Flute*. London: Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd, 1914.

Fleury, Louis. "The Flute and British Composers." *The Flutist* 7, no. 2: (February 1926): 33–6.

———. "The Flute and its Powers of Expression." *Music and Letters* 3, no. 4 (October 1922): 383–93.

Floyd, Angeleita Stevens. *The Gilbert Legacy: Methods, Exercises and Techniques for the Flutist*. Cedar Falls, IA: Winzer Press, 1994.

Francis, John. "John Francis Interview with Simon Hunt." *Pan* 8, no. 3 (September 1990): 14–22.

———. "John Francis in Conversation with Edward Blakeman." *Pan* 2, no. 2 (June 1984): 8–12.

———. "Teaching the Flute in Schools and After: the Importance of a Relaxed Embouchure." *Pan* 1, no. 2 (July/August 1983): 18–19.

Galway, James. *Flute*. London: Macdonald, 1982.

Giannini, Tula. *Great Flute Makers of France: The Lot and Godfroy Families, 1650-1900*. London: Tony Bingham, 1993.

Gilbert, Geoffrey. "Geoffrey Gilbert in Conversation with Edward Blakeman." *Pan* 2, no. 3 (September 1984): 8–15.

Gilbert, Monya Winzer. *Geoffrey Gilbert: a Personal Look*. On-line. Available from Internet, <http://www.geoffreygilbert.org>, accessed 27 March 2006.

Griffith, Frederic, ed. *Notable Welsh Musicians (of today), with portraits, biographies and a preface on the condition of music in Wales at the present time*. London: Goodwen, 1896.

Handel, George Frideric. *Menuet, arranged for Flute and Piano by Roland Revell*. London: Rudall, Carte, and Co., 1928.

Howes, Frank. *The English Musical Renaissance*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1966.

- Hughes, Meirion. *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- Hughes, Meirion and R. A. Stradling. *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music*. 2nd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Jefferson, Alan. *Sir Thomas Beecham: A Centenary Tribute*. London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1979.
- Langey, Otto. *Practical Tutor for the Flute, in Four Systems, New Edition, Revised and Enlarged*. London: Hawkes and Son, 1909.
- Lavignac, Albert, ed. *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*. Paris: C. Delagrave, c. 1913–31.
- Lewis, Lis. "Did the 'English' Style use Vibrato?" *Pan* 23, no. 2 (June 2004): 15–18.
- Melba, Nellie. *Melodies and Memories*. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1925.
- Morris, Gareth. *Flute Technique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- . "Gareth Morris Talks to Judith Fitton." *Pan* 9, no. 3 (September 1991): 11–16.
- . Interview by author, 1 December 2005.
- . Interview by author, 7 December 2005.
- Nicholson, Charles. *School for the Flute, Altered and Adapted for the Modern Flute by J. Radcliff*. Edited by John Radcliff. London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1873.
- Photographs of Well-Known Flute Players*. London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1938.
- Pirie, Peter J. *The English Musical Renaissance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.
- Powell, Ardal. *The Flute*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Rockstro, Richard Shepherd, and Georgina M. Rockstro. *A Treatise on the Construction, the History and the Practice of the Flute*. Rev. ed. London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1928.
- Royal Academy of Music. *Entrance Register, 1874–1894*.

_____. *Minutes of Committee of Management, Oct. 1902–Oct. 1906.*

_____. *Prize Lists, 1876–1892.*

Saerchinger, Cesar, ed. *International Who's Who in Music, and Musical Gazetteer.* New York: Current Literature Publishing Company, 1918.

Scott, Stuart. "Edward De Jong: Hallé's First Flute." *Pan* 11, no. 1 (March 1993): 17–18.

_____. *Hallé Flutes: Flautists of the Hallé Orchestra 1858-1993.* Cheshire, UK: author, 1998.

Shaw, George Bernard. *Shaw's Music: the Complete Musical Criticism in Three Volumes.* Ed. by Dan H. Laurence. London: Bodley Head, 1981.

Taffanel, Paul, and Philippe Gaubert. *Méthode Complète de Flûte: En Huit Parties.* Paris: A. Leduc, 1923.

Toff, Nancy. *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers.* 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Toff, Nancy. *The Development of the Modern Flute.* New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1979.

Walker, Ernest. *A History of Music in England,* 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1924.

Wion, John. "Orchestral Principal Flutists." On-line. Available from Internet, <http://hometown.aol.com/johnwion/orchestra.html>, accessed 28 December 2005.

Wood, Daniel S. *Valse-Caprice for Flute and Pianoforte.* London: Rudall, Carte, and Co., 1909.

Wood, Henry Joseph. *About Conducting.* London: Sylvan Press, 1945.

_____. *My Life of Music.* London: V. Gollancz, 1938.

Wye, Trevor. *Marcel Moyse, An Extraordinary Man: a Musical Biography.* Cedar Falls, IA: Winzer Press, 1993.

Repeated Periodicals

The Musical Times and Singing-Class Circular. 1884–1902.

The Musical Times. 1903–1939.

The Times (London). 1890–1939.

Audio Recordings

Bach, Johann Sebastian. *Bach Suites*. Philharmonia Orchestra. London: Angel Records, 1955. LP. No catalogue number available.

Carte, Richard. *Auld Robin Grey*. Edward de Jong, flute. 1906. Robert Bigio's private collection. Digital replica.

The Flute on Record 1902–1940. Compilation, <http://recordings.flutehistory.com> FP001. CD.

Geoffrey Gilbert with the Wigmore Ensemble. Private compilation by Larry Krantz. CD.

Gluck, Christoph Willibald. *Ballet Suite No. 1*. New Symphony Orchestra of London. London: LL. 1234, 1960s. LP.

The Great Flautists. Compilation, Pearl GEMM CD 9284, 1992. CD.

The Great Flautists, volume 2. Compilation, Pearl GEMM CD 9302, 1992. CD.

Homage to Diaghilev: the Music of his Famous Ballets. Philharmonia Orchestra. London: Angel Records ANG 35151–35153, 1954. LP.

Melba, Nellie. *Soir Païen* by Georges Hüe. Recorded 19 May 1910. London: British Library Sound Archives 1LP0143687, accessed 8 December 2005.

———. *The Complete Gramophone Company Recordings, Vol. 1*. Naxos 8.110737, 2002. CD.

———. *The Complete Gramophone Company Recordings, Vol. 2*. Naxos 8.110738, 2002. CD.

Tetrazzini, Luisa. *Luisa Tetrazzini*. Five-disc compilation, Pearl GEMM CDS 9920. CD.

_____. *Luisa Tetrazzini – The London Recordings, Volume 1 (1907–1914)*. Vocal
Archives VA1122, 1996. CD.