

The Life and Works of Dorothy Howell

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Abstract

Since the 1950s, the music of Dorothy Gertrude Howell (1898 – 1982) has fallen into obscurity. Despite being called ‘the finest woman composer of her era’¹ and being popularly dubbed ‘the English Richard Strauss’, following the performance of her debut orchestral work *Lamia* (1919), Howell’s place in twentieth century British music has largely been forgotten.

Dorothy Howell: Her Life and Works is the largest study to date on the composer. Based on original research, undertaken at the private archives of the Dorothy Howell Trust, the thesis provides a detailed account of the composer’s life and catalogue of her works. The study is divided into three sections.

The first section is biographical, providing a detailed and chronological account of the composer’s life. This section considers the reception of Howell’s orchestral works during the 1920s as well as her careers as a pianist and private teacher. The primary research develops our understanding of Howell’s trajectory as a composer and the circumstances that led to her decline as a composer during the 1940s.

The second section is thematic, exploring Howell in the context of her Catholic Faith and commitment to writing Mass settings before and after the Second Vatican Council; an area of the composer’s life and music that has been neglected in studies hitherto. This is followed by a conclusion which considers Howell’s broader contribution to twentieth century music.

The final section is a catalogue of the composer’s known musical works. This catalogue provides extensive details on extant scores, publication details and technical details.

¹ Quote from Sir John Drummond, ‘Dorothy Howell Centenary’ booklet produced by the Dorothy Howell Trust.

Acknowledgements

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In Birmingham, I thank the staff of the Barber Music Library, Birmingham Conservatoire Library, Archdiocese of Birmingham Archives and the Birmingham Central Library (in particular Mrs Ursula Colville, of the latter institution, for details on the 2010 Dorothy Howell exhibition).

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(All photographs reproduced courtesy of the Dorothy Howell Trust)

Note on Referencing: All letters, diary entries and scrap notes from Howell family members quoted in this work can be found at the archives of the Dorothy Howell Trust (DHT), unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

I first became aware of Dorothy Howell as an undergraduate at the University of Birmingham, whilst working as Director of Music at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Dudley Road, in October 2009. I was preparing the music for a Mass being said in celebration for the Golden Anniversary of the ordination of Rev. Fr. Petroc Howell (Dorothy Howell's nephew), who had worked in the parish for over thirty years before retiring in 2006. I discovered a copy of Dorothy Howell's *Missa Simplex* (1961), and decided to use the piece as a Mass setting for the choir to sing. At that point, I had no knowledge as to the identity of Dorothy Howell and the setting was just one of many Masses written as a 'People's Mass'; a style of simple Mass setting designed for parish choirs of average musical ability that became popular amongst Catholic congregations during the 1960s and 70s.

After the service, I was approached by Bede Howell (another nephew of Dorothy Howell) in the organ gallery; we discussed music generally for twenty minutes until he casually revealed his 'Aunt D' had composed *Missa Simplex*. At a reception afterwards I was introduced to Columb and Merryn Howell (custodians of the Dorothy Howell Trust archive), and learned that Dorothy Howell had enjoyed a period of success as a composer during the 1920s. It was not until two years later upon my first visit to the archives that I realised quite the extent of Howell's compositional output, her connection with many notable musicians and the extensive, but un-catalogued, material available.

As I began exploring the archive kept by the Dorothy Howell Trust, I became convinced that a full-scale study of the composer was needed. Scant attention has been given to the Howell's life and works since her death in 1982, with notable exceptions being an undergraduate study

and published article by Celia Mike (now Patterson) in the early 1990s², references in wider studies on female composers of the period³ and a small exhibition at Birmingham Central Library in 2010. A recording of Howell's chamber music on the Dutton Digital Label in 2004 (with sleeve notes from Patterson) was also another notable contribution.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide historical and biographical information about Howell's life and document her known works. My rationale for this objective is twofold: firstly, in order to understand more fully the composer's works, a context needs to be provided; secondly, the biographical details represent original research and bring to light previously unknown details about the composer's life. It is hoped that this will provide a contextual background for musicologists who may wish to analyse Howell's music in the future.

Given the vast and uncatalogued nature of the archive, it has been my conviction from the outset that a major part of the thesis should be devoted to cataloguing the composer's works in detail for the benefit of future researchers. Both elements of my study represent three years' work cataloguing available scores, manuscripts, letters, diaries and newspaper articles at the Dorothy Howell Trust, and further research at other libraries across the United Kingdom.

² Celia Mike, 'Dorothy Howell' BA Dissertation: University of Aberdeen, 1990. *Dorothy Howell* British Music 14 (1992) 48-58.

³ See: Sophie Fuller. *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629-Present* (Hertfordshire: Rivers Oram Press, 1995) p. 157; and Laura Seddon. *British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013).

Chapter 1: The Feeny and Howell families

Dorothy Howell's family had strong connections with the city of Birmingham and the Roman Catholic community in that city. Howell's maternal grandfather, Alfred John Feeny, was born in County Sligo, Ireland, in 1834. After a seminary education in Cologne, he moved to Birmingham and joined the staff of the *Birmingham Journal* in 1857 as a trade correspondent. He continued to work for the paper the following year when it was issued under the title of *The Birmingham Daily Post* – a publication founded by his uncle John Feeny.⁴ Alfred John was a prominent member of the staff, working at the paper until 1904, and took a special interest in the Birmingham Triennial Musical Festival held at Birmingham Town Hall. He was also partly responsible for the foundation of the Feeny Gallery at the city's Museum and Art Gallery.⁵

Howell's maternal grandmother, Rosetta Piercy (1838 – 1907), met Alfred John in 1857 and, prior to marrying him the following year, was received into the Catholic Church by the convert priest and hymnodist Rev. Fr. Edward Caswall (1814 – 1878) at Birmingham Oratory.⁶ Howell's mother, Viola Rosetta (1862 – 1942), grew up in Edgbaston and was an

⁴ 'A History of The Birmingham Post' *The Birmingham Post*, 125th Anniversary (1857 – 1982) Friday December 3rd, 1982.

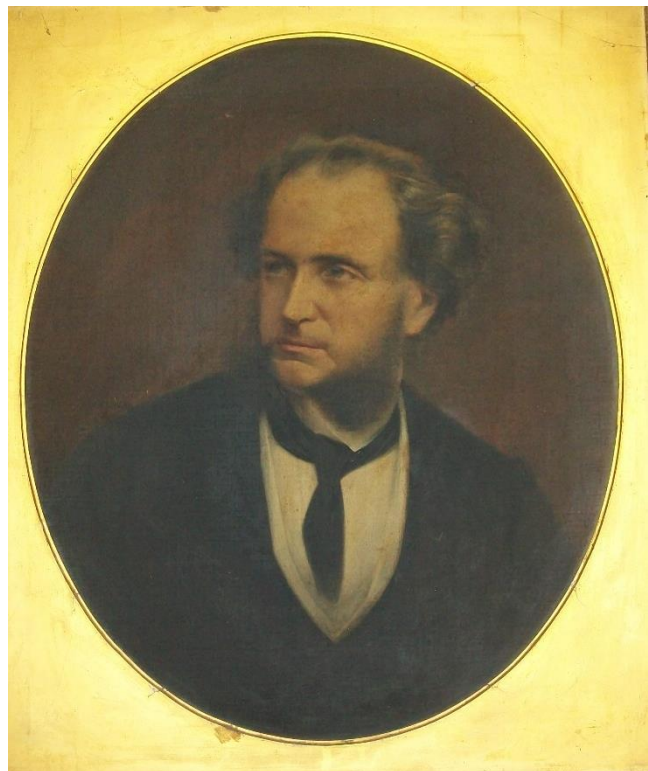
⁵ The obituary in *The Birmingham Post*, following his death in 1905, reports that 'Mr Alfred Feeny came to Birmingham to assist in the commercial department, in which there was a great deal of business detail, calling for activity and sound judgement... [He] worked on the theatrical, musical, side of the paper. He was a student of music and an amateur performer of no small talent.' The obituary praises his 'keen sense for the unravelling of a plot' and reporting on the Franco-German war (1870 – 1). The obituary also cites his capacity as a short story writer and thirty years' work as a Birmingham representative for the *London Times*. '[He was] Liberal in politics and a member of the Roman Catholic Communion.' 'John Alfred Feeny' *The Birmingham Post*, 4th June 1905.

⁶ Letter from Rev. Edward Caswall (Birmingham Oratory, Feb. 16, 1857)

amateur violist and soprano. One of Howell's great-aunts, Kate C. Hyde (1843 -1935), was a notable professional contralto singer.⁷

The earliest record of the paternal Howell family in Birmingham is from the 1881 census⁸.

Howell's paternal grandfather, Henry Howell, died in unusual circumstances in 1877⁹, leaving his wife Mary Ann Cox, from Church Lawton, Cheshire, to raise their only child Charles Edward, who was educated at the King Edward School, Birmingham.



Picture 1: An oil painting of Howell's Grandfather, Henry, now kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust.

⁷ Born in Lozells, Birmingham, Hyde was notable for founding, alongside her husband, James Hyde, the very first opera company to tour in South Africa; her diaries (kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust) depict the company touring various Voortrekker towns in the South African interior and also into Southern Rhodesia (modern-day Zimbabwe). Her diaries also provide a curious insight into the prevailing attitude toward women musicians in the late 19th century: her father, Director of Music at St. Chad's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Birmingham, would 'rather bury my mother than let her learn music. It was that which made me realise how musical progress had been handicapped in England, for whilst in continental Europe people were steadily developing in that direction, the English since the Reformation had been taught to regard music as a moral danger.'

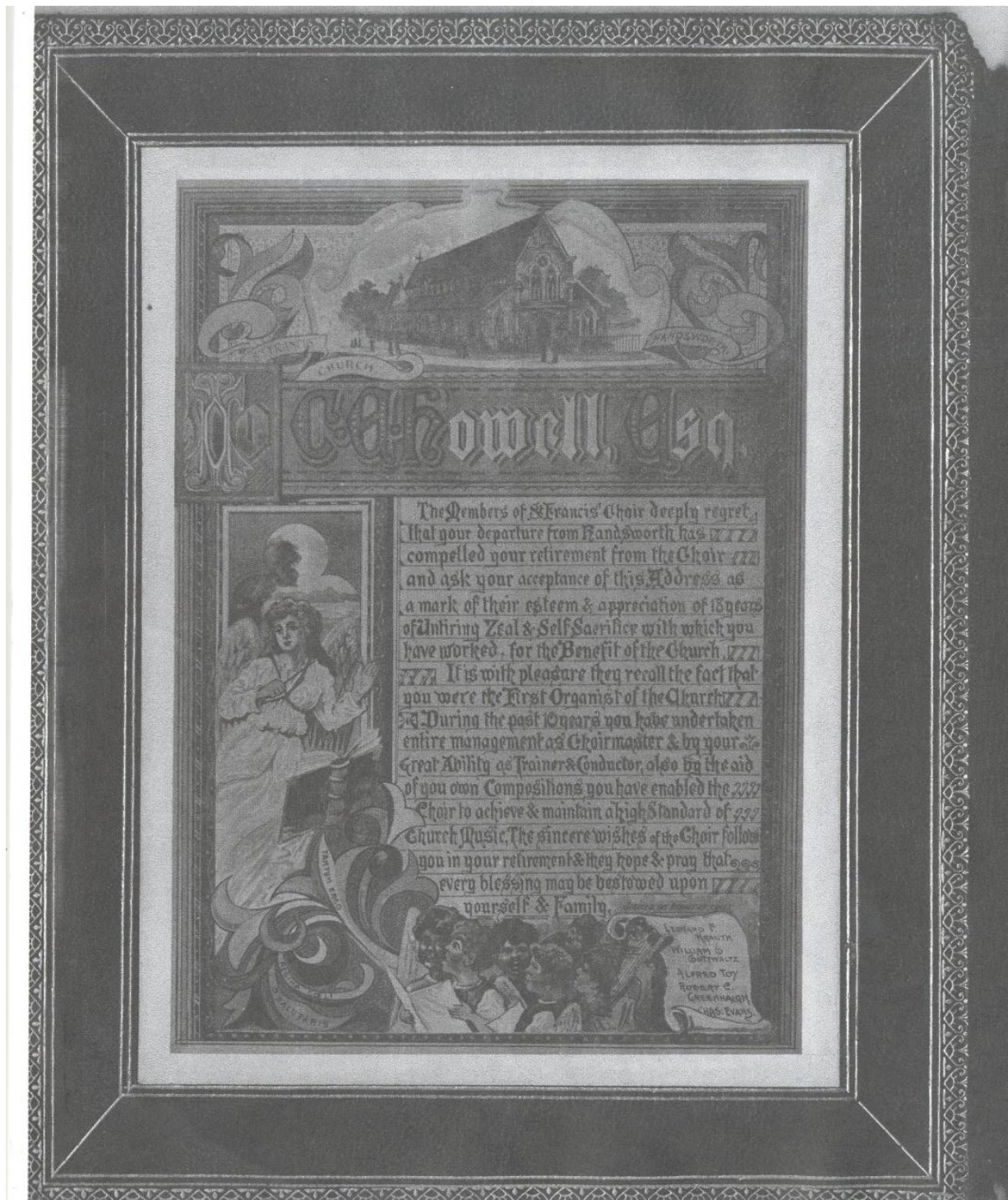
⁸ The 1881 British Census records the family living in Park Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, with only one servant (unusual given the status of the family) Mary Grave Stocks, aged 61, who served as a cook and domestic servant. Charles Edward, 25 at the time, is listed as a general merchant's clerk.

⁹ Having misjudged the depth of the water of the river Arno at the Ponte Vecchio, Florence, Henry Howell dived head-first into the water and died instantly. Suicide was not suspected. (Interview with Columb Howell, February 19th, 2013).

On account of Henry's premature demise, Charles Edward lived with his mother in Kings Norton until his early thirties whilst developing a lucrative career as an iron manufacturer. During the 1880s he travelled in North and South America extensively, sourcing iron to be shipped to foundries in the West Midlands for the Saltley Carriage and Waggon Company. His memoirs chart his journeys through Latin America during this period in scrupulous detail and make several references to indigenous and Spanish-influenced music – the latter almost certainly would have been introduced to the young Dorothy Howell and was a possible influence for the Spanish inflections in *Lamia* and *The Rock*.¹⁰

In 1892, Charles Edward and Viola Rosetta were married at Birmingham Oratory at the relatively late ages of 36 and 29 respectively. Charles Edward had been received into the Catholic faith in 1888. A list of wedding presents reflects the couple's musical interests: included on the list were a lorgnette (opera spectacles), several music books and a Bechstein upright piano, which was later inherited by Dorothy Howell. After the marriage the newlyweds moved to an extensive family home in Handsworth.

¹⁰ The two volume unpublished Memoirs of Charles Howell are available at the Dorothy Howell Trust archive.



Picture 2: A commemorative glass plate presented to Charles Edward Howell in honour of twenty years of service as Director of Music at St. Francis, Handsworth.

Chapter 2: Early Years

Handsworth

Although officially an independent town in the county of Staffordshire until 1911, Handsworth was close to central Birmingham and on the borders of the thriving Jewellery Quarter. The Handsworth Dorothy Howell knew during late 19th century was a salubrious middle-class suburb home to many professional families, and boasted a varied musical life¹¹. The area was also home to several people who would later achieve worldwide success musically, including the composer Albert Kettelby, born in Alma Street, Lozells (very close to Howell's family home) in 1884, and the tenor Webster Booth, born on Soho Road (the main arterial road through Handsworth) in 1902. Like Howell, Booth would discover music through the church, in his case the local Anglican Parish Church of St. Mary, Handsworth Park.

Dorothy Gertrude Howell was born on February 25th, 1898, at 3 Wye-Cliff Road. She was fifth in a line of six children: Charles Joseph (Carlo), Mary Viola, Winifred, Clifford and Alfred. Throughout her early years Howell was under the care of a nanny, Sarah Ward (the family nanny, who was a companion to Howell for over fifty years) and Kate Byrne (the house maid). The Howells also employed a cook and gardener¹².

¹¹ An 1895 edition of the St. Mary's Parish Magazine makes several references to the Handsworth Philharmonic Orchestra, whilst the 1898 Kelly's Trade Directory of Birmingham (including Handsworth) shows a high level of professional musicians and instrument builders in the area.

¹² Diary of Viola Rosetta Howell, 1899.

Charles Edward had recently been appointed as the first Organist and Director of Music at St. Francis' Roman Catholic Church, Hunters Road, Handsworth; the parish was one of the largest Catholic communities in the city at the time. The position was certainly prestigious and surprising given that Charles Edward was, by his own admission, an amateur musician; although many choirmasters were not employed on a professional basis by the church during the period, it was unusual given Charles Edward's profession as an iron merchant and a testament to his talent as a musician. St Francis' Church, built in 1884, is a particularly opulent gothic revivalist building and revealing of the increasing influence of the Catholic community in Birmingham.

Picture 3: Dorothy playing with her brothers (Clifford and Alfred) in the garden of 3 Wye Cliff Road, Handsworth.



Dorothy received her initial musical education from her father¹³ which, in addition to guidance on piano and violin, included a rudimentary theoretical training and, perhaps

¹³ 'Her father was a very talented pianist and Aunt D would recall how, as a very young girl, she would be encouraged by her father onto the piano. I think once she showed signs of real talent it was felt necessary to look elsewhere for tuition. Aunt D always maintained he would have been a great musician had he been classically trained.' (Interview with Merryn Howell, May 10th, 2012). Several photographs exist of Charles Edward leading family ensembles and family 'concerts' taking place on a regular and informal basis.

surprisingly for the time, encouragement in composition. In the later years of her life Howell was to claim that her father was one of her greatest musical influences¹⁴.

Although Handsworth was home to St. Mary's Convent School – a foundation established by the stained glass artist (and Howell family friend) John Hardman and managed by the Sisters of Divine Mercy in 1841 – Howell received education from another order at an establishment based in south Birmingham: the convent school of St. Anne, Deritend, Digbeth. The choice was unusual because Deritend was a much worse off area of the city compared with suburban Handsworth¹⁵.

One possible reason for her parents' choice could be the link with Cardinal John Henry Newman who founded the parish of St. Anne in January 1847, during his time as Rector of the Birmingham Oratory¹⁶. Another reason could be the fact that Charles Edward Howell worked at the Saltley Carriage and Waggon company; about one mile away from the site of the convent. Nevertheless, the choice on the part of Charles Edward was unusual and there is little in the way of material evidence about the nature of Howell's initial education.

At the age of 11, Howell and her sisters were sent to a convent school in Boom, Flanders, Belgium. In line with the English recusant Catholic tradition, this decision was something not entirely uncommon: many discerning Catholic parents felt that a continental education was authentically 'Catholic'.¹⁷ Whatever the motivation for such an education, Howell apparently

¹⁴ Interview with Merryn Howell: Bewdley, May 9th, 2012.

¹⁵ 'The congregation [of St. Anne's] was largely made up of Irish emigrants who had come to escape the potato famine.' J.J. Scarisbrick 'History of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: 1850 – 2000' (Strasbourg: Editions du Signe, 2008) p. 71

¹⁶ See Judith Champ 'William Bernard Ullathorne: A Different Kind of Monk' (Leominster: Gracewing, 2006) pp. 168 – 172.

¹⁷ Interview with Merryn Howell: Bewdley, November 10th, 2012.

disliked her time in Boom and conveyed this in a series of letters to her parents, which are unfortunately now lost.

Stourbridge, early compositional guidance and ‘Opus 1’

In 1911, Howell composed a series of works that were collected together as *Six Compositions for Pianoforte* (her ‘Opus.1’), which were vanity published by Charles Edward Howell.

Whilst this ‘publication’ could be perceived as being the action of a father paying tribute to his teenage daughter, rather than suggestive of any serious aspirations as a composer, there are elements within the works that provide an indication of Howell’s later style as a composer. Indeed, given Howell’s prolific output as a composer of children’s pieces the work reflects her interest in animals and a playful sense of humour, which pervades her later works for piano.

The titles to these pieces reveals their episodic nature:

- i. First Prelude
- ii. Puddle Duck
- iii. Double, Double, Toil and Trouble
- iv. Mouse Dance
- v. The Shower
- vi. Will o’ the wisp

Mouse Dance in particular reflects a feel for characteristic melodic phrases. Howell’s nephew, Rev. Fr. Petroc Howell wrote:

There was a certain childlike simplicity about Dorothy...children meant a lot to her, and she had a child's delight in the comical and in mimicking the comical – a quality which is evident in much of her music, creatures that jumped or bounced delighted her.¹⁸

The introduction to *Mouse Dance* describes the action that the music is meant to convey:

When the lights are out in the evening the mice come out and begin to play, being joined later by the rats. The dance gets wilder and wilder (*accel. Molto*) and reaches a climax, when the cat comes in with a bound (*molto accel ad fff*) and the mice scuttle off as fast and quietly as possible.

Written in ternary form, *Mouse Dance* begins with a memorable theme, which suggests the mice at play:

Ex. I



The musical score for Ex. I is written for Piano in 4/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piece starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The melody in the right hand features a series of eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment, also featuring a triplet in the second measure. The score is presented in a grand staff format with a brace on the left side.

¹⁸ Notes from sermon preached by Fr. Petroc Howell for Dorothy Howell's Memorial Service, St. Wulstan, Little Malvern. March 20th 1982.

There are also clear influences from Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* upon the arrival of the rats:

Ex II:



In 1911, Granville Bantock (1862 – 1948) was engaged to teach Howell composition during her school holidays from Boom: given Bantock's high-profile dual positions as Head of Music at the University of Birmingham (a post in which he succeeded Edward Elgar) and Head of the Midland School of Music, his input in Howell's compositional development provides a strong indication that Charles Edward was beginning to recognise serious potential in his daughter as a composer and, furthermore, was actively encouraging her to pursue this interest. Diary entries for this period make reference to Charles Edward promoting his daughter's music amongst his social circle, for instance, at a large dinner party at the home of Birmingham tool manufacturer John Rabone and the presence of many other local Handsworth dignitaries.¹⁹

¹⁹ The pieces are not specified: 'C played Dorothy's compositions.' The diary of Viola Rosetta Howell, Saturday January 27th, 1912.



Picture 4: The Howell family 'Orchestra' in the garden of 3 Wye Cliff Road, Handsworth.

(Left to right, Back Row: Charles Joseph (Carlo), Charles Edward, Winifred, Dorothy.

Front Row: Alfred, Mary Viola and Clifford.)

In 1912, whilst Howell was still spending school terms in Belgium, Charles Edward took up the post of company director for Noah Hingley's Iron and Steel Works, Netherton, Dudley, and the Howell family relocated to the opulent Wollescote House, Stourbridge (which was later demolished after the Second World War). The family established their own private

chapel, dedicated to St. Charles, which was opened and blessed by Archbishop Edward Ilesley (1838 – 1926) on June 14th 1915²⁰. Although there was no resident chaplain to the family, a curate from the neighbouring parish of Our Lady and All Saints, Stourbridge was assigned the duty of providing for the spiritual needs of the Howells and other Catholics in the local area, who attended a weekly public Mass in the private chapel.

By November 1912, Howell’s writing for piano begins to demonstrate more complexity, and one surviving work, *Impromptu*, written under the guidance of Bantock, demonstrates a rapid progression in compositional skill from the juvenile work *Six Pieces*. For instance the chromatic writing, which was to become a prominent feature in her mature music, is already evident:

Ex. III



There is a sense that Howell is experimenting with key changes in a manner that is somewhat forced (there are a total of nine alone in a work lasting 90 bars), yet the modulations are handled in a remarkably polished fashion and it is likely the piece was partly an exercise set by Bantock to allow the young Howell to hone her skills in handling modulation.

²⁰ The Memoirs of Kate Hyde, p. 23. (Kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust, Bewdley)

Clapham and application to the Royal Academy of Music

In February 1913, Howell returned to England and was eager to follow her musical interests more fully. Her parents, reluctant to allow their daughter to abandon her other studies altogether, decided that she should attend the Notre Dame Convent School, Clapham, and continue to study privately with Bantock in Birmingham. By November 1913, such was her motivation to study music full-time that her parents allowed her to leave Notre Dame and apply for a place to study composition and piano at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM hereafter).

Unfortunately, apart from a list of compositions completed under the guidance of Bantock, all of which are now lost, no teaching papers regarding the kind of tuition Howell received under Bantock are known to exist. In a letter, Howell makes a list of ‘compos required’ (for her application), which provides an example of the type of ‘characteristic’ pieces she was exploring under the guidance of Bantock. Some examples include:

Three Violin Pieces (i. Air Sprite ii. Water iii. Earth)

Suite for Piano (i. Ignorance ii. Nocturne iii. Sing o the Bees)

Danse Oriental

Soldiers of Spring

Interestingly, given Howell's background as a Roman Catholic, there is an example of a choral piece in English, *My Soul is awakened*, which was subsequently awarded the RAM's Hine Prize in December 1914.

Although all of the pieces are now lost, the titles provide an indication of the eclectic array of styles in which Howell was encouraged to compose under Bantock. Given that Howell began her studies at the RAM at the unusually young age of 15, it is possible that Bantock played an influence in persuading her parents to discontinue her convent education.

Howell moved to St. Dominic's Convent, Harrow, at the beginning of January 1914. Later that month she was taken by her uncle, Felix Feeny, to an interview at the RAM with Alexander Mackenzie and John Blackwood McEwen, thus beginning an association that would last until 1970 upon Howell's retirement as a professor of composition.²¹

²¹ Letter from Dorothy Howell to her parents. January 14th, 1914. She attended a piano audition on January 13th, and began formal studies at the RAM in February, 1914 a few weeks before her 16th birthday.

Chapter 3: Royal Academy of Music

Howell's early years at the RAM are relatively well documented through family correspondence and college periodicals. Her letters from this period make reference to her devout prayer life and daily attendance of Mass and other liturgies – particularly Vespers and Benediction. Her faith largely directed the time she spent outside of her musical commitments. Concert going was an activity which Howell viewed as a fundamentally educational endeavour²² as opposed to a merely recreational pastime. During this early period, she forged an intimate, but by all accounts platonic, relationship with a young organ student Dick Sampson (brother of her sister Winifred's fiancé) who often chaperoned Howell to concerts along with Felix Feeny²³.

Modernism: Early and later responses

A letter from 1914 reveals Howell's opinion of modernist (or so-called futurist) music; below is her reaction to a programme performed by the Russian pianist Leo Ornstein (1893 – 2002) at the Steinway Hall:

I never heard such a noise in my life. The programme contained music either written by Schonberg [sic] and Leo Ornstein [the performer] and I think his pieces have obtained even a more horrible degree of horribleness than the first mentioned 'artist'! It was so awful that I began to laugh and the fearful antics of the pianist added to my mirth.²⁴

²² 'I ought to go [to more concerts] because it is part of my education if nothing else.' Letters, January 14th, 1914, Convent of St. Dominic, Harrow, north London.

²³ Several of Howell's letters of the period make reference to being taken to dinners and concerts with either Feeny or Sampson and being subsequently escorted back to St. Dominic's.

²⁴ Concert at Steinway Hall: Letter from Dorothy Howell to Winifred Howell, March 1914.

Ornstein had met the composer Roger Quilter in Paris earlier that year and had been invited to perform at two concerts (the aforementioned concert in London and a performance in Oxford). The London performance Howell attended achieved notoriety²⁵ with a programme that included two works from Schoenberg's *Piano Pieces*, op. 11, Schoenberg's *Six Little Pieces*, op. 19, a Busoni arrangement of three chorale preludes by J.S. Bach, and a selection of Ornstein's own compositions including *Suicide in an Airplane*, *Danse Savage*, *Impressions de Notre Dame* and *Impressions de la Tamise*.²⁶

Whilst the programme caused Howell considerable amusement, the critical reception was altogether more disparaging: 'Nothing so [sic] horrible as M. Ornstein's music has been heard so far, [only] sufferers of complete deafness should attend the next concert.'²⁷

The Observer was even more dismissive of the concert:

We have never suffered from such insufferable hideousness, expressed in terms of so-called music. However, the skill that could have devised the cacophonous, unrhythmic [sic], unmusical always, two-penny coloured rubbish which Leo Ornstein drove with the Nasmyth hammer action into the head of the long suffering audience on Friday was stupendous!²⁸

However, despite an overwhelmingly negative critical response, *The Daily Telegraph* spoke of a mixed reception from the audience 'The audience remained to the end, hypnotized as a rabbit by a snake.'²⁹

Howell's reaction to the concert is telling in many respects: clearly her commitment to concert going during her early years at the RAM showed an open minded attitude to new

²⁵ 'Ornstein's London recitals created a sensation only slightly less uproarious than Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* had caused in Paris a year earlier.' Von Glahn and Broyles, 'Leo Ornstein: Modernist Dilemmas, Personal Choices'. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008) p. 20

²⁶ Ibid. (p. 20)

²⁷ R.C., (unverifiable initials) "Futuristic Music: Wild Outbreak at Steinway Hall" *London Daily Mail*, March 2nd, 1914.

²⁸ London Observer, March 2nd, 1914.

²⁹ The Daily Telegraph, March 2nd, 1914.

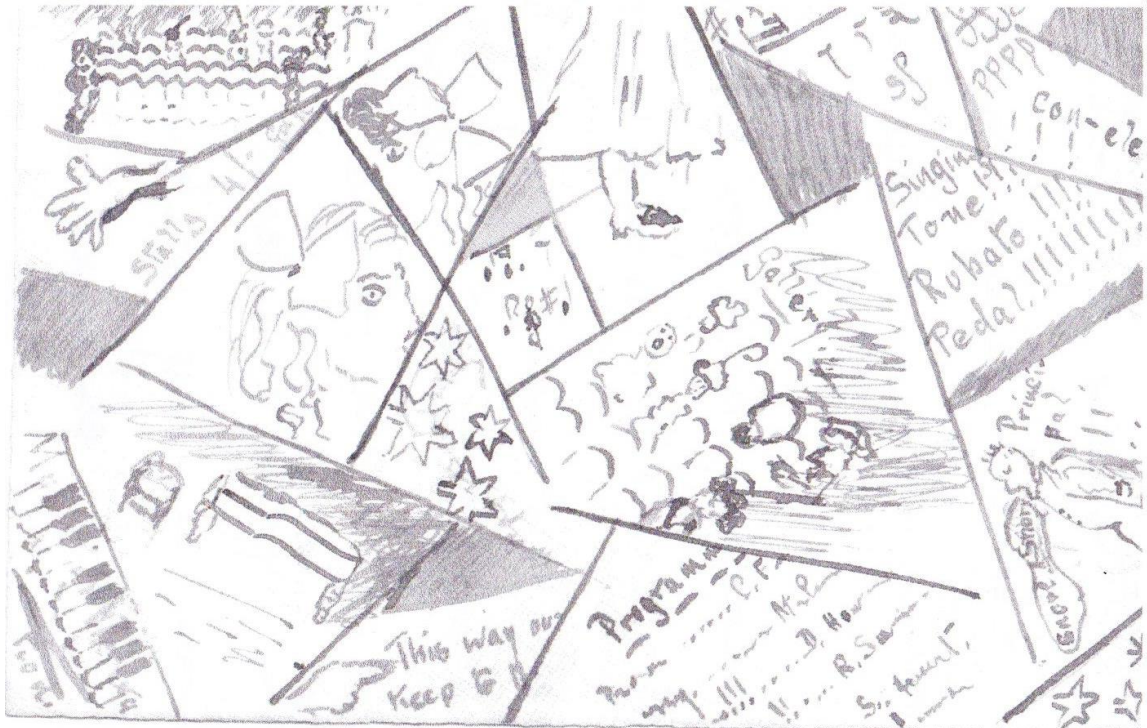
musical forms, but she was evidently bewildered by a style which she fundamentally saw as unmusical. Howell's dismissive opinion of modernism shows little development throughout her life, something which a letter written to her sister Winifred in the 1960s conveys:

'Below are my titles for 'A Suite of Modern Music by Dorothy Howell':

- a. Expressions – 4 Letter ones in 6 different languages
- b. Projections – to be followed (loudly) by OBJECTIONS
- c. Orbs with flute – or delicious with cream
- d. Allez Hop ‘ ’op it quick’
- e. Incrustations (Best to phone the doctor)
- f. Machine for Tuba and Cello (Warning attached £2 extra)³⁰

Although Howell never seriously intended to compose these pieces, the above quote is useful in helping us understand how she approached the later, more avant-garde, forms of modernism (exemplified by composers such as Stockhausen) with what could be most accurately described as humorous derision. Clearly modernism in music provided interest and amusement, but it was not a style of music Howell considered in any way seriously.

³⁰ Letter to Winnifred Howell, May 1966.



Picture 5: Howell's artistic impression of modernist music, accompanying a letter concerning Leo Ornstein's Steinway Hall Piano Recital. March, 1914.

Studies as a pianist

Howell's first piano tutor at the RAM was Percy Waller.³¹ To begin with Howell seems to have been overwhelmed by the exacting standards required in performance at the Academy, writing to her brother Charles 'Carlo' Howell:

I invariably make a hash of things when I try to play for Mr. Waller. He was very pleased, however, at my last lesson and said about six times: 'It's much better. Ever so much better.' I nearly went up in a blue flame when he told me I was coming on splendidly and proposed that I should try for a scholarship in May! Mr. Ewen was also more enthusiastic and said my last compo is the best I have done for him, "jolly nice."³²

As Howell's studies progressed Waller became an encouraging figure and by 1915 Howell wrote to Carlo about her development as a pianist and student:

I can hardly tell you about my piano playing now, things are humming so! P.W. congratulates me and calls me lovely names, and you know it used to be all the other way about. He is continually asking his other pupils to stop and listen to my lessons and telling them they will "learn a lot". I have to pretend not to hear!³³

By the end of her time studying with Percy Waller, Howell notes that her teacher was beginning to recognise her potential to work as a professional composer:

Mr Waller simply loves my compos and says I ought to make a lot of money out of them. He gave me [a] 3/4 hour lesson yesterday and was full of ideas for improving them. We both got so excited.³⁴

³¹ A letter Howell wrote to her parents humorously depicts Waller's teaching rooms at Sloane Square and also reveals something of her eye for detail: 'It is a large room with a polished floor and skiddy [sic] rugs about; there are two chesterfields and an arm chair... a beautiful cabinet and a big concert grand Bechstein. The whole is rather effective.' (Letters, January 1914)

³² Letter to Charles (Carlo) Howell, February 2nd, 1914.

³³ Ibid, October, 1915.

³⁴ Ibid, June 12th, 1915.

There is an acute sense of Howell flourishing during her time at the RAM; her correspondence with Carlo not only reveals a sense of fun and an optimistic personality, but, at times, an almost nihilistic attitude; certainly a sign that Howell becoming an increasingly independent and tough-minded individual:

Pleasant all these Zepps flitting about, what? I'm positive they will get right into London (or if not Harrow!) one fine night. Well, if I'm going to be blown [sic] up, I'll be blown up; if I'm going to survive, I'll survive! So there's no use worrying about it.³⁵

In another letter, she recounted being caught in a train accident:

I had an exciting little adventure on my way to the Bechstein Hall. The train between Harrow and Baker Street pulled up in a tunnel and waited for some time, the siren hooting continually, and it just entered my head that we were in for something new. At length it started again and we ran full speed into the station when – crash!!! There was a sound of broken glass and a terrific jerk that sent us all head first onto the floor. The ladies shrieked of course. I felt a bit shaken when I scrambled out onto the platform. When I'd finished seeing stars I collected my feet and stood on them, and a porter came in and said to the other passengers who were entangled on the floor, 'Now then, pick yourselves up. Has anybody's head gone through the window?' He meant it quite earnestly and seriously, but it struck me as being rather funny and I burst out laughing. Nobody else saw the joke though, so I came away and left them sitting on the floor, groaning and mopping their foreheads. I hope they'll recover, poor creatures.³⁶

Howell's letters from this period contribute to our understanding of the experience of female students during the RAM at this time. Laura Seddon notes that Howell, along with other female musicians at the RAM, represented a new generation of women who enjoyed a new-found freedom following the suffragette movement³⁷.

³⁵ Ibid, June 3rd, 1915.

³⁶ Ibid, February 8th, 1914

³⁷ Laura Seddon. 'British Women Composers and Instrumental Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century' (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013) p. 18.

A notable event during Howell's time at the RAM took place in March 15th 1916, when she was awarded a scholarship at a RAM piano competition. Howell wrote to her mother the following day outlining the events in a characteristically modest manner:

[The examiners were]: Gwenedda Davies, Christine Carpenter and... Myra Hess. Myra shook hands and said 'Congratulations! It was a delightful performance.' Then they told me that I stood out among all the competitors as far and away the best. The worst was yet to come, though! Outside the door stood a dense crowd of students reaching all down the hall, and I had to face no end of embraces and claps on the back without getting hysterics – quite difficult when you are strung up.³⁸

³⁸ Letter to Viola Howell, March 16th, 1916.

‘Graduation’ and demographics at the RAM

The First World War (1914-18) made a significant impact on the demographic structure of England with many young males being called up for active service. Whilst there had been a strong response from men in signing up to fight for Great Britain in the first six months following the outbreak of war, recruitment had tailed off considerably thereafter. By 1916, the government introduced conscription which eventually included both married and single men up to the age of 50. Therefore, there were huge consequences for the demography at the RAM during Howell’s years as a student: contemporary sources suggest that despite conscription not being introduced until the following year, there were already very clear demographic implications. For instance, in Percy Waller’s 1915 Pupils’ Concert (whose performers were made up of his students from the RAM, Matthay School Class and private tutees) five of the nine performers were female (including Howell herself). This suggests the significant impact of the First World War on musical life in London. However, when Howell left the RAM – which was coterminous with end of the First World War – the statistics were altogether starker; the records for her graduation class reveal that students at the academy were predominantly female at a 46:379 ratio of male to female students.³⁹

Therefore, it might be suggested that these circumstances allowed Howell and other female composers at the RAM a rare opportunity to progress in higher education and more specifically in the contemporary British musical scene. However, there are several factors that suggest Howell’s immediate success was not solely attributable to ‘lack of male competition’, and throughout her time at the RAM, Howell distinguished herself as a promising composer and pianist: she was consistently recognised for her considerable talents

³⁹ *Leavers of 1918*, Royal Academy of Music Annual Prize List.

in both areas; winning, amongst other things, the Sterndale Bennett Prize for composition and the Hine award for piano playing; both competitions included male candidates.

It should also be remembered that Howell began her studies a few months before the outbreak of the war and at an unusually young age; it would be misleading to suggest that her ability to succeed at the Academy could be purely attributed to lack of a substantial male presence at the academy. A RAM publication in 1915 made reference to the ‘high standard’ of music that had been attained that year and made specific reference to Howell’s compositions which whilst lacking ‘originality’ seemed to convey hope for the future.⁴⁰ One of the most promising composers at the academy during this period was the Welsh composer Morfydd Owen (1891- 1918), who studied composition under Corder and held the Goring Thomas scholarship during her time at the RAM. Tragically, Owen’s career was cut short due to accidental poisoning aged 26. After her death Corder compiled a four volume commemorative edition of Owen’s works published by the Anglo-French Music Company, with which Howell also had strong links.⁴¹ Another rising talent was Hilda Dederich (1901 – 1969), who was born in London and educated by Tobias Matthay during her youth. Dederich began to be acknowledged for her composition by the age of thirteen, and had a number of pianoworks published by the Anglo-French Music Company during the 1920s.⁴²

⁴⁰ ‘Indeed, the instrument standard seemed almost higher than usual, which was especially gratifying in view of the limited number of male students available. . . Some equally good work was done by Miss Dorothy Howell, who played three piano pieces of her own, slight things and not markedly original, but youthful enough to give promise of further attainments.’ Review of the 1915 at the Royal Academy of Music, June 19th 1915.

⁴¹ See Laura Seddon, 2013 (p. 78)

⁴² ‘Miss Hilda Dederich played a Sonatina of her own composition in which she displayed gifts.’ ‘Tobias Matthay Concert’, The Musical Times, August 1st, 1915.

Although no formal degree was awarded by the RAM at that time (BMus degrees were not issued at the RAM until after World War Two), Howell had to pass a number of exams before being admitted as a 'Graduate'. Her letters for this period reveal that whilst she excelled in her studies as a pianist and composer, she failed the sight singing test.

As was typical for many women 'graduates' at the time, once Howell had finished her studies at the RAM she returned home to Stourbridge to live with her parents - it was her desire to continue her musical career from the West Midlands. However, the Howell family received a number of letters from influential musical figures in London encouraging her to return to the capital in order to achieve success as a composer and pianist. Tobias Matthay wrote persuasively to Howell in a tone of warm familiarity.

You must not run to seed in the wilds of Worcestershire. After your Recital [sic] I am more than ever convinced that you have quite a big future in front of you, both as a composer and as a pianist. Please keep that statement vividly in front of you, and act accordingly, persistently, continuously and straight ahead. You are bound to come out on top if you do that... I have every confidence in your powers so GO ON.⁴³

J.B. McEwen also made an impassioned attempt to persuade Charles Edward to allow his daughter to move back to London in order to progress as a composer:

I can quite understand the natural desire on your part, and on the part of her mother, to have her at home with you. I can also see that, from her point of view, Dorothy herself is anxious to get back to home life... but I think that I should in some measure be failing of what is my artistic responsibility if I did not put the other side of the matter before you.⁴⁴

These letters, remarkable in revealing the esteem in which Howell was held by her tutors, were successful in persuading Charles Edward to rethink his original plans and he eventually

⁴³ Letter from Tobias Matthay to Dorothy Howell, March 29th, 1919.

⁴⁴ Letters from J.B. McEwen to Charles Edward Howell, Monday, April 21st 1919.

decided to allow Howell to move into London where she took up residence at the Cowdray Club, Marylebone, and continued to work on her first large scale orchestral work, *Lamia*.

Chapter 4 - Lamia

Lamia (1919) is Dorothy Howell's most frequently played orchestral composition.⁴⁵ It is an orchestral tone poem based on John Keats' 1820 poem of the same name and is written in a Late Romantic idiom. Contemporaneous critics noted the work's similarity to the tone poems of Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949) and even dubbed Howell the 'English Strauss'⁴⁶. During Howell's lifetime it was her most successful large-scale orchestral work and brought her career as a composer to public attention in a manner which was unprecedented for a woman composer during the period. This chapter will consider the sources that inspired Howell to write *Lamia*, the influence of Sir Henry Wood in promoting the work during the 1919 Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, contemporaneous critical reception, the work's subsequent influence on Howell's career, and, finally, provide an overview of the piece.

Keats' *Lamia* and Charles (Carlo) Howell

It could be reasonably suggested that the piece addresses Howell's grief following the loss of her beloved brother Charles (Carlo) Howell in particularly horrific circumstances during the First World War⁴⁷, and the death of her close friend Dick Sampson during the Second Battle of the Somme (1918).

⁴⁵ The most recent performance was Prom 68 during the 2010 BBC Proms season as part of 'Henry Wood Day'. Paul Watkins conducted the Ulster Orchestra in a variety of works associated with the 'father of the Proms'.

⁴⁶ Birmingham Post, September 19th, 1919.

⁴⁷ A letter from Carlo's regiment, fighting in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), informed the family that Carlo was buried at an unknown location. After the War, a soldier from Carlo's regiment informed Charles Edward that Carlo had been massacred by enemy forces and his butchered body had been buried near Kut. Dorothy was informed of these details. (Letters, November, 1917 & Interview with Merryn Howell, Bewdley, October 21st, 2012).

Merryn Howell provides an explanation as to why Howell chose the poem as a basis for her tone poem:

I know that Dorothy was one of the few members of the family to be aware of the full horrors of Carlo's [Charles Howell's] death in Mesopotamia, and she was undoubtedly troubled by the gruesome nature of his death; they were both very close; very similar in the sense that they both shared a love of poetry and music. *Lamia* is an unusual poem and I think the work may have had some particular significance for both Dorothy and Charles.⁴⁸

This background information perhaps goes some way to revealing why Howell chose Keats' *Lamia* as the basis for her work; Keats' poem is deeply melancholic and its storyline does not reflect the youthful exuberance one might expect from a debut work.

However, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that Keats' *Lamia* had a particular significance for Dorothy and Carlo. It is worth noting though that the poem had previously inspired several Pre-Raphaelite paintings – most notably John William Waterhouse's 1905 depiction of Lamia and Lycius. Indeed, Howell was not the first composer to write a symphonic tone poem based on the poem; American composer Edward MacDowell (1860-1908) wrote a symphonic tone poem *Lamia* (op. 29) in 1888. MacDowell uses a similar orchestration to Howell (see Catalogue) and the piece is similarly programmatic, but this is perhaps more an indication that both pieces were written in a similar Late Romantic style.

It is impossible to say whether or not Howell was familiar with MacDowell's work; there are no references to his work in the composer's diaries, nor any recorded performances of the work at Promenade concerts or at other London concerts, which Dorothy may have attended.

⁴⁸ Interview with Merryn Howell, October 19th, 2012.

Reception

Dorothy Howell was 21 when *Lamia* was first performed at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, on September 10th, 1919, under the direction of Sir Henry Wood.

Howell's aunt, Kate Hyde, was present at the concert and recalled the reception after the piece had been performed: 'When the composer was called on and a slim young girl came forward, people became wildly excited and on her parents' return to Stourbridge they found the house full of reporters eager to interview her.'⁴⁹

The media interest was immediate; contemporary press reports made reference to the public's interest in *Lamia* not only because it was composed by a woman, but also because someone as young as Howell could write music with such evident maturity: 'It is a remarkable achievement for so young a composer as Howell... [She] has a vein of easy lyrical eloquence that tells very effectively the love music of *Lamia*'⁵⁰ The significant attention stimulated by *Lamia* was such that Wood took an unprecedented step in repeating the work a further four times during the 1919 Promenade season.

Details of the première of *Lamia* were covered by all of England's major newspapers. The press reception of the work provides a good insight into the media's attitude towards female composers. The tabloid paper *The Star* highlighted the 'curious' nature of a female orchestral composer in an article entitled '*Girl composer's fame: success gained through a promenade novelty*'.⁵¹ Reviews of this nature were typical amongst more populist publications, which played on the general public's curiosity that a female had achieved such immediate success.

⁴⁹ The diary of Kate Hyde, 1919, p. 25.

⁵⁰ *Lamia* and *The Spectre's Bride*, A. J. Sheldon, *The Birmingham Post*, December 2nd 1920.

⁵¹ 'All musical London is talking about Miss Dorothy Howell, the girl composer whose symphonic poem *Lamia* created such instantaneous effect' *The Star*, September 11th 1919

The Times noted the potential of Howell to succeed on an international level:

Indeed, the younger school of Italian symphonic composers will have to look to their laurels if Miss Howell takes to writing Futurist music... [Sir Henry Wood] described her as the finest composer since [Richard] Strauss.⁵²

The Daily Telegraph, however, felt Howell had chosen a somewhat clichéd subject in Keats' poem, which ultimately led to the detriment of the work:

Her music gave one the impression of that of a very clever writer handicapped by a rather unfortunately chosen subject. There are very few of us nowadays who can pretend to a serious interest in the love of affairs of Lycius and his serpent-bride Lamia... It was a conventional idea and she has treated it very conventionally, but her music is certainly clear, well knit, and not by any means without real feeling.⁵³

The Pall Mall Gazette, was even more negative about the literary inspiration for the work commenting that Howell was decidedly backward-looking in 'her choice of form, and even of subject, [which] is not that of a composer entering upon a career today, [but belonging] to a chapter of musical evolution that is all but closed.'⁵⁴

For some listeners there was cause to doubt the work was a truly independent endeavour on Howell's part; *The Star* put forward this question to J. B. McEwen, who confirmed that his former student at the RAM had written *Lamia* without any outside assistance⁵⁵. The clear implication was that some members of the press suspected that Howell, as both a young person and a woman, was incapable of writing music of such complexity.

⁵² *The Times*, September 11th 1919

⁵³ *Daily Telegraph*, September 11th 1919

⁵⁴ *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 11th, 1919

⁵⁵ 'What she has done is entirely her own work and neither as regards the letter nor the spirit of the music has she received any assistance.' J.B. McEwan, *The Star*, September 11th, 1919.

Some press commentary considered Howell's training at the RAM as a prominent factor in forming her voice as a composer: 'Miss Howell turns from executive to creative work with an excellent equipment derived from her skill as a pianist and knowledge of the most prominent composers. Excellent rhythmic command and a good knowledge of orchestral effect is on show in her work'⁵⁶. Other commentators noted Howell's venturing into orchestral composition as a positive step forward.⁵⁷

The majority of press commentary conveys an acute sense that *Lamia* represented an exciting development in the history of female composers in Great Britain. As Henry Wood would later recall:

The work made such a lasting impression that it was repeated no less than five time [sic]. This was indeed exceptional for a British composer's work – for a woman, a triumph. Up to this time Miss Howell had been known as a pianist only... She was a fastidious composer; slow in production; consequently she has produced few works; but they are all of distinction, for her themes and orchestration show real thought and musical feeling.⁵⁸

Wood subsequently performed the work in many of the major concert halls in Britain, including Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bournemouth⁵⁹.

Lamia was scheduled to be performed in Birmingham on February 4th 1920, however, Wood cancelled the performance on the grounds that the orchestra lacked sufficient competence to do justice to the work; the Birmingham premiere was therefore postponed until December;

⁵⁶ *Morning Post*, 11th September 1919.

⁵⁷ It is interesting to see how there was possibly an expectation for female composers to write music for piano exclusively: 'It need hardly be said that her reputation which, up to now, has been principally as a composer of pianoforte music, is at once enormously enhanced by the present, very fine, orchestral composition'. Robert Norris, *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 29th, 1919.

⁵⁸ Henry Wood 'My Life of Music: The Autobiography of Sir Henry Wood' (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938) p. 400.

⁵⁹ Premiered in Liverpool on October 24th, 1919; Birmingham on December 1st, 1920, Bournemouth on February 3rd, 1921. (See Catalogue for more details)

something which reveals Wood's respect for both *Lamia* and Howell personally. Throughout the subsequent two decades Howell and Wood corresponded regularly; many of their letters still exist and provide an insight into their close working relationship; for example, in a letter to Howell following Novello's publication of the score in 1921, Wood wrote: '[Lamia] is my little baby, in a way, and I want to always give it a chance whenever I can.'⁶⁰ Wood was later to conduct for the premieres of the ballet *Koong Shee*, the *Piano Concerto in D minor* and *The Rock* – the latter was performed at the Last Night of the Proms in 1928.⁶¹

'The English Strauss'

Following the enthusiastic reception of *Lamia*, Howell was dubbed the English Strauss, due to the supposed similarities in her compositional style to that of Richard Strauss (1864 -1949) by the British press. Following the première of *Lamia*, *The Times* reported 'Sir Henry Wood... on the conclusion of the performance stood up and shook [Howell] warmly by the hand. It is declared that he described her as the finest composer since Strauss.'⁶²

This somewhat sensationalist description is found in the populist nature of an article in *The Star* concerning *Dorothy Howell: The English Strauss*:

Miss Dorothy Howell, who stepped into fame at the Queen's Hall on Wednesday night, is the very antithesis of what the general public imagine a musical genius to be. [The positive public and critical reception] naturally made her a much-sought for young lady by musical experts, interviewers and autograph hunters yesterday. But adulation does not appeal to her, and while many people haunted her hotel, Miss Howell, happy and unmolested, spent the morning with her youngest brother Alfred and the animals at the Zoo.⁶³

⁶⁰ Arthur Jacobs, 'Henry J. Wood, Maker of the Proms' (London: Methuen, 1994) p. 180.

⁶¹ 'The Rock' was premiered on October 6th, 1928 at the Queens Hall. (See Catalogue for further details).

⁶² 'English Girl Strauss: Remarkable Scene at the Queen's Hall', *The Times*, September 11th, 1919.

⁶³ *The Daily Sketch*, September 13th, 1919.

The tone of the article is telling of contemporary attitudes towards female composers: it conveys the notion that Howell was spared the undue 'molestation' by adoring fans, something that would not have been foisted upon a male composer in a comparable situation. The portrayal of Howell as the antithesis of the stereotypical genius reveals a somewhat uncritical and superficial assessment of both Howell and her music.

Whilst the press attention lavished on Howell during this period certainly brought her to public attention, there is most definitely a sense that articles of this nature did not help her subsequent reputation with discerning audiences, let alone 'musical experts'. By direct contrast, the critical reception of her *Two Dances for Orchestra* (premiered in Birmingham two days before *Lamia* was first performed) was decidedly less sensationalist. Although the title of 'English Strauss' has been used subsequently, the comparison is not particularly accurate because the majority of Howell's subsequent works are written on a much smaller scale than those of Strauss.

Overview of the storyline

Keats' *Lamia* is based on a Greek myth concerning Lycius, who encounters tragedy when Lamia (his bride) transforms into a serpent. Upon being challenged by Lycius, Lamia vanishes, leaving the distraught Lycius to die in state of intense sorrow. Howell divides the work into four continuous sections, which correspond to specific scenes from the poem:

Section	Corresponding bar numbers	Tonal Centres	Time Signature
Lamentation: Lamia longs for freedom from her shackled form as a snake woman:	b. 1 – 101	b. 1 – 91: C minor b. 91 – 101: C major	b. 1 – 91: 6/8 b. 91 – 101: 4/4
Lamia meets Lycius – Love song	b. 102 – 185	b. 102 – 113: A major b. 113 – 126: D flat major 126 – 185: Modulating bridge section	b. 102 – 185: 4/4
Marriage Feast – Girls dance at the wedding feast, then increasing anxiety upon memories of Lamia's previous form as a snake woman. Lamia is exposed by Apollonius; general confusion and dismay.	b. 186 – 480	b. 186: E flat major b. 236 – 456: D minor	b. 186 – 480: 4/4
Lamia vanishes and Lycius dies from grief	b. 481 – 502	b. 481 – 492: C minor b. 493 – 496: E flat major b. 496 – 502: C minor	b. 481 – 503: 4/4

Form

The fact that *Lamia* is a tone-poem in one continuous movement undoubtedly prompted critics to draw comparisons with Richard Strauss – the preeminent composer of such works during the Late Romantic period. In contrast to the British symphonic poems of Elgar, *In the South* (1904) and *Cockaigne* (1901), Grainger's *Train Music* (1901), and Bax's *Tintagel* (1919), Howell's specific allusion to Keats' poem echoes the literary influences seen in Strauss's tone poems: Nikolaus Lenau's poem *Don Juan* (1888), German folklore in *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (1895), the poetry of Frederic Nietzsche in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1896), and Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1898).

Tonality and Orchestration

A key characteristic of Howell's compositional voice is the use of chromaticism: this is particularly evident throughout *Lamia*. The opening phrase is a repeated one-bar oscillating chromatic flute figure; chromaticism is employed here to describe the lamentation of Lamia, and the phrase is constructed in a manner that provides a lack of tonal resolution:

Ex. IV

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a 6/8 time signature, featuring a repeated chromatic figure in the flute part, marked 'pp'. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a 6/8 time signature, featuring a clarinet interjection with a dissonant interval, also marked 'pp'.

The clarinet interjection provides dissonance that further adds to a lack of tonal resolution.

Howell uses simple timbral contrast to build an increasing sense of lamentation; the repetition

of the phrase suggests that the composer is not attempting to build on the motivic idea, but rather to use orchestration to create textural effect.

This is confirmed by the introduction of the violin playing a short theme (b. 4) which lacks a clear sense of periodicity:

Ex. V



The melody appears to die away amidst the introduction of a dissonant G minor chord from the trumpet and trombones (b.7), and harp arpeggios at b. 9.

A particularly memorable example of this chromatic and texturally based approach (b. 28) reveals Howell is using relatively little melodic material:

Ex. VI



During the first section of the work, the oscillating chromatic phrase reappears, in an undeveloped manner, using new tonal colours (b. 63):

Ex. VII



The most substantial thematic material is found in the melody and development of the ‘love theme’ (b. 102) in the second part of the tone poem. The theme is introduced as an oboe solo with chordal French horn and violin accompaniment. Tonally, the theme is based on a descending chromatic idea:

Ex. VIII



The rhythm of the French horn accompaniment is evocative of a Schubert song, and provides an increased sense of romanticism:

Ex. IX



The theme is later presented in a triumphal passage at the climax of the second section; however, it is not until the very end of the piece, in the coda (b. 511 – 515), when the love theme finally reaches a resolved cadence:

Ex. X



Howell builds on the love theme using orchestral colour with the introduction of full strings at b. 110, and includes a brief cello counter-melody that heralds a development section of the love theme:

Ex. XI



As the theme progresses, Howell continues to make further use of chromatic material, with an ascending phrase used to build a climax (b. 129 – 134):

Ex. XII

Musical score for Ex. XII, measures 129-134. The score is in 3/4 time and features five staves. The top two staves are for strings, the middle two for woodwinds, and the bottom for bass. The music is marked with a forte dynamic (ff) and includes the instruction "cresc. ed accel." (crescendo and acceleration). The score shows a complex texture with many triplets and chromatic lines. The number 14715 is printed at the bottom.

Once again, there is timbral contrast as the phrase is also played by the clarinets (b. 130 – 135):

Ex. XIII

Musical score for Ex. XIII, showing a woodwind part with a clarinet line. The score is in 3/4 time and features a complex texture with many triplets and chromatic lines. The music is marked with a forte dynamic (ff) and includes the instruction "cresc. ed accel." (crescendo and acceleration).

The next major melodic idea is the main theme of the third section: a brief motif to depict the wedding dance (b. 201 -206):

Ex. XIV

Musical score for Ex. XIV, Violin I. The score is in 3/4 time and features a single staff. The music is marked with a forte dynamic (ff) and includes the instruction "cresc. ed accel." (crescendo and acceleration). The score shows a complex texture with many triplets and chromatic lines.

Howell also employs a modified trumpet fanfare based around the theme (b. 211 - 215):

Ex. XV



However, there is little evidence of the theme being developed in a motivic way. The third section also features a feverish chromatic passage, although this cannot be called a fully developed theme in any way (b.231 – 237):

Ex. XVI



Lamia concludes with a coda that presents the first and second themes of the piece, and a sense of despair is reached in a funereal passage in c minor; the use of strings, bassoon, timpani and harp provide a marked contrast to the orchestration of previously stated love theme (b. 515 – 523):

Musical score for a string ensemble, featuring multiple staves with various dynamics and performance instructions. The score includes:

- Staff 1: *p*, *a 2.*, *pp*
- Staff 2: *p*, *pp*
- Staff 3: *p*, *pp*
- Staff 4: *pp*
- Staff 5: *pp*
- Staff 6: *pp*
- Staff 7: *pp*
- Staff 8: *pp*
- Staff 9: *pp*
- Staff 10: *pp*
- Staff 11: *pp*
- Staff 12: *pp*
- Staff 13: *pp*
- Staff 14: *pp*
- Staff 15: *pp*
- Staff 16: *pp*
- Staff 17: *pp*
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Additional markings include:

- f* (forte)
- p* (piano)
- pp* (pianissimo)
- ppp* (pianississimo)
- div. pizz.* (divisi pizzicato)
- con sord.* (con sordina)
- TUTTI**

Publisher: G. Schirmer & Company, Ltd. Engravers & Printers. 14715 April 1918.

Subsequent Performances

Lamia was performed several during the subsequent decades, with the last performance in Howell's lifetime taking place in Croydon in 1950.⁶⁴ Recently, the work was resurrected for a celebration of 'Henry Wood Day' on September 5th, 2010. The work attracted limited press interest with the most extensive review coming from Christopher Morley, writing for *The Birmingham Post*, who posited possible reasons for the relative obscurity of Howell's music:

[The reasons are, I suspect,] quite complex, and have something to do with the fact that her sex counted against her as she gradually left behind the persona of the fascinating slip of a girl who first hit the musical scene at the end of the First World War.⁶⁵

George Hall, writing in *The Guardian*, felt the work 'revealed a sensitive ear for sonority', but that the melodic material lacked memorability.⁶⁶

As part of the 2014 Women of the World Festival, segments from *Lamia* were played by an amateur orchestra under the direction of Jessica Cottis, but the performance failed to receive any press attention.

Lamia is an interesting work in a number of respects: although the piece does not present a major departure from, or development of prior conventions in Late Romantic music, the prominent use of chromaticism, skilfully contrasted tonal colour and the 'lyrical eloquence' of the work's three main themes demonstrate that Howell had an exceptionally well developed voice as a composer. The support provided by Sir Henry Wood was exceptional and integral: Arthur Jacobs, Wood's biographer, later remarked 'Wood could have taken no greater care in preparation [of *Lamia* for the premiere] had it been by the most celebrated

⁶⁴ Croydon Civic Hall, November 18th, 1950. (See Catalogue for further details)

⁶⁵ 'Dorothy Howell's *Lamia*, the Ulster Orchestra, at the Royal Albert Hall', *The Birmingham Post*, September 8th, 2010.

⁶⁶ 'Ulster Orchestra, Paul Watkins' *The Guardian*, September 6th, 2010.

composer in Europe instead of a novice.⁶⁷ The public interest in the future of the composer was considerable if not somewhat temporary. However, it was the case that by the end of the following decade, Howell had begun to fade into relative obscurity. In the next chapter, we will consider the circumstances which led to this decline after such an illustrious debut.

⁶⁷ Arthur Jacobs, 'Henry J. Wood, Maker of the Proms' (London: Methuen, 1994) p. 179.



Picture 6: The general public was eager to see a photograph of Howell following the première of *Lamia*. The above portrait was included in *The Daily Sketch* article from September 15th, 1919.

Chapter 5 – Major Orchestral Works

This chapter will present an overview of the critical reception of the four other major orchestral works of her Howell's period as a composer: *Dances for Orchestra* (performed the same week as *Lamia*), *Koong Shee*, the *Piano Concerto in D minor* and *The Rock*. The examples of reception provide an indication of the decline in interest surrounding Howell's work following *Lamia* and also a sense that Howell was unable to find a distinctive voice as an orchestral composer.

During the same week as the first performance of *Lamia*, another work by Howell, *Two Dances for Orchestra*, was premiered in Birmingham at the Futurist Theatre under the baton of John Appleby to lesser public excitement, although the press reaction was favourable with the *Birmingham Gazette and Express* predicting Howell as being 'destined to go far'. The dances were praised for being 'full of musical individuality and rich in orchestral ideas. *Danse Grotesque* obtains its bizarre effects from the woodwind and the brass but Miss Howell has used these conventional means quite unconventionally. *The Valse Caprice* is dainty without being insipid.'⁶⁸

1919 was a spectacularly successful start to Howell's career. On November 25th the *Two Dances* were selected to be played at Buckingham Palace for a 'First Command' performance under the direction of Raymond Roze, who wrote to her the following day to report on the reception of the work:

The Command Performance was a great success, and you will be pleased to hear that your charming piece was beautifully performed and greatly appreciated by the distinguished audience. Sir Frederick Ponsonby especially expressed his great liking for your work.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ 'A Young Birmingham Composer' *Birmingham Gazette and Express*. September 8th, 1919.

⁶⁹ Letter from Raymond Roze to Howell, December 1st 1919.

On February 23rd 1920, the work was performed at the Queen's Hall – once more with members of the royal family in attendance. Howell, who had been struck with measles, was taken to the London Fever Hospital on the night of performance. Charles Edward, however, was present that evening and notes on the back of a concert programme record:

The murmur of the surrounding crowd who were decidedly raptured being quite evident... At the conclusion in response to repeated rounds of applause, Mr Raymond Roze stood up and said that unfortunately Miss Dorothy Howell, whose composition we had just heard was too ill to be present, and therefore – with an expressive gesture – he would tell her of the crowd's appreciation tomorrow. Renewed demonstrations. Princess Mary and Prince Henry were there. ⁷⁰

Koong Shee

Howell's next large-scale orchestral work was music to a ballet based on the story of the Willow Pattern Plate which tells of the courtship of Koong Shee, the daughter of a wealthy mandarin, and Chang a bird catcher. The story ends in the death of Koong Shee and Chang after which their souls take the form of two white doves flying up to heaven. *The Bournemouth Guardian* felt that, whilst the music was 'very graphic [and contained] a lot of beauty,' the oriental influences were 'decidedly weird. It is, of course, highly imaginative, but generally the right atmosphere seems to have been caught. The orchestra, under the conductorship of Sir Dan Godfrey, played this most unusual work in great style and together with Miss Howell were accorded a fine reception at the close.'⁷¹

⁷⁰ Note on the back of concert programme written by Charles Edward Howell.

⁷¹ 'Bournemouth Symphony Concerts' *The Bournemouth Guardian*. January 13th 1923.

Piano Concerto in D minor

Sketches for the *Piano Concerto in D minor* exist from as early as the summer of 1919 - prior to the premiere of *Lamia* – and a diary entrance makes reference to ‘Dodie’s little secret.’⁷²

After the success of *Lamia*, Howell postponed plans for the Piano Concerto in order to turn her attention to *Koong Shee* and teaching commitments at the RAM. By the summer of 1922, however, the sketches had begun again, and by the beginning of July 1923 the work was complete. In fact, it exists in two forms: a version for two pianos and the standard version with orchestral accompaniment.

Howell sent the completed score to Sir Henry Wood in July 1923 and the work was quickly premièred the following month on August 23rd at the Queens Hall as part of the Summer Promenade Concerts.

The critical response was somewhat mixed in comparison to the almost universal of acclaim of *Lamia*; A.J.A. Symons, writing in *The Birmingham Post*, was particularly dismissive of the work:

Though the work [*Lamia*] did not disclose strongly marked individuality of style, there were hints of latent power sufficient to invest with interest the production of her next composition on a large scale. [*The Piano Concerto*] did not suggest any notable advance, either in power or individuality. So much was hardly to be expected, perhaps, for Miss Howell, forsaking a programmatic basis for her music and entering the domain of the absolute genre in which greatness has been obtained by few, may as truly be regarded as a beginner when she wrote her four years old symphonic poem. Moreover, in proportion as her task is greater so her achievement be reckoned [sic]. Granting so much, however, it is still to be admitted that her pianoforte concerto is a degree less satisfying than its predecessor.

She moves less securely into a medium wherein thought and feeling are unbound by pictorial allusiveness. She gives a hostage or two to fortune, moreover, and in doing so burdens herself with a handicap she has yet neither the strength of wing nor velocity of thought to overcome. Modesty doubtless led to the eschewing of the concerto models of the classic masters, but there is a great deal to be said for the old models still. Miss Howell’s concerto is cast in a continuous mould rather

⁷²Diary of Dorothy Howell, May 1919

after the manner of Delius. Its three sections – they are hardly fully developed movements – are linked.⁷³

Symons' assessment reflects a disappointment that was general amongst the press following the première of this work. There is a degree to which Symons views Howell as failing to sustain the originality, or indeed 'latent' promise suggested by *Lamia*; a view that has become common even in more recent considerations of Howell's work.⁷⁴

However, not all the contemporary critical reception was negative: *The Birmingham Gazette*, for instance, provided a more agreeable, if slightly uncritical, assessment of the work:

To Miss Dorothy Howell, who has returned to her home at Wollescote House, Stourbridge, after achieving much success with one of her compositions at the Queens Hall [sic], London, musical Birmingham has extended the heartiest congratulations. For her new pianoforte concerto, which took her about five months to write, Miss Howell was recalled no fewer than five times – a splendid mark of approbation. Naturally, this talented composer – she is only 25 years of age – is very pleased at her success... Discussing the future with a Gazette representative on Saturday, Miss Howell, who has a charming personality, said she intended to continue composing. Her next work would be a fantasia for violin and piano. Undoubtedly, Miss Howell has a brilliant career before her.⁷⁵

Given the somewhat populist nature of *The Birmingham Gazette*, it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of this article focusses on Howell as a young composer and her personal circumstances rather than on a discussion of the nature of the composition. However, it is clear that the widespread public excitement shown towards 'The English Strauss' in 1919 did not extend to Dorothy Howell, the composer aged 25, and outside of the aforementioned article, Howell's *Piano Concerto* received little tabloid attention.

⁷³ *The Birmingham Post*, August 24th, 1923

⁷⁴ 'Howell only ever attained the status of a minor composer. Though she had shown significant early promise... the expectations that she generated in musical circles in the 1920s were ultimately not sustained.' Christopher Wiley, *Music and Literature: Ethel Smyth, Virginia Woolf and 'The First Woman to Write an Opera.'* *Musical Quarterly*. Vol. 96, No. 2: (footnote) (Summer 2003).

⁷⁵ *The Birmingham Gazette*, August 27th, 1923

The Birmingham Post suggested Howell had undertaken too great a challenge in attempting to write a piano concerto:

When Miss Dorothy Howell played her piano concerto at the City Orchestra's Sunday Concert on January 9th, I received the impression as of an aviator who gathers together the material for a successful flight, but finds himself straining to get away, yet unable to rise more than a few feet from the ground. [Howell] assembles an enormous orchestra, but though she herself was at the pilot's wheel, the music did not soar; because, as I felt, the ideas of the composition did not have real motive force. Yet there was often a charming feminine grace, in both music and performance.⁷⁶

The reference to 'feminine grace' and the somewhat facetious comparison with an aviator in this commentary betray a thinly veiled preconception of the nature of what a female composer was capable of; there is a clear sense from this article that Howell, in attempting to write a piano concerto, had somehow exceeded her brief.

The tendency for contemporary critical commentary to compare the work unfavourably to *Lamia*, alongside a sense that Howell was somehow unsuited to an altogether more complex area of composition, almost certainly had an impact on Howell's subsequent orchestral compositions. After the *Piano Concerto*, Howell wrote only five complete orchestral works; each one was considerably smaller in scale than the *Piano Concerto* and it is probable that the critical and public failure of the work led to the composer feeling somehow discouraged from writing pieces in traditional orchestral forms.

The Rock

On June 6th 1924, Howell took a vacation with her mother and Clifford on the Ss. Maloja. Four years later she completed the tone poem *The Rock*, subtitled 'Impressions of Gibraltar'. The work was premièred at the Last Night of the Proms concert on Saturday October 6th,

⁷⁶ Notes from Birmingham. (E.M.G.) *Musical News & Herald*, February 1927.

1928, under the direction of Sir Henry Wood. In the original manuscript Howell included an extract from her diary of the trip recording her first impressions which inform the work:

They sent us ashore on a tender at eight thirty this morning, and when the assortment of Arabs and Spaniards and ‘Mongrels’ who meet the boats had finished jabbering and gesticulating over the baggage, we were driven up the main street to our hotel. This street is narrow and crooked, and crowded with little shops on either side displaying wonderful embroidered shawls, carved ivory figures and oriental rugs... The donkeys bray, and their masters call their goods in a queer sing-song voice. There are men who go round with herds of goats and milk them by the roadside for each purchaser. They announce their approach on a little set of pan-pipes. Another tune I heard, played by a knife-grinder in search of jobs.

The *Musical Times* bemoaned the lack of substantial melodic material and lack of direction throughout the piece:

Like much of Miss Howell’s music, this overture opens with some effective material, and then loses its way among a number of fragmentary ideas which are not co-ordinated into convincing design. It has, however, its picturesque moments; it is not over long and it does not make a great noise – and that’s something to be thankful for.⁷⁷

However, the *Daily Telegraph* felt Howell’s use of minimal thematic material marked ‘an advance in point of workmanship on any recent composition of Miss Howell’s that I have heard. [Howell] has discreetly painted on a small canvas, and refrained from over-crowding it with detail, so that her effects come off clearly. Miss Howell’s scoring here shows a lighter touch than in some of her previous works, and in a more or less conventional way this unpretentious overture makes quite pleasant hearing.’⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Musical Times*, December 1928.

⁷⁸ ‘London Concerts: New Work by Miss Dorothy Howell.’ *Daily Telegraph*, 8th October 1928.

The Rock was performed the following month in Bournemouth and has never been subsequently heard. The work marks an end to a consecutive run of orchestral pieces Howell composed during the 1920s.

Chapter 6 – 1920s

Early Career as a Pianist and Critical Reception

Following piano studies with Percy Waller, Howell was taught by Tobias Matthay, who proved a profound influence on Howell's career as a pianist. Another notable pupil of Matthay, Myra Hess, recalled the fundamental principles of the Matthay technique thus: 'relaxation in the hands, arms and shoulders; a capacity for intense concentration on the music; warmth and fullness of tone; clean articulation and the ability to enjoy the music.'⁷⁹

In a letter to Carlo, Howell recalls her first meeting with Matthay:

During the interval when we all went downstairs and imbibed coffee and sandwiches and talked, I suddenly felt my arm pulled and heard a voice saying 'This is the young lady'. I found myself being presented to Uncle Tobbs [Matthay] who congratulated me on having knocked out all his pupils (he didn't put it that way, of course!) and said he hoped to hear me play someday... I said 'her her her! [sic] Thanks very much! Pleasure's mine!' and felt 'some knut' [sic] with everybody looking on.⁸⁰

Howell subsequently became a student of the Tobias Matthay School as an undergraduate, continuing after her time as a student at the RAM, with the 1919 prospectus listing Howell as a senior student. Following her success as a composer and performer in the early 1920s, she began teaching at the school in 1925.

Although Howell made her public debut as a pianist in Stourbridge in November 1914, she had given performances at private recitals since commencing her studies at the RAM – the most notable example was a performance of Rachmanioff's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the RAM orchestra, one month before her Stourbridge debut.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Marion McKenna. 'Myra Hess' (London: H. Hamilton, 1976) p. 22

⁸⁰ Letter to Carlo, March 16th 1916

⁸¹ Concert on October 6th 1914 at the Duke's Hall, Marylebone Road.

Following the premiere of *Lamia*, Howell gave a piano recital to much public interest at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham:

‘A series of her own compositions discovered a decided talent which, with due development, should make this young lady’s name conspicuous amongst our native composers. The quality of her versatile accomplishments is distinctly high for one so young and her career as a pianist and composer will be watched with interest.’⁸²

‘[A] name conspicuous amongst our native composers’ is a particularly revealing statement: the suggestion that Howell was not merely an interesting lady pianist, or that her compositions contained some sort of novelty factor (as was often the critical press attitude towards her contemporary Dame Ethyl Smyth⁸³), but rather that her skill as composer could potentially lead to a recognised place in the English musical tradition is either indicative of genuine potential or hyperbolic praise by a Birmingham newspaper for a native of the city. In any case, the praise was perhaps less aimed at the compositions played at the concert (a series of piano miniatures), than an echo of the sensational success of her work *Lamia* premièred earlier that year in September, 1919. Fundraising concerts were important during the First World War, and a notable concert in June 1917 was a fundraiser in aid of the Petrol Fund, in which Howell played for Princess Henry of Battenburg.⁸⁴

⁸² ‘Concert at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham’, *The Birmingham Gazette*, 19th November, 1919.

⁸³ ‘Smyth claimed that sex discrimination had prevented her from succeeding as a composer, and she cast much of the blame on the press. Female composers have long struggled against sexist critics, who denied their music a hearing.’ Elizabeth Jane Kertesz, ‘Issues in the critical reception of Ethel Smyth’s *Mass* and first four operas in England and Germany’. Kertesz continues to present a more nuanced view of critical reception to the work of Smyth, noting: ‘There are many [inflammatory and sexist] passages in [contemporary] reviews that cry out for quotation, but hidden in the dossier behind them is extensively commentary: measured critique... [and] evaluation of Smyth’s place in the development of English opera.’ (pg. 2)

⁸⁴ Programme of Entertainment in aid of the Petrol Fund, Wednesday June 13th, 1917. Cavendish Square.

Although Howell had made several notable appearances as a pianist inside the RAM and, more publically, in the West Midlands, her debut recital in London was at the Aeolian Hall on March 11th, 1919. Her playing received a largely positive critical reception: *The Observer* notes Howell attracting attention as both a composer and pianist and praises her playing for ‘good tone and a directness of execution which were both striking and pleasing.’⁸⁵ *The Universe*, a Roman Catholic newspaper, noted Howell’s ‘Command of real singing tone in passages of melody [which] so many pianists always seem afraid of.’⁸⁶ *The Times*, whilst noting Howell’s relative inexperience as a pianist, commented on her ‘uncommon promise’ as a pianist and ‘rare gift of imagination’ as a composer⁸⁷. *The Daily Mail* acknowledged Howell’s ‘candid talent’ as a pianist but commented upon her failure to draw out the ‘deeper passion and close-knit unity’ of Schumann’s *Symphonic Studies*.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ ‘Miss Howell’s First Recital’, *The Observer*, March 15th, 1919.

⁸⁶ ‘An Interesting Pianist’, *The Universe*, March 14th, 1919.

⁸⁷ ‘Piano Recital at the Aeolian Hall’, H.B. Dickin, *The Times*, March 16th, 1919.

⁸⁸ ‘Two New Musicians’, *The Daily Mail*, March 12th, 1919.

ÆOLIAN HALL.

DOROTHY HOWELL



First
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Recital

Tuesday, 11th March, 1919, at 8 p.m.

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Picture 7: Publicity for Dorothy Howell's 'First Piano Recital'

Howell developed a reputation as a concert pianist through a number of acclaimed performances in London and elsewhere during the 1920s. A notable example is her performance of MacKenzie's *Scottish Concerto in E minor* (op. 55) at the Queen's Hall in the 1920 Proms season⁸⁹ with *Musical Opinion* commending Howell for 'splendid playing [which] undoubtedly made an impression both by the fluidity and brilliance of her tone and personal charm.'⁹⁰

During the 1920s she established an association with the prima ballerina Ivanava (real name Nancy Hanley) and the two worked on 'dance and pianoforte recital lectures'. Throughout this period, Howell also assisted London dancers in an improvisatory capacity:

Miss Dorothy Howell and Mrs Milburn have been experimenting in the simultaneous extemporisation of music and dancing. It has been proposed that friends should be allowed to watch this and to help by suggesting themes. Therefore on Thursday September 18th, 1924, at 8.30pm you are invited to be members of a kind, indulgent and strictly uncritical audience at the Faculty of Arts Studio, Golden Square. Please remember we are amateurs only doing this for fun!⁹¹

Throughout the 1920s Howell developed a career as teacher and examiner, the Michaelmass edition of *The Cottonian* (the magazine of Cotton College, a junior seminary for the Archdiocese of Birmingham in north Staffordshire) makes reference to a three-day period of 'examination and inspection'⁹² undertaken by the composer; this was to be first of many visits to the institution over the next four decades. Howell also developed links with other Catholic private schools such as Stonyhurst, Ampleforth, Stanbrook and Rye St. Antony, Oxfordshire.

⁸⁹ Queens Hall, Prom 29, Thursday September 16th, 1920. 8pm. Henry Wood conducted the New Queen's Hall Orchestra in a programme that included a typically eclectic mixture of music including works by Wagner, Handel, Armstrong Gibbs, Grainger, Haydn Wood and Rossini.

⁹⁰ *Musical Opinion*, p. 37, October 1920.

⁹¹ Notice posted on the Royal Academy of Music staff notice board. September, 1924.

⁹² *The Cottonian*, December 1926.

Chapter 7 - 1930s

Although the 1930s saw a shift in her focus from composition to teaching and performance, Howell continued to write works for orchestra and small ensembles; although none of these pieces achieved widespread success. For example, the première of her *String Quartet in D minor* (1933) took place privately at a Chamber Concert of compositions by professors of the RAM. Notes from the programme make clear the purpose of such meetings:

These private meetings are a part of the educational course and are intended to enable the professors to observe the general working of the academy and to promote the interest of the pupils in each other's progress. The performers challenge no public criticism and visitors who are present are expected to hear them with indulgence.⁹³

However, some of her works were still being performed publically, with her 1935 work *Recuerdos Preciosos I & II* for piano garnering positive critical reception at its première in January of that year.⁹⁴

Howell was in demand as a pianist in the London musical scene and performed the premiere of McEwen's *Sonata No. 6 in G major* at the Duke's Hall in November 1930. The *Daily Telegraph* praised Howell's 'craftsmanship and delicacy'⁹⁵ in the performance.

In March 1930, Howell attended an 'Easter Vacation School' in Florence organised by the University of London School of Librarianship, at the request of the phonetician Professor Arthur Lloyd-James (1884 - 1942), to help accompany his wife, the violinist Elsie Owen, in rehearsals during the trip. Her attendance during the trip is nonetheless unusual: Howell was not a librarian and the lectures were exclusively on matters of librarianship – the list of

⁹³ Notes to Chamber Concert Compositions by Professors of the Royal Academy of Music: Thursday October 19th, 1933

⁹⁴ For example: 'Miss Howell made a great impression with the lyric quality of her first *Recuerdos Preciosos* and the Spanish colour of the second.' *Musical Times*, January 1935.

⁹⁵ *The Daily Telegraph*, November 24th, 1930.

attendees reveals a selection of head librarians from university libraries in Great Britain and members of institutions in France and Switzerland. Given Howell's ostensible capacity as a musician, it is curious to note that the only known performance made by Elsie Owen during the trip (at the British Institute in Florence) was accompanied by the Italian pianist Felice Boghen from the Florence Conservatoire.⁹⁶ Later that year, in November, Owen and Howell performed a concert of exclusively British music, including Howell's own *Andante and Allegro*, at the Duke's Hall, and continued to perform together throughout the 1930s.

It is unfortunate that only one of Howell's diaries from the 1930s is known to exist. However, 1932 was to prove an eventful year and marked the first time Howell began to write liturgical music. On March 5th, 1932, her father died and she cancelled her London appointments for a fortnight and returned to the West Midlands for the Requiem Mass at Our Lady and All Saints Church, Stourbridge. Howell remained with her mother for a few weeks before returning to London. Crucially, she did not compose any music until the end of the year. On October 6th she set sail for Egypt on the *RMS City of York* from Birkenhead with her mother to visit Alfred Howell, who was stationed in Ismailia as an RAF officer. She arrived at Port Said on October 20th and the following day met Rev. Peter Dorman after the evening Benediction at the church of the Holy Family, Ismailia. Her diary reveals once again her devout prayer life with her attending daily Mass and other services.

⁹⁶ In a somewhat macabre aside, Elsie Owen was later murdered by Arthur Lloyd-James on January 14th, 1941. He was subsequently jailed on February 10th, 1941, after having being declared insane. He told police after the trial: 'I thought my powers were failing and I could not cope with my work. Rather than ask her [Owen] to face a bleak future I decided she should die and not be asked to face it.' 'Professor Guilty But Insane' *The London Evening Standard*, February 2nd, 1941. Lloyd James committed suicide on April 12th, 1943 in Brixton Prison.

Away from the musical world of London, she entered into a period of intense composition – writing five substantial works: *Vidi Aquam*, *Domine Salvum Fac*, *A Mass in Honour of the Holy Family*, *Missa Notre Dame* and *Missa Brevis*. It can be deduced from the nature of these works that the choir and organ at the Church of the Holy Family must have been somewhat restricted; for instance all of the aforementioned pieces are written for two-part choir and the writing for organ is also very simple. However, it marks a turning point in her career: upon returning to England, Howell would begin writing for The Grail (a group of lay Catholics dedicated to spirituality and improvement of the liturgy) and later establish a prominent position in Catholic circles as a serious composer of liturgical music.

During her trip to Egypt, Howell also performed a number of piano recitals in Cairo and Ismailia, attracting attention in the local, French-speaking, press:

The artist with a confident touch and charming modesty enabled us to appreciate the depth of her playing, which is sensitive varied and full of subtlety. She was applauded at great length by a discerning audience, whom she conquered with obvious sympathy. One hopes that Madam Dorothy Howell will give Port Said and Port Tewfick the occasion to hear and the joy to applaud her.⁹⁷

Outside of her work with the RAM, her most enduring work as a teacher was as a ‘professor’ at the Tobias Matthay Pianoforte School (founded in 1905 and based at 96 Wimpole Street, Westminster). The 1936 prospectus lists Howell amongst five other professors, all of whom were conspicuous musical figures at the time: York Bowen, Harriet Cohen, Hilda Dederich, Myra Hess and Percy Waller. Howell worked at the school until its closure following the death of Matthay on December 15th 1945. Interestingly, Howell was not appointed as a

⁹⁷ ‘L’artiste, avec une sureté nuancé d’une modestie charmante, fit apprecier les ressources de son jeu sensible, varie, plein de subtilité. Elle fut longuement applaudie par un public de choix dont elle conquit d’emblée la sympathie. Il fait esperer que Mademoiselle Dorothy Howell donnera a Port Said et a Port-Tewfik l’occasion de l’entendre et la joie de l’applaudir.’ *Le Rayon du Canal de Suez*, January 1933.

trustee of the school with Hilda Dederich, Vivian Langrish and Denise Lassimone taking the very quick decision to close the school before the end of 1945.⁹⁸

Association with Radio Stations

During the 1920s, Howell began to perform regularly on the radio as a pianist and music broadcaster for the London-based radio station 2.LO (a precursor to the BBC), making her debut broadcast in February 1921⁹⁹. A catalogue of her radio performances in part three of this study reveals that the majority of her performances focussed on romantic music and her own compositions. Many of the radio broadcasts Howell made for London 2LO were pedagogical programmes aimed at children; in which she assumed a character much like the ‘Aunt Hilda’ persona adopted by Hilda Dederich in the BBC’s *Children’s Hour*.¹⁰⁰

Howell would also present the persona of a maternal educator, introducing her young audience to works by classical composers and also her own music for young pianists. The fact that two of the most prominent female composers from the RAM achieved success in a radio programme aimed at youngsters is telling of the areas within the musical world of the time in which women composers could succeed.

Howell continued to work as a radio pianist when 2.LO amalgamated with the BBC in 1927.

Howell’s connection with the BBC would continue for many years: throughout the Second

⁹⁸ Myra Hess wrote to Howell: ‘We [the aforementioned appointed trustees] presume and hope that all your school pupils will continue to study with you privately... although we do not feel it is possible to carry on the school itself, there can be no end to Uncle Tobias’ work, and we, his disciples, will have the great privilege of continuing to spread his teaching and of perpetuating his spirit.’ (Letters from Myra Hess to Dorothy Howell, December 28th, 1945)

⁹⁹ See catalogue of Radio Performances.

¹⁰⁰ Gordon Cox ‘Living Music in Schools, 1923 – 1999: Studies in the History of Music Education in England.’ (Surrey: Ashgate, 2002) p. 37

World War, records show a number of ‘secret’ performances for the BBC Overseas Music Department at Worcestershire and Hertfordshire locations.¹⁰¹ *Nocturne for Orchestra* was premiered at the BBC Spring Series of Chamber Concerts in June 1926¹⁰².

Sir Arthur Bliss offered Howell a full-time post working for the BBC Music Department in 1943, a role she declined on the grounds of commitments with CEMA (Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts) and the responsibility of caring for her mother: ‘Perhaps I now shall be spurred to make good use of the free time that threatened to slip away from me and really do something this winter about a Symphony and a viola sonata that have lain too long upon a shelf.’¹⁰³ During the early 1950s, Howell made a number of recordings for the BBC Home Service which were to mark the end of her formal connection with the BBC.

Note on Personal Life

Howell, who never married, lived at numerous addresses throughout the early 1920s and was often without an official residential address. After leaving St. Dominic’s Convent, she lodged with a series of relatives in north London (primarily on the maternal Feeny side) and later with Miss Dorothy Silk (1883 – 1942), a close companion to Howell who trained as a soprano at the RAM. Silk grew up in Kings Norton, Worcestershire (now part of Birmingham), so most probably had an established connection with the Howell family. From 1930 – 1940, whilst working fulltime as a teacher at the RAM, Howell divided her time between London and the family home in Stourbridge. The Cowdray Club, South Kensington,

¹⁰¹ Employment records from DHT.

¹⁰² June 14th, 1926. The work appeared alongside K.A. Wright’s Sleepy Tune. The conductor was John Barbirolli.

¹⁰³ Letter to Sir Arthur Bliss, September 20th 1943.

and the Queensbury Club, Marylebone were both institutions at which Howell stayed during this period. In 1932 Howell moved to Letchworth, Hertfordshire, to live with her mother. Howell's final address, and first purchased property, was Studley House, Malvern Wells. Howell lived with the family nanny, Sarah Ward, until Ward's death in 1954.

Chapter 8 - *Three Divertissements*, the Second World War and Malvern

By far the largest work of her later career, *Three Divertissements* was commissioned by Sir Henry Wood for the 1940 Proms season. Howell wrote to Wood the following year in May requesting *Three Divertissements* be performed that season. Wood's subsequent reply reflects the adverse impact on concert going during the Second World War:

It would be inadvisable during this purely experimental season to include any new works. It could at most be very limited, and in no way representative of our composers, since so many are called to other occupations during this stress of war: this, and the fact that the curtailed period and shortened programmes make it extremely difficult to include new works presented in the way to which we have been accustomed for so many years.¹⁰⁴

From her rural base in Letchworth, Hertfordshire, Howell was an enthusiastic member of the Women's Land Army; her diary for 1940 makes few references to musical commitments, but notes, with some relish, details of her duties working on the threshing machines for a local farm.¹⁰⁵

Howell's primary musical contribution to the Second World War was as an active member of Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts (CEMA), playing at numerous concerts throughout the south of England¹⁰⁶. Something of the limitation of available resources during the Second World War is reflected in the fact that Howell on occasion had to share a bed with

¹⁰⁴ Henry J. Wood letter to Dorothy Howell, May 29th, 1941.

¹⁰⁵ The Diary of Dorothy Howell, 1940.

¹⁰⁶ Examples include the Wigmore Hall (September 29th 1940), Southend-on-Sea (15th November, 1942) Trowbridge Town Hall, Wiltshire (11th December, 1942 & January 18th, 1943), Lambeth Hospital (February 19th, 1943) The Institute, Banstead, Surrey (July 28th, 1943) and the Community Centre, Didcot (December 7th 1945) amongst many others.

her fellow artists¹⁰⁷, the society endeavoured to provide musical opportunities to a largely provincial base and were reluctant to play at concerts in central London.¹⁰⁸

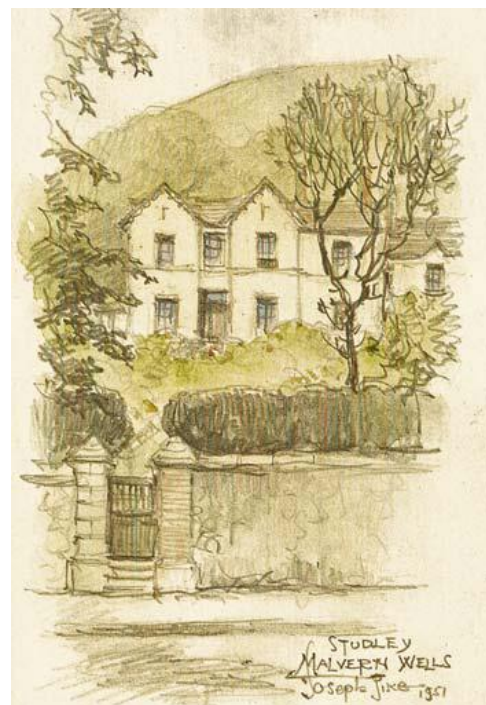


Picture 8: Dorothy Howell with the conductor Hans Redlich, Letchworth Settlement Choral and Orchestral Society. December, 1947.

¹⁰⁷ 'Mr Ryder (concert organiser at Trowbridge) has had great difficulty in getting any accommodation and has been forced to book two double rooms for the four ladies... We are very sorry about this but it could not be avoided apparently.' Letter from Joan Woodman, Secretary to Concert Organiser. January 8th, 1943.

¹⁰⁸ '[CEMA] withheld its encouragement from London as long as Londoners were getting as much public music as times warranted. [The concerts] were organized and announced rather hastily last week.' Week-End Concerts: CEMA at Wigmore Hall. *The Times*, October 1st, 1940.

In March 1947, Howell relocated to Studley House, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire, with her long-time friend, and former nanny, Sarah Ward. Howell makes reference to sketches for a symphony throughout the 1930s, and by 1947 she was working on a symphony in C major (the preliminary notes of which are kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust). Unfortunately, a month after moving to Malvern Howell was diagnosed with breast cancer and throughout the following two years underwent a series of intense radiotherapy treatments in Bath.



Picture 9: Studley House, Malvern Wells

By the early 1950s Howell began to suffer from depression and, wearied by the exhausting radiotherapy treatment, ceased to compose orchestral music altogether. To compound matters, there was also a marked decline in the sale of Howell's published works, with OUP pulping several works for piano: 'Sales of the works listed have been disappointingly small

for some years past, and we have been forced to the conclusion that public interest in them has practically disappeared.’¹⁰⁹

Despite a decline in demand for her published works, Howell’s orchestral music continued to be performed at a provincial level. In September 1950, *Three Divertissements* premiered under the direction of Sir Adrian Boult and the Malvern Elgar Festival¹¹⁰, whilst *Lamia* was performed at the Civic Hall, Croydon, in November of that year. The short-lived semi-professional Neri Orchestra (named after St. Philip Neri) led by Michael Bush performed Howell’s *Two Pieces for Strings* twice during the summer of 1959¹¹¹.

Whilst suffering from depression, Howell received encouragement from Herbert Howells, who had taken over as editor of Arnold’s *Singing Class Music* series from Thomas F. Dunhill, and published Howell’s song setting of T.S. Eliot’s ‘Song of the Jellicles’ in 1953. A letter in Dorothy Howell Trust reflects a warm friendship:

I’m sending your Cat’s Cantata [Song of the Jellicles] to Edward Arnold and Co. with my blessings and I hope Mr. Fagan will like it as much as I do. And what a lovely musical handwriting you have I’m jealous. Take care of yourself and WRITE MUSIC. Don’t get ill any more you’ve had your quota. Yours ever, Herbert [Howells]¹¹²

Despite such assistance, Howell completed only one more song setting, however. This perhaps reflects her growing interest in writing music for liturgical purposes which began to blossom during the late 1950s as she began to recover from cancer treatment.

¹⁰⁹ The works were: *Dreamland*, *Five Studies for Piano*, *Rosalind*, *Spindrift*, and *Toccata*. Undated letter to Dorothy Howell from OUP.

¹¹⁰ See Catalogue of Works: *Three Divertissements*.

¹¹¹ 7th June at St. Dominic’s Priory, Southampton Row, and a ‘Sacred Concert’ at Greyfriars, Oxford, on 14th June. The programme for both concerts, somewhat incongruously, featured works by Purcell and Handel.

¹¹² Letter from Herbert Howells to Dorothy Howell, 29th April 1952.

Although Howell continued to teach at the RAM until 1970, letters from the 1960s reveal her increasing dissatisfaction at changes to the syllabus. One particularly pertinent example is her reaction to a departmental letter written by Sir Thomas Armstrong regarding amendments to the harmony and counterpoint course, allowing students to re-harmonise typical works (such as Bach chorales) for undergraduate work: ‘It is not intended that the examination papers should be more difficult than they have been in the past, but it hoped they will be somewhat modified in style so as to provide the best possible framework for harmony teaching.’¹¹³ Howell expressed her vehement opposition to such measures: ‘I voice my strong disapproval of inviting candidates to *tamper* with the classics... To reharmonise Bach, Schubert and Haydn etc. seems to me pure impertinence. My conscience revolts.’ The following year, largely due to the opposition of Howell and others in the department, Armstrong took the decision to make both syllabi available and allow the professors to decide on an appropriate course of action for their students.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Letter from Sir Thomas Armstrong to members of the Harmony and Counterpoint staff at the Royal Academy of Music, November 25th, 1965.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Sir Thomas Armstrong to members of the Harmony and Counterpoint staff at the Royal Academy of Music, February 2nd, 1966.



Picture 10: Howell at Perrins Retirement Home, Malvern.

Chapter 9 – Retirement and final years

During Howell's final years in Malvern her primary focus outside composition was private piano tuition, and her attitude to pedagogy is revealed most notably in the form of her published tutorial: *Keyboard Work for Harmony Students* (1962). A particularly interesting comment reveals Howell's attitude towards the piano as an instrument for composition: 'to compensate for the deficiencies of the piano as a melodic instrument, it is necessary to provide continuous movement', a comment that is reflected in the kinetic energy present in her piano compositions. If we look at the following examples, we can see how Howell's piano writing, even at slower tempos, has a continuous forward motion and is very rarely static:

Ex. XVIII (Boat Song, 1920: b. 1 -10)

The image displays a musical score for 'Boat Song' (1920), measures 1-10. The score is in 6/8 time, marked 'Andante' and 'p Cantabile'. It features a continuous melodic line in the right hand and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand part consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, creating a sense of forward motion. The left hand part consists of a steady accompaniment of eighth notes, often beamed together, providing a rhythmic foundation. The score is written in G major and 6/8 time. The first system contains measures 1-5, and the second system contains measures 6-10. The tempo is marked 'Andante' and the dynamics are marked 'p Cantabile'.

Ex. XIX (The Moorings, 1925: b. 1 -3)



Howell considered improvisation as something principally founded on intuitive talent: ‘improvisation becomes increasingly a thing dependent on the natural endowment of the individual performer.’¹¹⁵

During the 1960s, Howell made extensive trips around the United Kingdom and France; for three of the largest trips there still exist her notes of these ‘Motor Tours’ to the Lakes and Scotland (1960), Rouen (1965) and the Isle of Wight (1962). She also lectured on liturgical music attending several conferences in the UK and abroad. In 1970 she wrote an obituary in the magazine of the RAM for her contemporary Hilda Dederich.¹¹⁶

On the encouragement of her students, Howell wrote to several conductors during the 1960s requesting the possibility of performances of her orchestral works (or at least drawing their attention to them). A notable, and particularly dismaying, response came from Stanford Robinson, when he tried to get *Lamia* included in a programme:

I am very disappointed that I was unable to prevail upon the London programme planners to accept the work for one of my Northern Orchestral Concerts. Like you, I find it very mysterious that the Northern Orchestra should spend so much time re-playing familiar symphonies. You, as one of Sir Henry Wood’s protégés,

¹¹⁵ Dorothy Howell. ‘Keyboard Work for Harmony Students’ (London: Josef Weinberger, 1962) p. 2.

¹¹⁶ ‘Hillie: Remembering Hilda Dederich’. Royal Academy of Music Magazine, March 16th 1970.

are much too ‘old hat’ to have the respect of the present day BBC planners, but I remember well hearing “Lamia” under Sir Henry, and liked it very much, and I am sincerely sorry that I never brought off another performance of it for you.¹¹⁷

No subsequent performances of Howell’s orchestral compositions took place during her lifetime.

Howell taught at the RAM until 1970, but throughout the 1960s developed a popular teaching practice from her home in Malvern. Berendina Norton was a piano student of Howell’s from 1973 to 1977. Recently, Norton recalled her teacher played a ‘profound influence on my musical life... the legacy she left me is a repertoire of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Schubert, and Schumann.’¹¹⁸ Norton, who later worked as a professional pianist, remembered the idiosyncratic nature of Howell’s piano technique: ‘the way she played Bach... was controversial, provocative, and deeply musical.’¹¹⁹ After Norton left to study at the RAM, the two remained in contact and Norton has subsequently promoted Howell’s music in her own concert performances.

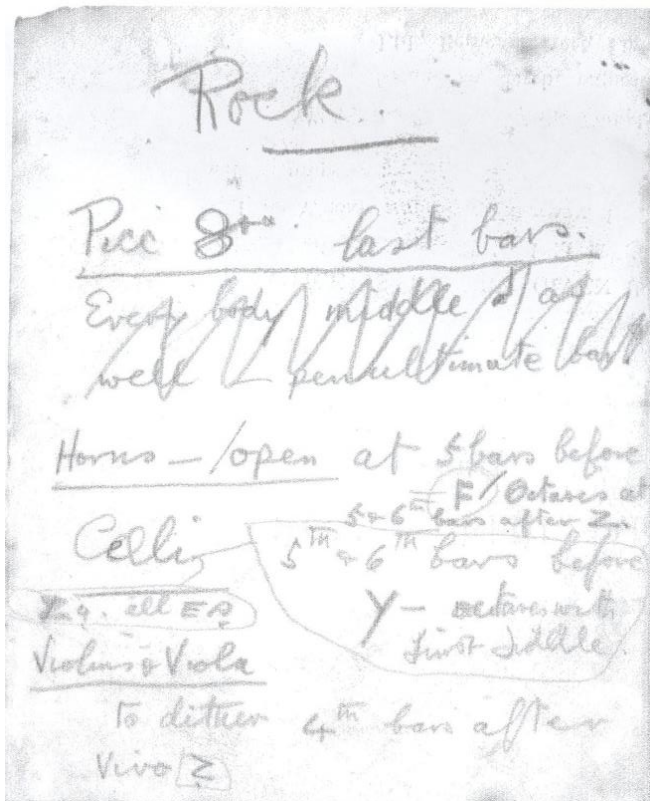
It would appear that Howell’s pedagogical approach was akin to her process of composition – several teaching notes exist in scrap form and provide insight into her views on the rudiments of piano technique and harmony and counterpoint. One such guide (written on the back of a used envelope) contains detailed notes written in a somewhat florid manner: ‘The ear will accept any queer noise ‘en passant’ if the mind is intrigued with following a pattern’¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ Letter to Dorothy Howell from Stanford Robinson, June 6th, 1968.

¹¹⁸ Letter to Columb Howell, June 9th 1998.

¹¹⁹ Letter to Columb Howell, June 9th 1998.

¹²⁰ From a series of scrap notes kept amongst the composer’s teaching papers.



Picture 11: An example of a work in progress: compositional notes for *The*

Rock (1928). Howell would typically draw up her ideas about form and orchestration on scraps of paper, before attempting a manuscript draft.

Final Years

Howell wrote fewer works during the 1970s and effectively abandoned any public performances as a pianist, although she provided help as a supply organist at her local Catholic Church, St. Wulstan, Little Malvern. She also became involved with the Elgar Society and was amongst those responsible for tending his grave – in the grounds of St. Wulstan's. Merryn Howell recalls that her aunt was a well-known Malvern figure, despite the fact that few of the town's residents would have been familiar with her music. A final public appearance came in the form of an uncharacteristically autobiographical presentation called 'Musicians I have known'.¹²¹

By the mid-1970s, Howell became increasingly frail, and a reappearance of cancer necessitated a relocation to Perrins Retirement House, Great Malvern. In 1978 she sold her Bechstein piano (purchased for her parents as a wedding gift) to a former student in London.¹²² Howell also began to encounter problems with depression once again; two days before her move to Perrins House, Merryn Howell discovered Dorothy destroying original manuscripts of her early works. Merryn intervened and helped move the archive of works to Bewdley.

Howell was gladdened to hear a BBC Radio Three performance of her *Piano Sonata in E minor* (1955) during July 1981, and her family recall a sense of growing contentment as she reached her final days. Howell's final completed composition (a piano work for one hand) was written for a friend who had lost an arm and 'premiered' at the chapel of Davenham

¹²¹ Malvern Gramophone Society, November 30th 1981.

¹²² Letters, March 16th, 1978.

Retirement Home, Cheshire, in September 1981. The work was later published by the Society for Disabled Music Performance in 1983.

On March 15th 1981, Howell's last remaining sibling Clifford died and Howell attended his funeral at Oscott College later in the month.¹²³

Howell's very last performance on the piano was on December 23rd 1981 at the home of her brother, Alfred, at High Street, Bewdley, Worcestershire. Remarkably, a recording of the performance has recently surfaced and the programme includes her own piano compositions and a selection of Chopin nocturnes and works by Scarlatti. Merryn Howell recalls the performance:

I think she knew that she was coming to the end of her life and in a way the performance was her farewell to us. I remember we were gathered in the drawing room on the second floor and by the time she finished playing people were gathered down in the street to hear her play.

The recording is a testament to Howell's skill as a pianist; even as a fairly weak octogenarian, she was able to play demanding passages with extraordinary ease.

Howell spent Christmas with the Sampson family in Chelworth, Wiltshire, before contracting pneumonia. Returning to Perrins House after New Year, she died on January 12th 1982. Her passing was recorded by many national newspapers, the majority of obituaries inevitably recalling *Lamia* and its subsequent reception. Several memorial concerts and services were held during the following months in Malvern, Birmingham and London. An obituary from the RAM recalled Howell's wider international influence¹²⁴.

A Requiem Mass was held on January 18th 1982 at the church of St. Wulstan and the composer was buried in the same field as Edward Elgar.

¹²³ Jesuit Letters and Notices, Easter, 1981.

¹²⁴ In the obituary a colleague fondly recalled the widespread impact of Howell: 'I well remember how frequently her name cropped up during my tours in Africa (late 1950s) always with gratitude and affection'. Royal Academy of Music Magazine, 1983. (Single page cutting kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust archive)

By the mid-1980s Merryn Howell began to archive her aunt's letters and diaries, a task in which she was aided by the research of Celia Mike (now Patterson), who wrote a short monograph about the composer in 1990 which later formed part of an autobiographical article in *British Music Society Journal*¹²⁵. In 1998, there was an exhibition on Howell at the Barbican Music Library, London, which was followed by a subsequent presentation in Birmingham in 2010. Since 2000, there have been several performances of Howell's orchestral and chamber works in addition to professional recordings of *Lamia*, the *Concerto for Piano* and selected works for piano and violin.

¹²⁵ *British Music* 14 (1992) 48-58.

Chapter 10:

Dorothy Howell: Catholic Composer

The Catholic faith was an integral part of Dorothy Howell's life both personally and musically. In order to understand Howell's trajectory as a composer of religious music, it is vital to consider first the considerable shifts in the attitude towards liturgy and music in the Catholic Church that took place during Howell's lifetime.

As the established religion, the Church of England, following the influence of the 'high church' Oxford Movement, enjoyed something of a renaissance in choral music during the latter half of the 19th century and around Birmingham several Anglo Catholic parishes became renowned for musical excellence.¹²⁶

The Roman Catholic Church in England, by comparison, was relatively impoverished both musically and financially, with large inner city parishes in Birmingham such as Sparkhill and Deritend serving large immigrant populations with several Masses to fulfil the Sunday obligation. St. Francis' Church, however, under the guidance of Charles Edward Howell, had a good-sized plainchant choir. Hymnody was something generally excluded from Catholic services of the time and Pope Pius X's motu proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini* (1903) reaffirmed the importance of plainchant in the Mass, and also warned against liturgical abuses such as female participation in choirs¹²⁷. It is important to note that Pius X's guidance on the 'real

¹²⁶ See Bernard Rainbow 'The Choral Revival of the Anglican Church, 1839 – 1872' (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970)

¹²⁷ 'Singers in church have a real liturgical office, and that therefore women, being incapable of exercising such office, cannot be admitted to form part of the choir. Whenever, then, it is desired to employ the acute voices of sopranos and contraltos, these parts must be taken by boys, according to the most ancient usage of the Church.'

liturgical office' of singers was also something many Anglican parishes adhered to until after the 1960s¹²⁸.

Although Dorothy Howell abandoned a convent education at the earliest opportunity, she was a devout practising Catholic all her life. Her faith is expressed in the many works she composed for liturgical purposes, the earliest example of which comes from music written during her visit to Egypt in 1932.

According to Howell's nephew, Columb Howell, she was: 'careful in her religion, she had a sense of how to be correct in church and was fiercely loyal to the person of the Holy Father and dutifully accepted changes in liturgy during the 1960s and 1970s. She was a prominent member in the society of St. Gregory and a lover of decent choral music – particularly plainsong.'¹²⁹

From the very beginning of her career as a pianist Howell took part in fundraising concerts in aid of Catholic charities. On January 30th 1917, she performed for the Birmingham Catholic Reunion Grand Concert in aid of British Prisoners of War to much acclaim:

One of the outstanding features of the concert given at the Grand Hotel was the magnificent and talented piano playing of Miss Dorothy Howell. Expert musical critics were united in their praise, not only of the execution shown but also of the taste and feeling which characterised each item.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ For instance the famous Birmingham Anglo-Catholic parish of St. Agatha, Sparkbrook, did not admit females in to the choir until the 1970s. *The Fiery Cross*: Parish Magazine of St. Agatha, Sparkbrook. March, 1970.

¹²⁹ Interview with Columb Howell April 4th 2012.

¹³⁰ 'Local Lady's Musical Success' *County Advertiser*, February 3rd 1917. The article continues by stating, somewhat tenuously, that this was 'practically [Howell's] first debut performance as a pianist'. The *Birmingham Daily Post* was altogether less appreciative: '[Howell's] opening piano solos were made almost inaudible by the large number of late comers. Liapounov's [sic] "Carillon"...seemed a little beyond her strength.' *Birmingham Daily Post*, January 31st, 1917.

Howell opened both parts of the concert, playing Chopin's *Nocturne in E flat major* and Paderewski's *Caprice* in the first half, and Lyapunov's transcendental etude *Carillon* in the second half. The concert, arranged by the tenor Gervase Elwes (1866 – 1921), was attended by several 'high dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church'¹³¹ and Howell appeared alongside Elwes himself and José Soler Gomez (violinist to the King and Queen of Spain)¹³² the event going some way to highlight the eighteen-year-old Howell's growing acclaim in Catholic musical circles. The 1920s saw the zenith of Howell's career as a pianist generally, and during the same decade she was also in high demand for Catholic fundraising concerts throughout England.¹³³

It was not until she abandoned orchestral writing altogether in the early 1950s that Howell began to focus more seriously on religious works. The respect and prominence Howell enjoyed in English Catholic circles reflects the changing attitudes towards female composers in the church before and after the Second Vatican Council.

Fr. Clifford Howell S.J., Howell's younger brother, was a pre-eminent liturgist and advocate of translation of the Mass into vernacular tongues. In contrast, it would appear Howell favoured the Tridentine Mass and adherence to a more traditional manner of Catholic worship – something evidenced by her private collection of prayer books used for devotional purposes. Nevertheless, she was exposed to some of the more radical aspects of the liturgical

¹³¹ 'Birmingham Catholic Reunion Concert'. *Musical News*, February 10th 1917. The attendees included the Archbishops of Birmingham, Glasgow and Cardiff respectively, in addition to the Earl and Countess of Denbigh amongst others.

¹³² Birmingham Catholic Reunion Grand Concert, 1917, programme.

¹³³ Notable examples include a 'Grand Concert' fundraiser for the Catholic Evidence Guild at Westminster Cathedral Hall, on April 14th, 1921, in which Howell played Liszt's Concert Study in F minor; The National Catholic Congress Sacred Concert at Birmingham Town Hall on August 5th, 1923, in which Howell played Liszt, Schumann and her own works; and a piano recital at Stonyhurst College on February 24th, 1926 with a programme including Chopin, Bach, Poldini, Leo Livens and York Bowen.

movement in Great Britain prior to the Second Vatican Council – for instance, the Dialogue Mass (something which was never officially sanctioned by church authorities).

Although she may not have approved of some of Clifford's more radical theological ideas, Dorothy acquiescently provided help in the form of musical accompaniment for several of her brother's presentations on the liturgy and Eucharist. ¹³⁴

Picture 12: Dorothy (in Land Girl uniform) Stood next to her mother, Viola Rosetta, and brother, Fr. Clifford Howell S.J. 1943, in Letchworth, Hertfordshire.



During the late 1930s, Howell joined the Society of St. Gregory – a Roman Catholic society of clergy and lay-people dedicated to the 'improvement' of music in church. During the 1940s, she served as secretary for the group. She was also closely linked with The Grail, a lay movement that produced numerous shows for stage during the 1930s and '40s. Howell wrote

¹³⁴ References are made in the archives to trips to Paris (1963) and Pamplona (1967).

the entire score for a play called *This Way Home* (1946) with a text written by P. Stewart Craig and subtitled a ‘modern morality’. The play concerns the relationship between human beings and their guardian angels; the speech is interspersed with settings of extracts from the Mass ordinary and instrumental music. The play’s incidental music is descriptive in nature; typically for Howell much of the writing has chromatic inflections although is generally tonal in concept. The accompanying organ part is somewhat unconventional, with an awkward octave chordal shift from the first to the second bar that suggests the composer was unfamiliar with composing organ music:

Ex. XX

The musical score for Ex. XX is written for Organ and Pedals in 4/4 time. The Organ part is divided into two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The first measure of the Organ part is marked *f* (forte) and features a complex, chromatic melodic line in the treble staff and a chordal accompaniment in the bass staff. The second measure is marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) and shows a similar melodic line with a chromatic inflection. The Pedals part, shown in a single bass clef staff, consists of three measures, each containing a whole rest, indicating that the pedals are not played during this passage.

Howell’s music for the play was well received by audiences and the reaction of one senior London priest reflects the regard in which Howell was held as a Catholic composer:

I think your music is fully in accord with the spirit of the morality play and further I think that it reflects complete understanding of the whole... Above all there was a refreshing absence of any passage that seemed to be put in just to fill up space and time.¹³⁵

Howell was particularly close to Fr. Joseph Connelly, Dean of Music and Professor of Plainchant at St. Mary’s Seminary, New Oscott, Birmingham from 1934- 1956.¹³⁶ They corresponded regularly throughout Connelly’s time at Oscott; the priest clearly held Howell

¹³⁵ Letters, October 9th 1946. Right Rev. Monsignor John G. Vance, Cardinal Vaughan School London, W. 14.
¹³⁶ Entry for Rev. Joseph Connelly. *The Catholic Directory of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, 1959.*

in high regard as a composer and musician: ‘I would value the opinion of a real musician. And if you say it is not worth anything, or not fit for Church, or liable to corrupt the minds of the young, I won’t mind a bit.’¹³⁷ Unfortunately, the composition in question no longer exists. The letter makes reference to the use of ‘the vernacular tongue’ and therefore it is likely that the alleged ‘corrupting’ factor could have been the use of such music in a liturgical context.

Connelly’s use of vernacular is also surprising given the recollections of a former student ‘[During his time at Oscott] he did not take kindly to my efforts to promote the English liturgy. In fact, I think he thought me a heretic’, and Connelly’s nickname amongst Oscott students at the time was ‘Spot Connelly’ in reference to his advocacy of plainchant.¹³⁸ The humour in Connelly’s letter suggests a surprising degree of familiarity between a clergyman and a laywoman for the time, and highlights the evident regard in which the priest held Howell as a composer. In 1947, Connelly commissioned Howell to write a setting of ‘*An Amor dolor sit*’ (‘Whether love is pain’) for a production of Morna Stuart’s play *The Traitors’ Gate* performed by the staff and students at St. Mary’s College.

¹³⁷ Letters, April 3rd 1942. Rev. Joseph Connelly, St. Mary’s College, New Oscott, Sutton Coldfield.

¹³⁸ ‘Fr. Connelly was an ardent reformer, advocating the “Solesme”. That accounts for the nickname that was given him soon after his arrival, “Spot”, on account of the many spots over the notes in that edition. He retained the nickname all during his time at Oscott.’ Obituary for Rev. Connelly, *The 1979 Archdiocese of Birmingham Directory*.



Picture 13: The Society of St. Gregory's Annual Conference, Wadham College, Oxford, 1945. Howell (secretary of the society), is seated in the middle of the front row. Immediately behind her is Dom Gregory Murray. The priest on the third row, extreme left, is Rev. Joseph Connelly.

Howell's Jesuit brother, Clifford, was at the forefront of the liturgical renewal movement in English speaking countries, and family tradition suggests Howell was aware of some of the more radical aspects of liturgical change before the initiation of the Second Vatican Council.

In 1953, Clifford Howell published one of his most influential works, *The Work of Redemption*, which takes a somewhat utilitarian approach to liturgy:

The liturgical movement, therefore, is concerned directly with fundamentals - the glory of God and the sanctification of man. It is not directly concerned with externals, such as the style of vestments, the beauties of Gregorian chant, the dignity of ceremonies, and so forth.¹³⁹

Clifford Howell advocates the notion of:

[A] "practical liturgist" - he who is actually striving to bring men to God by means of the liturgy - cannot evade pre-occupation with these things, even though they be not in themselves his ultimate objective. They are, however, his tools: so he must understand them and know how to use them.¹⁴⁰

During the 1960s Howell devoted her compositional efforts to church music almost exclusively; in a decade which bore witness to dramatic reforms in the liturgy of the Catholic Church, the composer seemingly felt bound to composing music for the New Rite Mass which maintained integrity and reverence. These settings of the Mass in English are overwhelmingly uniform in tone: simple melody lines recall the plainchant Howell knew well and serve the purpose of music for amateur singers in a very effective manner. Many of her Mass settings in English became popular throughout the English speaking world, and Howell developed a reputation as one of the foremost Catholic composers during the immediate post-Conciliar era – an esoteric area, perhaps, but nevertheless one in which an appreciative and enthusiastic audience was found.

¹³⁹ Clifford Howell *The Work of Redemption* (Oxford: Catholic Social Guild, 1953) p. 48

¹⁴⁰ Clifford Howell *The Work of Redemption* (Oxford: Catholic Social Guild, 1953) p. 50

Howell's approach to such compositions was summarised in a church magazine:

Her **enjoyment** in the challenge of creating music for the translated Mass is clear. As to the fitting (or misfitting!) of English to existing plainsong, Miss Howell feels that it usually dislocates the inherent rhythm of either the music or the words. Better indeed to continue to sing plainsong in Latin, simultaneously fulfilling the injunction that the Latin Sung Mass should be preserved in order that Western Catholics of all nations and generations may continue to share a common heritage of music and liturgy. Miss Howell notes "How can they if we tamper with the original?"¹⁴¹

Considering the wider context of religious music during the 1960s, Howell's comment seems conservative; in the Anglican tradition, for instance, vernacular English chant had been in place since the late nineteenth century, and plays a prominent part in *The English Hymnal* first published in 1903. As early as the 1920s, Anglican composers had pioneered a new type of Mass for the people, ranging from conservative models such as *An English Folk Mass* by Martin Shaw (1875 – 1958) based on plainchant, to Mass settings inspired by popular songs, such as the *20th Century Folk Mass* by the Anglican priest Geoffrey Beaumont (1903 – 1970).¹⁴²

A prominent figure in the implementation of the new liturgy following the Second Vatican Council was, J.D. Crichton, who suggested that English Catholic composers seek inspiration from '[Anglican composers] who have a long experience of setting English words to music, and in the promotion of traditional music.'¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ 'Some Catholic Composers'. *The Church Musical Quarterly*, March 1963.

¹⁴² The latter work is based on popular tunes of the 1920s and 1930s, including a setting of the *Agnus Dei* inspired by Cole Porter's 1934 song 'Begin the Beguine'.

¹⁴³ J.D. Crichton *The Church's Worship* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964) p. 223

However, Howell's resistance to altering Latin plainchant displays a loyalty to preserving the authenticity of earlier forms of church music. Merryn Howell expands the point:

Dorothy wanted to preserve what she saw as the integrity of church music; she recognised that plainchant was the unbroken musical tradition of the church and the idea of introducing a vulgar tongue to such music, for her, was not an appropriate fit. Therefore, although she was willing to write music in the vernacular, she was determined that it would not in any way be to the detriment of chant and tradition.¹⁴⁴

Like many who had grown up in the tradition of Mass in Latin, Howell was later to distance herself from many of the liturgical excesses that arose from the introduction of the newly translated Pope Paul VI Mass in 1969. In fact, Howell wrote very few liturgical works after 1970 and was even involved with the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales (founded in 1965) during the last decade of her life.¹⁴⁵

Missa Simplex

Howell's best-known mass setting was actually in Latin and predates the Second Vatican Council by a couple of years. *Missa Simplex* (1961) recalls the popular work *A People's Mass* by Dom Gregory Murray: in the guidance notes for the printed edition there is an explanation that the setting can be performed successfully by any 'unpretentious' choir that is familiar with *A People's Mass*.

Written in a diatonic idiom, *Missa Simplex* enjoyed popularity amongst parish choirs during the 1970s despite the introduction of the vernacular New Rite Mass in 1969, and is still used in parishes today: several recent examples include Stonyhurst Jesuit College, Lancashire,

¹⁴⁴Interview with Merryn Howell. Bewdley, February 5th, 2013.

¹⁴⁵Interview with Merryn Howell. Bewdley, October 24th, 2012.

Maryvale Institute, Birmingham and St. Patrick's, Dudley Road, Birmingham. Throughout the work, the melodic material has clear plainchant inflections and draws influence from the English folk-song tradition in its modally-inflected harmony:

Ex. XXI

Not too slowly ♩ = 66

Ky-ri- e e - le i - son, Ky-ri- e e - le i - son Ky-ri

7 e e le i son. Chri- ste e - le - i - son. Chri ste e -

The work has clear parallels with 'A People's Mass':

Ex. XXII

A PEOPLE'S MASS

Dom Gregory Murray, O.S.B.

KYRIE

Ký - ri - e e - léi - son, Ký - ri - e e - léi - son,

Ký - ri - e e - léi - son. Chri - ste e - léi - son,

Both works are have a very simple unison melody, but include an accompaniment written in four parts - the idea being that choirmasters could adapt the work into four-part harmony if necessary. Whereas the melody of Murray's *Kyrie* setting is limited to repetition of a twelve-bar theme throughout, Howell employs greater melodic range and develops the opening melodic phrase in a manner which suggests a folk song rather the hymn-like rhythms of Murray's setting.

The Universe announced the work as a genuine example of a 'People's Mass' that eschewed the: *'florid, flimsy and fussy'* and continued:

The plebs sancta is coming into its own; Dorothy Howell's *Missa Simplex*... is rhythmically varied yet not too free, modal in flavour, grateful to sing and not exacting in range. The struggling parish choir has here something that it can easily master and will get to like.¹⁴⁶

The inherent understanding of the needs of a parish choir was no doubt derived from Howell's experience as an amateur church organist.¹⁴⁷

The central role Howell played in the Society of St Gregory points to the high esteem in which she was held by other Catholic composers, most of whom were male, and music specialists amongst Catholic clergymen in Britain; Howell's collaboration with Fr. Joseph Connelly and other priests reflects this and challenges our preconceptions of the status of women within the Catholic Church during the early twentieth century. Her work with

¹⁴⁶ *The Universe*, December 1960.

¹⁴⁷ '[Howell] was a very nervous and inexperienced organist – I really think she disliked playing the organ at St. Wulstan, but she felt a duty to help out the friars there. I remember accompanying her once when she was playing for Low Sunday and she attached ribbons to the 8ft Diapason and 4ft Flute in order to remember what stops to use. I never heard her use pedals and she seemed completely different to when she was at the piano, but it was done out of duty.' Interview with Merryn Howell, October 19th, 2012.

Clifford provided the composer an opportunity to assert her own, more orthodox, opinions in liturgical and theological matters with an authority and confidence that was perhaps unconventional for the time. By the 1970s Howell's increased status as a Catholic composer reflected a growing change in the Catholic Church's attitude to the role of women in composing church music and indeed reflects the instructions on liturgy found in documents for the Second Vatican Council: 'Great importance is to be attached to teaching and practice of music... in the houses of study of both sexes, and also in other Catholic schools and institutions.'¹⁴⁸

It is perhaps lamentable that Dorothy Howell's liturgical works, being simpler and less of a reflection of her abilities as a composer, have become the most widely available, and indeed widely performed, area of her compositional output. Her success as a published composer of Catholic music is representative of changing attitudes to the role of women and music in the church and also to a revised attitude to the participation of the laity in the Catholic Mass. The style of music Howell produced during this period has a certain practicality (in the sense that it is pitched at an appropriate level for a typical parish choir of the time) and economy of phrase (in the sense that her Mass settings are devoid of ornamentation and extraneous material), which reflects the view of Clifford Howell seeing liturgical music ultimately as a 'tool' to 'bring men to God.' Although Dorothy Howell was to eventually distance herself from the later musical manifestations inspired by the Novus Ordo, her Mass settings remain as a testament to her Catholic Faith and sense of service as musician to the Church. It is worth noting, however, that with the exception of her 1932 Masses and *Missa Simplex*, Howell's vernacular Masses are no longer suitable for use in Catholic Churches following a

¹⁴⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Instruction on Music in the Liturgy* quoted from J.D. Crichton *The Church's Worship* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964) p. 40.

re-translation of the Order of Mass by the International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) in 2011.

Conclusion

When Howell died in 1982, she left behind an extensive and entirely un-catalogued musical legacy. Without the intervention of a few relatives and musical aficionados, the vast majority of her works would have been lost completely. It is clear that Howell was not a promoter of her own works; indeed it was Dame Ethel Smyth who provided the catalyst for Howell to be included in the 1940 Grove Dictionary of Music¹⁴⁹. Throughout her life, Howell maintained a relatively low public profile and there is a sense that by the end of her life she viewed her musical career in terms of a disappointment; admittedly her final years saw her at a low ebb, but nevertheless, there is no denying her relative obscurity following the wild success of *Lamia*.

Considering Howell's career from a purely populist perspective, it is clear that the composer never enjoyed being a public figure in the mould of Ethel Smyth (nor, indeed, did she seek such a position) and yet there was a public audience for perhaps a less politicized female figure in British music at the time as witnessed by the tremendous popular appeal of *Lamia* and the subsequent interest from the tabloid press in the modest composer who sought refuge in London Zoo rather than courting the press eager for her photograph. The public acclaim of *Lamia* was never to be repeated and there is a sense that this 'overnight' popularity was merely an ephemeral beginning to a public musical career; it could be argued that this was disadvantageous, because public interest was bound to falter, unless had she chosen to write music with broader popular appeal.

¹⁴⁹ See Wiley, Christopher. Music and Literature: Ethel Smyth, Virginia Woolf and "The First Woman to Write an Opera" *Musical Quarterly*. Vol. 96, No. 2: pp. 263 -295. (Summer 2003). Also, Ethel Smyth, *A final Burning of Boats, etc.* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1929)

If public interest had decreased in the composer following *Lamia*, critical and academic interest was to remain until the end of the 1920s. Henry Davey's 1921 overview of English Music speaks of 'great deeds' being expected from Howell¹⁵⁰, whilst Tobias Matthay, in his well-publicised lecture on *Contemporary British Piano Composers* in 1922, praises Howell's virtuosity as a composer¹⁵¹. In a 1925 review of contemporary composers, the composer Joseph Holbrooke discusses Howell seriously as a modern composer. Although Matthay's comments on Howell's ability to 'write like a man' could today be viewed as patronising of female musical ability, the two aforementioned studies give Howell as much serious attention as any of her fellow female composers with Matthay concluding that Howell had the potential to be the 'strongest composer we [the RAM] have yet seen'. In Matthay's appraisal, Howell is seen as continuing the trajectory of distinguished composers emerging from the RAM: she is, he says, a successor to the 'phalanx of four great Academy composers [Arnold Bax, Felix Swinstead, York Bowen and Benjamin Dale].'¹⁵²

Throughout the 1920s, there is an increasing sense that Howell was somehow unable to fulfil what the public and critics had expected of the twenty-one year old composer of *Lamia*. Whilst the negative press commentary following the *Piano Concerto* certainly appears to have discouraged Howell from composing in traditional forms, the practicality of attempting to maintain a successful career as both pianist, teacher and composer also played a factor in Howell producing fewer examples of large-scale works as her career progressed.

¹⁵⁰ Henry Davey (*History of English Music*. London: Curwen & Sons, 1921) (p. 486)

¹⁵¹ 'Miss Howell, one can claim, has already made her mark with several larger works for orchestra, *Lamia*, for instance, but she has also written some remarkably fresh and effective piano music; she will play two of her Five Concert Studies now. Miss Howell I think, indeed, bids fair to prove herself to be the strongest woman composer we have seen. Ladies must forgive my saying so, but I think her playing, as well as her composing, is more like a man's than a women's.' Tobias Matthay. *Some Contemporary British Composers* (London: Anglo-French Music Company, 1922) p. 8.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* p. 10.

In a brief set of autobiographical notes, Howell acknowledged a change in her career during the 1920s:

I tried for some time to fulfil the triple role of composer, teacher and concert pianist. Ultimately decided [sic] it could not be done and abandoned concert work so as to devote non-teaching hours to composition – result various piano works, a violin sonata and other chamber music.¹⁵³

Whilst the focus on small scale works may have begun to limit Howell's wider reputation as a composer, the decline in serious musical discussion about her works during the 1930s can only be attributed to the fact that she wrote very few large-scale musical works during the decade; arguably her most important work during this period was her liturgical works composed whilst visiting Egypt, but the scores for these works were only discovered in 2014 and, whilst being of biographical interest in plotting the beginning of her association with music for the Catholic Church, are not major works by any means.

However, Howell's obscurity is not wholly unique – there were many composers with whom Howell associated, all of whom enjoyed popularity during the 1920s and 1930s, who are now completely forgotten these include: Hilda Dederich (1901 – 1969), Ethel Bilsland (1892 – 1982), and Morfydd Owen (1891 – 1918). And amongst that new generation of female composers, Howell enjoyed the unique position of having been recognised as a composer of orchestral music as opposed to a composer for piano. It is also worth noting that the two male Royal Academy composers Matthey cites as being part of the 'new generation', Leo Livens and Sydney Rosenbloom, have both suffered from neglect in recent years.

¹⁵³ Undated biographical notes kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust, Bewdley. (Viewed on October 21st, 2012)

Indeed, the apparent obscurity of the aforementioned composers serves as strong evidence that this younger generation of Royal Academy composers was unfortunate in reaching maturity just before modernism had begun to permeate British musical life. It has been argued that British musical life at this period was somewhat staid¹⁵⁴ and also that modernism took longer to be officially established and supported in Britain than on the continent.¹⁵⁵

The fact that by 1968 Stanford James was unable to get the BBC to record a performance of *Lamia* on the grounds of its being too ‘old hat’ suggests that the works of Howell’s contemporaries (or, as James notes, ‘protégés of Sir Henry Wood’) were no longer of interest to a modern concert going audience.

The Second World War adversely influenced Howell’s compositional career, with her returning her attention to work as a pianist for CEMA and duties as a member of the Women’s Land Army, whilst her ill health in the late 1940s effectively put an end to her ambition to write a symphonic work. By the time her last notable orchestral work, *Three Divertissements*, was brought to the public in 1950, it was already ten years old and denied a premiere performance at the Royal Albert Hall. Her later years as a private piano teacher and adjudicator undoubtedly influenced the musical careers of others, though they leave little tangible legacy today – indeed, her employment records at the RAM of Music and Birmingham Conservatoire have been lost and, with the exception of Berendina Norton, none of the professional pianists who were taught by Howell are alive today.

¹⁵⁴ The composer Donald Mitchell notes that ‘The musical scene in England after the turn of the century possessed all the immobility of a waxworks stacked with dummy composers and the effigies that they passed off as compositions. “How to go on?” was not so much the question; it was, rather “How to go back?”’ Donald Mitchell, *The Language of Modern Music* (London: Faber, 1963), p. 110.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Despite the strenuous effort of individuals, it was not until the 1960s that modernism as an ideology secured lasting patronage and institutional support in Britain.’ Matthew Riley (ed), *British Music and Modernism, 1895 – 1960*. (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010) p. 1

However, Howell's lasting legacy comes from what her story can reveal about the nature of English music in the twentieth century. In many respects she was an outsider from the governing musical elite – being female and Roman Catholic – and yet she achieved rapid success at the RAM in an entirely meritocratic manner. Throughout her time at the RAM, she flourished in a way that challenges Ethel Smyth's declaration that women musicians had to struggle for the musical opportunities freely open to men.¹⁵⁶ Although the circumstances of the First World War provided a greater opportunity for female composers to be recognised, Howell's experience at the RAM is telling of the social reforms that were taking place at the beginning of the twentieth century in British musical life.

The unfulfilled promise of Howell's subsequent career as an orchestral composer provides an insight into the difficulty female composers often had in being taken seriously when composing in traditional forms, whilst also being viewed in the wider context of the decline of Late Romantic music during the 1920s.

Howell's later revival as a composer of Catholic music demonstrates the changing attitudes towards the role of women musicians in the church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and demonstrates that Howell was able to adapt her musical skills in a surprising way to suit the needs of amateur musicians.

¹⁵⁶ Ethel Smyth *A final burning of boats, etc.* (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1929) p. 12

Catalogue of musical compositions by Dorothy Howell

Introduction

This part of the study endeavours to provide a detailed overview of the known musical compositions of Dorothy Howell – both published and unpublished. No formal catalogue has been undertaken in the Dorothy Howell Trust (DHT).

Where possible, I have included a brief summary of the work alongside publications details, references to known performances and any significant accompanying notes the composer made either in the manuscript, published versions or programme notes. The majority of the manuscripts are held at Dorothy Howell Trust. However, in the case of published works (such as *Lamia* and *The Moorings*) copies at other institutions also exist; where possible, I have included details of other copies.

I have organised the works into the following seven categories:

- i. Orchestral Works
- ii. Sacred Choral Works
- iii. Vocal Solo Works (with Orchestra)
- iv. Secular Choral and Vocal Works
- v. Stage Works
- vi. Solo Piano Works
- vii. Chamber Works
- viii. Lost Works

In the case of works that exist in multiple editions (for example the 1919 work *Humoresque*) I have categorised the piece in its most substantial form – in the case of the aforementioned work, it is listed under orchestral works.

My hope in assembling this catalogue is that it will be used to aid future research into Dorothy Howell's musical compositions.

List of abbreviations

BCL: Birmingham Conservatoire Library

BL: British Library, London

BLO: Bodleian Library, Oxford

BML: Barber Music Library, Birmingham

CUL: Cambridge University Library

EML: Elder Music Library, University of Adelaide, Australia

EUL: Edinburgh University Library

DHT: Dorothy Howell Trust, Bewdley

LCM: London College of Music Library, London

RAM: Royal Academy of Music, London
RNC: Royal Northern College Library, Manchester
SAL: Stanbrook Abbey Library (currently in a temporary location at St. Mary's College, New Oscott, Birmingham)
SUL: Stellenbosch University Library, South Africa
UML: University of Manchester Library
UCT: University of Cape Town Library, South Africa
VL: Victoria Library, London

Orchestral Works (OWs)

OW 1: Two Dances for Orchestra: Danse Grotesque & Valse Caprice, 1919

Comments: Ink manuscript score and parts at DHT.

Performance history:

Sunday, September 7th, 1919. Futurist Theatre, John Bright Street, Birmingham. *Appleby Matthew's Sunday Orchestral Concerts.*

Conductor: Appleby Matthews
Orchestra: The Appleby Matthews Orchestra

Monday, November 24th, 1919. Buckingham Palace. *Royal Command Performance.*

Conductor: Raymond Roze
Orchestra: British Symphony Orchestra

Monday, February 23rd, 1920. Queens Hall, London. *Symphony Concert Series 1919 -1920. Second Royal Command Performance.*

Conductor: Raymond Roze
Orchestra: British Symphony Orchestra

Thursday, January 15th, 1920. Town Hall, Walsall. *A Grand Orchestral Concert.*

Conductor: Appleby Matthews
Orchestra: The Appleby Matthews Orchestra

OW 2: Lamia, 1919

Comments: Preparatory sketches and ink manuscript of full score and parts at DHT. Copies of published score (Novello) available at BL, CUL, DHT and RAM.

(Howell's recommended time for performance: 12 minutes)

Orchestration:

Piccolo
Flutes (2)
Oboes (2)
Cor Anglais
Clarinets (2)
Bassoons (2)
Horns in F (4)
Trumpets in C (3)
Trombones (3)
Bass Tuba
Timpani
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

First Performance:

Wednesday September 10th, 1919 (8pm) (Prom 22 of the 1919 Promenade Season)
Location: Queen's Hall, London
Conductor: Sir Henry Wood
Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Subsequent performances:

Saturday September 13th, 1919 (8pm) (Prom 25 of the 1919 Promenade Season)
Location: Queen's Hall, London
Conductor: Sir Henry Wood
Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Tuesday, October 24th, 1919 (7.30pm)
Location: Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool
Conductor: Sir Henry Wood
Orchestra: Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

Cancelled performance:

(Note: Henry Wood omitted *Lamia* from this concert because he felt the orchestra were of insufficient quality to do justice to the work – see Chapter 4).

Tuesday, February 4th, 1920
Location: Town Hall, Birmingham
Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: City of Birmingham Orchestra

Subsequently performed:

Saturday December 1st, 1920 (7pm) (Second Concert of the Fifty Ninth Series)

Location: Town Hall, Birmingham

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: Birmingham Festival Choral Society

Thursday 3rd February, 1921.

Location: Bournemouth Winter Gardens

Conductor: Dan Godfrey

Orchestra: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra

Thursday September 15th, 1921 (8pm) (Prom 29 of the 1921 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Monday September 24th, 1923 (8pm) (Prom 38 of the 1923 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Thursday November 15th, 1923. *Sixth Symphony Concert of the Twenty Ninth Winter Series.*

Location: Winter Gardens, Bournemouth

Conductor: Dan Godfrey

Orchestra: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra

Saturday September 20th, 1924 (8pm) (Prom 37 of the 1924 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Thursday November 12th, 1925. (3pm)

Location: Winter Gardens, Bournemouth.

Conductor: Dan Godfrey

Orchestra: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra

Monday August 24th, 1926 (8pm) (Prom 8 of the 1926 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Thursday February 14th, 1929 (7pm)

Location: City Hall, Cardiff

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: Welsh National Orchestra

Tuesday September 30th, 1930 (8pm) (Prom 45 of the 1930 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: BBC Symphony Orchestra

Saturday August 24th, 1940 (8pm) (Prom 13 of the 1940 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: London Symphony Orchestra

Saturday November 18th, 1950 (7.30pm)

Location: Civic Hall, Croydon

Conductor: Ralph Nicholson

Orchestra: Croydon Symphony Orchestra

Sunday September 5th, 2010 (8pm) (Prom 68 of the 2010 Promenade Season)

Location: Royal Albert Hall, London

Conductor: Paul Watkins

Orchestra: Ulster Orchestra

Sunday March 8th, 2014 (7.30pm) Women of the World Festival 2014: Mirth Control

Location: Royal Festival Hall, London

Conductor: Jessica Cottis

Orchestra: Women of the World Orchestra (assembled for the purposes of the festival)

(Note: An abridged version was played without the wedding dance sequence. The programme was presented by Sandi Toksvig, with Merryn and Columb Howell in attendance as guests of honour representing the Dorothy Howell Trust)

Commercial Recordings:

British Composers Premiere Collections Volume 1, Karelia State Philharmonic Orchestra, dir. Marius Stravinsky (Cameo Classics, CC9037CD)

OW 4: Koong Shee, 1921

Comments: Ink manuscript of full score and parts at DHT.

(Howell's recommended time for performance: 20 minutes)

Orchestration:

Piccolo
Flutes (2)
Oboes (2)
Cor Anglais
Clarinets (2)
Bass Clarinet
Bassoons (2)
Horns in F (4)
Trumpets in C (3)
Trombones (3)
Bass Tuba
(Percussion including Timpani)
Xylophone
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Performance History:

First Performance:

Thursday October 20th, 1921 (8pm) (Prom 59 of the 1921 Promenade Season)
Location: Queen's Hall, London
Conductor: Sir Henry Wood
Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Friday January 12th, 1923
Location: Winter Gardens, Bournemouth
Conductor: Sir Dan Godfrey
Orchestra: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra

Friday March 6th, 1931

Location: Devonshire Park Winter Gardens, Eastbourne, East Sussex
Conductor: H. G. Amers
Orchestra: Eastbourne Municipal Orchestra

Wednesday December 6th, 1933. *Subscription Concert: "Ladies Night"*

Location: Town Hall, Birkenhead
Conductor: Dr. Teasdale Griffiths
Orchestra: Birkenhead Professional Orchestra

OW 5: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, 1923

Comments: Ink manuscript of full score and parts at DHT.

(Howell's recommended time for performance: 16 minutes)

Orchestration:

Piccolo
Flutes (2)
Oboes (2)
Cor Anglais
Clarinets (2)
Bassoons (2)
Horns in F (4)
Trumpets in C (3)
Trombones (3)
Bass Tuba
Timpani
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

First Performance:

Thursday, August 23rd, 1923 (8pm) (Prom 11 of the 1923 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

Orchestra: New Queen's Hall Orchestra

Thursday November 12th, 1925.

Locations: Winter Gardens, Bournemouth

Conductor: Dan Godfrey

Orchestra: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra

Sunday, January 9th, 1927 (7pm)

Location: West End Cinema, Birmingham

Conductor: Adrian Boult

Orchestra: City of Birmingham Orchestra

Thursday, August 18th, 1927 (8pm) (Prom 5 of the 1927 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London
Conductor: Sir Henry Wood
Pianist: Dorothy Howell
Orchestra: Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra

Wednesday, March 4th, 1931. Choral and Orchestral Concert given by the Arundel Choral Society.

Location: Arundel Castle
Conductor: Norman Demuth
Pianist: Cyril Smith
Orchestra: Arundel Choral Society

‘Dorothy Howell nearly became fashionable some years ago with her Symphonic Poem Lamia. Fortunately, she did not feel it incumbent to turn out a series of orchestral works ‘written to order’. Hence, if her output is comparatively small, it is uniformly [sic] good and surprisingly equal. It is possible that her neglect may be accounted for by the fact that she is fearless enough to put a considerable amount of feeling into her music, and in these days of cerebral vapourings it is distinctly a reactionary element. There is also a good deal of melodic charm about her music.’ (Untraceable newspaper cutting kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust archive)

Thursday, 11th November, 2010 (7.30pm) (Remembrance and Revival – a series of music by English composers for Remembrance Day).

Location: Cadogan Hall, London
Conductor: Toby Purser
Pianist: Valentina Seferinova
Orchestra: Orion Symphony Orchestra of London

Commercial Recordings:

(2010) British Composers Premiere Collections Volume 4, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, dir. Toby Purser, pianist: Valentina Seferinova (Cameo Classics, CC9041CD)

OW 6: Nocturne for String Orchestra, 1926

Comments: See ‘Lost Works’

OW 7: Two Pieces for Muted Strings, 1926

Comments: Ink manuscript of full score and parts at DHT.

Orchestration:

Violin 1
Violin 2

Viola
Cello
Double Bass

OW 8: The Rock, 1928

Comments: Ink manuscript of full score and parts at DHT.

(Howell's recommended time for performance: 11 minutes)

Orchestration:

Piccolo
Flute (2)
Oboe (2)
Clarinet (2)
Bassoon (2)
Horns in F (2)
Trumpet (2)
Harp
Percussion (inc. Timpani)
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

First Performance:

Saturday October 6th, 1928 (8pm) (Prom 49 of the 1928 Promenade Season – Last Night)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra

Thursday November 1st, 1928. (3pm) *Fourth Symphony Concert of the Thirty Fourth Winter Series.*

Location: Winter Gardens, Bournemouth

Conductor: Dan Godfrey

Orchestra: Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra

OW 9: Fanfare (later named A Westminster Fanfare), 1930

Comments: Written in aid of Musician's Benevolent Fund, a recording exists from the Savoy Hotel on May 8th, 1930 played by the Royal Military Band, Conducted by H.E. Atkins. The recording also features short fanfares by the following contemporary composers who were also commissioned to write fanfares for the occasion: Eugene Goossens, Arthur Bliss, Granville Bantock, Roger Quilter, Arnold Bax, Henry Walford Davies and Ethel Smyth. The

piece is a short, forty second, fanfare based on the Westminster chimes. A three page autographed score is kept at DHT.

(Recording code: MMV C 2445)

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Allegro*

Orchestration:

Trumpet (3)

Trombone (3)

Timpani

Cymbal

OW 10: Three Divertissements, 1940

Comments: Ink manuscript of full score and parts at DHT

Cancelled First Performance:

(As a result of the increasingly dangerous nightly air raids on London, the 1940 Prom seasons was cancelled)

Wednesday September 18th, 1940 (8pm) (Prom 34 of the 1940 Promenade Season)

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Orchestra: London Symphony Orchestra

First Performance:

Tuesday September 26th, 1950

Location: Malvern Priory, Great Malvern, Worcestershire (As part of the Elgar Festival)

Conductor: Sir Adrian Boult

Orchestra: London Symphony Orchestra

Tuesday March 25th, 1952

Location: BBC Broadcasting House, London.

Orchestra: Northern Orchestra

Conductor: Leighton Lucas

(Note: this performance was recorded for the BBC Orchestral Hour and broadcast on March 25th, 1952, at 3.45pm)

OW 11: Symphony in C major, 1947

Comments: Ten pages of handwritten sketches are held at the DHT. Howell's diary entries and correspondence suggest she worked intermittently on this work throughout the 1940s, although she never completed a full movement.

(Undated)

OW 12: Lauda Sion

Comments: A prelude on the plain-song theme, the work was never performed. A well preserved, 10 page, manuscript is available at the DHT archive. Howell's writing for organ has a typically sparse pedal part.

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Andante/ Adagio misterioso*

Metronom: ♩ = 46

Orchestration:

Flute (2)

Clarinet in B flat (2)

Bassoon (2)

Oboe (2)

Horns in F (2)

Trumpets in C (2)

Tenor Trombones (2)

Organ

Timpani

Violin 1 (5)

Violin 2 (5)

Viola (3)

Bass (2)

OW 13: Concert Overture (never performed)

Comments: Incomplete orchestral work. Ten page pencil manuscript of full score at DHT.

Orchestration:

Piccolo

Flute (2)

Oboe (2)

Clarinet (2)

Bassoon (2)

Horns in F (2)

Trumpet (2)

Harp

Percussion (inc. Timpani)

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Sacred Choral Works

SCW 1: Vidi Aquam, 1932

Comments: Part of the sequence for the Paschal Vigil, this plainchant setting was written during the composer's 1932 visit to Ismailia, Egypt. Several final draft manuscript copies exist in the archives of the DHT.

SCW 2: Domine Salvum Fac, c. 1932

Comments: This short 12 bar setting was presumably written during Howell's visit to Egypt in 1932 – it is written on the back of a scrap manuscript copy of Vidi Aquam (1932) in very faint pencil – there is no reference to the work ever being performed, although it is complete. The copy can be found at Dorothy Howell Trust archive.

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 4/4

SCW 3: Mass in Honour of the Holy Family, 1932

Comments: Written during Howell's visit to her brother, Alfred, who was serving as a pilot officer in Ismailia, Egypt. This piece was first performed at the Holy Family Catholic Church, Ismailia, commissioned by Rev. Edmund O'Callaghan O.Carm. Written for SATB voices and organ accompaniment (manuals only).

Kyrie

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 4/4

Gloria

Key Signature: B flat major

Time Signature: 4/4

Responses:

(Six plainchant responses)

Sanctus:

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 3/2

Benedictus:

Key Signature: A minor

Time Signature: 3/2

Agnus Dei:

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 3/2

SCW 4: Messe Notre Dame, c. 1932

Comments: Written for two unaccompanied voices, the work exists in several handwritten manuscript copies at the archives of the Dorothy Howell Trust.

There are six copies of the Kyrie, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, five copies of the Credo and four copies of the Gloria suggesting that the piece was performed for liturgical purposes at some point. The piece is undated, but the paper and ink used suggests it was written around the time Howell visited Ismailia in 1932.

Kyrie

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Andantino*

Gloria

Key Signature: B flat major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Moderate time*

Credo

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegretto risoluto*

Sanctus

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Andantino*

Benedictus

Key Signature: A flat major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Andantino*

Agnus Dei

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Moderato Molto*

SCW 5: Missa Brevis (in honour of St Antoni), 1932

Comments: Written to be performed on the occasion of the visit of the Bishop of Port Said to the Holy Family Church, Ismailia. A manuscript copy is available in the archives of the DHT in a manuscript edition; at the time of writing, only the soprano and bass part are known to exist; it is not clear from the manuscript if an accompaniment or tenor and alto parts were written, although her Mass in Honour of the Holy Family (written during the same visit) was written for two voices only (soprano and alto) and organ accompaniment.

Kyrie:

Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 4/4

Gloria:

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: Plainchant

Sanctus:

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 4/4

Agnus Dei:

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 4/4

SCW 6: Christmas Bells Are Ringing: A Christmas Carol, 1940

Comments: Published as No. 54 in the Leonard Gould and Bottler's Library of Unison and Part Songs for Schools series, Howell collaborated with her sister, Mary Viola, who wrote the lyrics for this carol. The piece consists of a simple piano accompaniment and parts for two voices. Copies at the RAM & BL.

Catalogue No: L. G. & B. 9910

Key Signature: G major/ B major/ E flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Boldly*
Metronome: $\text{♩} = 52$

SCW 7: An Amor dulce sit, 1947.

Comments: Commissioned by Rev. Joseph Connelly for a play at St. Mary's College Oscott, *The Traitor's Gate*, to commemorate the feast of the English Martyrs. It is written for unison male voices in a plainchant style. The only existing copy is a two page manuscript at the DHT.

Key Signature: D major

Time Signature: 2/4

SCW 8: Holy, Holy, Holy, 1958

Comments: See missing works.

SCW 9: Missa Simplex, 1960

Comments: One of the best known examples of the composer's People's Mass, this pre-Second Vatican Council work has a simple unison setting of the Mass parts in Latin. The work is used in some Catholic parishes in the UK – a recent example being the 50th anniversary Mass of Rev. Fr. Petroc Howell's (the composer's nephew) ordination to the Priesthood at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Dudley Road, Birmingham. The work was published L.J. Carey (Carey Edition 916) and was commissioned by St. Richard's Preparatory School, Malvern.

Composer's Notes: *This attractive unison Mass is suitable for either choir or congregation. Its musical content will commend it to choirs, while its freshness and simplicity bring it well within the scope of any congregation that has mastered Dom. Gregory Murray's "A People's Mass"*

Catalogue No: C & Co. 3040

i. *Kyrie*

Key Signature: D minor

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Not too slowly*

Metronome: ♩ = 66

ii. *Gloria*

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 2/2

Tempo: *Brightly*

Metronome: ♩ = 72

iii. *Sanctus and Benedictus*

Key Signature: D major

Time Signature: 2/2

Tempo: *In moderate time*

Metronome: ♩ = 60

iv. *Agnus Dei*

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Not too slowly*
Metronome: ♩ = 66

SCW 10: Praise Be the God of Love, c. 1960 (undated manuscript)

Comments: Written for male voice choir and organ (manuals only) and based on the poem by the 16th century Anglican priest and poet George Herbert (1593 – 1633). Given the use biro and type of paper used for the manuscript the most probable date for composition is the early 1960s. Copy at DHT.

Key Signature: C major/ G major/ F major
Time Signature: 6/4 & 4/4
Tempo: *Andante*
Metronome: ♩ = 60

SCW 11: Caeli Anarrant Gloria Dei (Motet), 1961

Comments: Commissioned by Stanbrook Abbey, Worcestershire, the work was performed at the Requiem Mass for Dorothy Howell. A copy of the printed edition is available at the BL.

SCW 12: Epiphany, 1961

Comments: An accompanied setting of words by the forgotten children's writer and needlework specialist Bee McMullen, this somewhat whimsical piece was published as Cary Edition No. 924 as part of the 'Cary Catholic Music' series; several copies exist in the DHT and the BL, although I have not been able to verify any performances of the work in a liturgical context.

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/4
Tempo: *Slow and with a swaying rhythm*
Metronome: ♩ = 46
Catalogue Number: C & Co. Ltd. 3067

List of performances:

Bewdley Music Club Christmas Concert, St. Anne's Parish Church, Wednesday, December 10th, 1983.

SCW 13: Oculi Omnium, 1962

Comments: Published as part of Cary's Contemporary Church Music series. (No. 3)
Catalogue No: C & Co. Ltd. 3039 (C.C.M. 3) Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and BL.

Key Signature: E flat major

Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Andante*
Metronome: ♩ = 52

SCW 14: A Simple Mass for the People, 1965

Comments: Commissioned by the Gregorian Institute of America, Ohio: the American counterpart of the English Society of St Gregory, with which both Dorothy and her brother, Clifford Howell S.J., were heavily involved. Written for unison voice and piano organ accompaniment, the Mass is typical of the People's Masses popular following the Second Vatican Council which concluded on December 8th 1965. Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT and BL.

Catalogue No: G – 1169

Kyrie

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/4 & 4/4
Tempo: *Gently Moving*
Metronome: ♩ = 76

Gloria:

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Brightly*
Metronome: ♩ = 88

Creed

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Fairly brisk/ Gently and unhurried*
Metronome: ♩ = 80/ 72

Sanctus

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Not too slow*
Metronome: ♩ = 52

Agnus Dei

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/4
Tempo: *Moderato*
Metronome: ♩ = 69

SCW 15: Four Anthems of Our Lady, 1966

Comments: A setting of four Marian hymns (translated from Latin by Rev. Adrain Fortesque), all pieces are written for unison singing and organ (manuals only accompaniment). The work was approved for liturgical use by Peter Anglim (Nihil obstat) and the Imprimatur was Patrick Casey, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Westminster. Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and BL.

Catalogue No. C. & Co. 3115 (Carey Edition No. 952)

i. Holy Mother of Our Redeemer (Alma Redemptoris Mater)

Key Signature: B flat major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Moderately Slow*

Metronome: ♩ = 60

ii. Hail, Queen of Heaven (Ave Regina Caelorum)

Key Signature: B flat major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *With a lilt*

Metronome: ♩ = 120

iii. Queen of Heaven, Rejoice (Regina Caeli Laetare)

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Joyfully*

Metronome: ♩ = 66

iv. Hail, Holy Queen (Salve Regina)

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Rather slowly*

Metronome: ♩ = 63

SCW 16: The Apostles' Creed, 1965

Comments: A setting of the profession of the Catholic Faith, this work has a very simple unison vocal melody and organ part (manuals only). It is written in the manner of a typical chanted psalm, with the chordal accompaniment. Howell wrote some guidance as to how the piece should be performed which is in keeping with her view of liturgical music maintaining

a good pace and flow. Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and BL.

Howell's preface to the work: The varying numbers of syllables allotted to each minim beat should flow with the natural rhythm of careful speech. This will present no difficulty if the correct speed is discovered and a steady but not too rigid minim pulse maintained.

Catalogue No: C. & Co. 3111
Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Boldly*
Metronome: ♩ = 72

SCW 17: St Michael's Mass, 1965

Comments: Published by the World Library of Sacred Music, Cincinnati, Ohio, as part of the *Masses for Choir and Congregation* series, this setting is another 'People's Mass' commissioned by the Gregorian Institute of America. It is written for unison voices and organ (manuals only).

Catalogue No: EMO -819 – I

Kyrie

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Fairly fast*
Metronome: ♩ = 66

Gloria

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *A fairly brisk minim beat*
Metronome: ♩ = 88

Creed

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *At a moderate pace*
Metronome: ♩ = 84

Sanctus

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 6/4 & 4/4
Tempo: *Calm and unhurried*
Metronome: ♩ = 46

Agnus Dei

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Moderately slow*
Metronome: ♩ = 66

SCW 18: English Mass for Ampleforth, 1967

Comments: Commissioned by the rector of Ampleforth Abbey, Yorkshire, the Mass was approved by the National Commission for Catholic Church Music on January 18th 1967 – thus confirming the work was officially approved for parish use in the United Kingdom. The Mass is a simple unison setting, although the accompaniment is written in a manner which would make SATB singing possible. All parts of the Mass are written in C major. Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and the BL. The work is still used by the parish choir of St. Wulstan's Church, Little Malvern.

Catalogue No: Cary Edition No. 967 (C& Co. 3142)

Kyrie

Time Signature: 6/4
Tempo: *Boldly*
Metronome: ♩ = 52

Gloria

Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Fairly brisk*
Metronome: ♩ = 88

Credo:

Time Signature: 6/4
Metronome: ♩ = 80

Sanctus and Benedictus

Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Slow and solemn*
Metronome: ♩ = 54

Agnus Dei

Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Gently*

Metronome: ♩ = 72 (In the Cary printed edition the metronome marking is given as ♩ = 58. Howell wrote to the publishers on January 26th 1967 noting the error, however, the piece had already been printed. In February the composer visited the L.J. Cary's office in London to amend the error personally.)

SCW 19: Short English Mass for Congregation, 1967

Comments: Published as Cary Edition No. 969. A simple mass setting for unison voices and keyboard accompaniment (the published edition does not specify organ or piano). It was accepted by the National Commission for Catholic Church Music on January 18th, 1967. Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and BL.

Catalogue No: C & Co. 3145

Kyrie:

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Simply*
Metronome: ♩ = 56

Gloria

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *At a moderate pace*
Metronome: ♩ = 104 (♩ = 84 in the published editions, but amended by the composer)

Sanctus and Benedictus

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Not too slow*
Metronome: ♩ = 100

Agnus Dei

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Gently*
Metronome: ♩ = 69

SCW 20: Responsorial Psalm and Alleluia, 1971

Comments: Written to mark the centenary of the dedication of the Benedictine Abbey Church of Our Lady of Consolation, Stanbrook, Worcestershire, on September 6th, 1971, this work also exists with a verse for the purpose of Christmas Midnight Mass. Both editions are

written for two vocal lines and organ (manuals only) accompaniment. Neither edition was published, but manuscript editions for both works exist in the archives of the DHT and the archives of Stanbrook Abbey.

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 5/8

Verse (for dedication): How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord God of hosts etc (Psalm 83)

Verse (for Christmas): I bring you news of great joy, today a Saviour has been born to us.

SCW 21: For You has He Commanded His Angels to Keep You In All Your Ways, 1978

Comments: A copy is kept at in archives of Stanbrook Abbey (currently in the process of being transferred to St. Mary's College, Oscott, but unavailable for viewing at the time of writing).

SCW 22: Mass (For Stanbrook), 1978

Comments: see above.

SCW 23: Gloria for St. Wulstan's, 1978

Comments: A short work for unison voice and organ accompaniment, which exists in very faint pencil (incomplete) manuscript at the DHT in a file with other miscellaneous compositions. The present extant score ends at the line 'You alone are the Holy One' whilst Howell uses abbreviations suggesting the existing score is just a draft, for instance 'R.H. for Right Hand of the Father.' The work was written in August 1978 and may have been performed by the choir of St. Wulstan's Church, Little Malvern. The composition has all the hallmarks of a People's Mass part with a simple vocal line and accompaniment of sustained chords. Given the title of the piece it is unlikely that the work is part of a larger Mass setting – the other works in the miscellaneous file are not liturgical.

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 3/4

(Undated works)

SCW 24: Away in a Manger

Comments: A very poor quality manuscript in pencil exists at the archives of the DHT. Written for two vocal parts (melody and descant). It was most probably written for the Catholic society The Grail, which often used unpublished works by Howell and other Catholic composers in a non-liturgical context.

Key Signature: A minor
Time Signature: 9/8

Tempo: *Andante*

SCW 25: Let Us Go to Bethlehem

Comments: Based on lyrics by Violet Clifton, a copy is recorded to exist at the DHT archive in Celia Mike's 1990 study on Howell, but no copies were available for inspection during my time researching. The piece was written for three female voices and piano.

SCW 26: Rejoice Heavenly Powers

Comments: A copy of this work exists in the private hands of the Sampson family, Tetbury, Gloucestershire, but was unavailable for inspection.

SCW 27: Word Was Made Flesh

Comments: An autographed manuscript exists at DHT archive for three voices. The incomplete work has no time signature.

Vocal Solo Works with Orchestra (VSWO)

VSWO 1: A South-Wester, 1919

Comments: This work is based on the poem by Wolverhampton-born Alfred Noyes (who was also well known in the Midlands Catholic community and possibly an acquaintance of Charles Edward Howell).

First Performance:

Tuesday, December 2nd, 1919

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Soloist: Phyllis Lett

Orchestra: New Queen Hall Orchestra

Tuesday, December 14th, 1920. Haywards Heath Musical Society, Grand Evening Concert (7.30pm)

Location: Public Hall, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Soloist: Phyllis Lett

Pianist: Roger Ackroyd

Notes on the performance: 'The pieces selected for rendition on Tuesday were light and melodious and the composers were all British of that fact we were proud. Too long has the foreigner been allowed to hold the field.' *The Mid-Sussex Herald and Tribune*, Wednesday December 15th, 1920. (no page number – cutting from the Dorothy Howell Trust)

Orchestration:

Piccolo

Flute (two parts)

Oboe (two parts)

Cor Anglais

Clarinet (two parts)

Bass Clarinet (two parts)

Bassoon (two parts)

Horn in F (four parts)

Trumpet in B flat (three parts)

Trombone (three parts)

Bass Tuba

Timpani in C

Harp

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

VSWO 2: A Sunset, 1919

Comments: Originally written for a large orchestra, this piece also exists in a later piano reduction (written in 1920). Both copies exist in the DHT. The orchestral version (see orchestration below) is remarkably opulent, however, it is worth noting the second known performance of this work uses the more frugal piano reduction.

Orchestration:

Piccolo

Flute (two parts)

Oboe (two parts)

Cor Anglais

Clarinet (two parts)

Bass Clarinet (two parts)

Bassoon (two parts)

Horn in F (four parts)

Trumpet in B flat (three parts)

Trombone (three parts)

Bass Tuba

Timpani in C

Harp

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

First Performance:

Tuesday, December 2nd, 1919

Location: Queen's Hall, London

Conductor: Sir Henry Wood

Soloist: Phyllis Lett

Orchestra: New Queen Hall Orchestra

Second Performance (with piano reduction):

Saturday, January 20th, 1923 (3pm)

Location: Wigmore Hall, London

Pianist: Mr. G. O'Conor-Morris

Soloist: Phyllis Lett

Solo Piano Works (SPW)

SPW 1: Six Pianoforte Compositions, 1911

Comments: See Chapter 1: Opus 1 and Stourbridge. Printed copy and manuscript available at DHT.

- i. First Prelude
Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 7/8

- ii. Puddle Duck (with apologies to Beatrix Potter)

Preface to piece: Jemima Puddle Duck sets out for a quiet stroll. Stopping at intervals for a worm and occasionally emitting a loud ‘quack’. Presently, she glides into the water (Piu Mosso) swims to the opposite bank, espies her companions some way up the hill and goes off in pursuit at a brisk pace (Accel. ad finem)

Key Signature: B flat major/ E flat major
Time Signature: 2/2
Tempo: *Andante*
Metronome: ♩ = 60

- iii. Double, Double, Toil and Trouble (Macbeth IV: i)
Key Signature: C minor
Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Allegro*

- iv. Mouse Dance
Composer’s Preface: When the lights are out on the evening the mice come out and begin to play, being joined later by the rats. The dance gets wilder and wilder (accel. moto) and reaches a climax when the cat comes in with a bound (molto accel. and fff) and the mice scuttle off as fast and quietly as possible.

Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Allegretto Scherzando*

- v. The Shower (Imitation of bells)
Composer’s Preface: Suggested by a sudden squall of wind and rain through which could be heard the bells of a neighbouring church on a Sunday evening in July. [Note: The ‘neighbouring church’ from Howell’s home in Wye Cliff

Road, Handsworth, could be either: Hamstead Road Baptist Church, St. Michael's Parish Church, Soho Hill or St. Mary's, Handsworth Parish Church, (all of which are less than ½ of a mile away from Wye Cliff Road). The most probable case is St. Mary's, which has a full peel of bells imitated in the piece.]

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Andante/Allegretto*

vi. Will o' the wisp

Key Signature: A minor

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Allegretto Allegro Leggiero*

SPW 2: Impromptu, 1912

Comments: A well preserved, seven page, manuscript exists at the DHT – the only known copy. Previously thought to have been written in 1919, the manuscript is clearly dated November 1912, Wollescote House, Stourbridge.

Key Signature: E minor/ A flat major/ E major/ C major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Allegro Moderato*

SPW 3: Tarantella, 1912

Comments: Completed on June 18th 1912, when the composer was still living in Handsworth. A very well preserved ink manuscript edition exists in the DHT; four full pages and one loose half page as page 5. On the back of page 5 also exists some sketches for the piece in an untypically untidy hand. The work is sequential and based around a three note descending melody. The work is most definitely juvenilia; for instance, the fourteen year old Howell makes several errors forgetting to write the correct number of sharps on the first and second page. However, it is an ambitious work with several changes in key and time signature.

Key Signature: B flat major/ B major/ D flat major/ E flat major/ D major

Time Signature: 6/8 and 2/4

Tempo: Presto

SPW 4: Danse Oriental, c. 1912

Comments: The score for *Danse Oriental* is now lost, we know from a diary entry that the piece was among 11 works submitted to the RAM for her entrance interview in January 1913. The work was completed whilst Howell was studying composition under Bantock, and was

likely set as an exercise in composing in the oriental style given the pseudo-exotic oriental influences in Bantock's own works. In the DHT archives there exists a manuscript copy of a piece called *Chinese Dance* – it is uncertain if this is a renamed *Danse Oriental*, however it is unlikely the two pieces are related in any way other than supposed oriental influences.

SPW 5: Piano Piece (unnamed), 1914

Comments: Part of a file of miscellaneous and unpublished works, this piece for piano is dated March 1914, and exists in a four page manuscript. The piece is a waltz and has a simple left hand accompaniment, the right part is interesting because it bears Howell's trademark chromatic style and the descending melody is similar to the dance sequence in *Lamia*.

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegretto*

SPW 6: Rhapsody in E flat major, 1915.

Comments: See Lost Works.

SPW 7: Sonata (Two Movements in C Minor), 1916

Comments: Mentioned in Howell's diaries as an early composition at the RAM, no score is known to exist for this work at the time of writing.

SPW 8: Theme and Variations, 1916

Comments: Theme, eight variations and a finale exist in a twelve page manuscript edition at the DHT archive.

Theme:

Key Signature: E flat major

Time Signature: 4/4

i. Key Signature: E flat major

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Allegro*

ii. Key Signature: C minor

Time Signature: 9/8

iii. Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 3/4

iv. Key Signature: E flat major

Time Signature: 3/4

v. Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 2/4

vi. Key Signature: A flat major
Time Signature: 3/4

vii. (Later published separately as Prelude in F minor by the Oxford University Press in 1929, with a seven bar extension)
Key Signature: F minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Andante*

viii. Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Vivace*

Finale:

Key Signature: C minor
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Presto*

Notes: Howell also wrote an alternative variation for VII which she subsequently crossed out; the piece is much shorter than the final variation (which was later published) and has a more static chordal texture. Howell would have worked on the work in composition class at the RAM and therefore was probably encouraged to develop the original variation; for instance she reworks some of the descending chromatic theme in to the final version.

Variation VII:

Key Signature: C sharp minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Andante*

Performance history:

September 5th, 1924. Grand Hotel, Grosvenor Room, Birmingham.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 9: Pieces for the Bairns, 1917 (published in 1921)

Comments: Dorothy Howell's first formally published work was this two-book pedagogical collection for the Anglo French Music Company's 'Educational Music for Pianoforte' series. The series also included work by Tobias Mathhay (*Five Cameos*), J.B. McEwen (*Sonatina*) and Ethel Bilsland (*The Birthday Party*). It is a series of four short pieces similar in style to the juvenile work *Six Pieces for Piano* (1911), with titles that clearly convey what the music is intended to describe. The works were ranked as being suitable for 'elementary' standard pianists. A copy of the published edition, signed by the composer, is kept at the DHT. At the time of writing I have not been able to locate the first book of this collection, either in the private archives or elsewhere, but Howell broadcast a piece from the first book as part of a children's programme for Radio London 2LO (see below).

Catalogue No. A.F.M. Co. 175

i. *The Paper Boat*

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Andante con moto*

ii. *Follow my Leader*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Moderato*

iii. *Lament for Cock Robin*

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Cantabile*

i. *Leap Frog*

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 2/2
Tempo: *Allegro giocoso*

Performance History:

January 1st, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.

Pieces: *Paper Boat & Leap Frog*

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

May 13th, 1926. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.

Pieces: No. 4, Book 1

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 10: Humoresque, 1919

(Howell's recommended time for orchestral performance: 3 minutes)

Comments: This piece exists in three versions: solo piano, two pianos and full orchestra. The piano solo reduction is the only version to have been published – released in 1919 as No. 47 in the Anglo French New Music Series The other two versions exist in manuscript form and are held at the DHT.

Piano solo copies: BCL, EUL, LCM, and VL.

The composer wrote descriptive notes to the first performance:

‘It is built up mainly on a rhythmic figure which is given out by the bassoon melody and the strings. Later a new theme of a more jovial character is introduced by flutes, oboes and clarinets and, after this, a little development leads onto the middle section in B major – a light staccato movement interspersed with heavy chords. The work henceforth pursues a perfectly normal course. We have a return to the first subject followed by a triumphal reiteration of the second. Then after a rapid diminuendo the music suddenly scurries away in a little pianissimo run.’

Key Signature: E minor/E major/ B major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Allegro*

Catalogue No. AFMC 47

Performance History:

First Performance (Piano Edition):

Wednesday, November 12th, 1919 (8pm)

Location: Grosvenor Room, Grand Hotel, Birmingham

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

First Orchestral Performance:

December 8th 1921

Location:

Orchestra: Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Dan Godfrey

Orchestration for full orchestra version

Flute 1

Flute 2

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Clarinet (in A) 1

Clarinet (in A) 2

Bassoon 1

Bassoon 2
Horn (in F) 1
Horn (in F) 2
Trumpet (in F) 1
Trumpet (in F) 2
Timpani (B and E)
Tambourine
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Bass

February, 1923. Radio Broadcast: London, 2. L.O.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

January 27th, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London, 2. L.O.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

March 16th, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London, 2. L.O.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

April 6th, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London, 2. L.O.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

September 5th, 1924. Birmingham Grand Hotel: The Grosvenor Room.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell.

January 26th, 1927. Radio Broadcast: London, 2. L.O. *Children's Programme.*

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

Recording (piano version):

Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music, pianist: Sophia Rahman (Dutton Digital: Epoch British Music, B0006840MA)

SPW 11: Five Studies for Pianoforte, 1919

Comments: Written in 1919, these five studies were not published until 1920 by the Anglo French Music Company. They were published individually and were never issued as a set.

Each study focusses on a different piano technique: G major (arpeggio technique), D major (Fifths), F major (right hand technique), G sharp major (right hand melody – balance) and E major (syncopated rhythm). Copies of the printed edition are available at the BL, DHT, LCM (Nos. 4 & 5 only) RNC and UCT (No. 2 only) Complete ink manuscript (twenty pages) also at DHT.

- i. Study No. 1
Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Allegro*
Catalogue No: AFM Co. 67
- ii. Study No. 2
Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Moderato*
Catalogue No: AFM Co. 68
- iii. Study No. 3
Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 3/8
Tempo: *Presto*
Catalogue No: AFM Co. 69
- iv. Study No. 4
Key Signature: G sharp major
Time Signature: 3/2
Tempo: *Allegro*
Catalogue No: AFM Co. 70
- v. Study No. 5
Key Signature: E major
Time Signature: 2/2
Tempo: *Andante Allegro*
Catalogue No: AFM Co. 71

Performance History:

First Performance:

Tuesday March 11th, 1919. (8pm) *Dorothy Howell: First Pianoforte Recital*

Location: Aeolian Hall, London.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

Wednesday, November 12th, 1919 (8pm)

Location: Grosvenor Room, Grand Hotel, Birmingham

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

February, 1923 (London 2L.O. Radio Broadcast)

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

September 6th, 1926. (London 2L.O. Radio Broadcast)

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

March 19th, 1998. St. Mary-le-Bow, London. *Royal Academy of Music Composers Recital.*

Pianola: Michael Broadway

May 28th, 1998: Holy Innocents Roman Catholic Church Hall, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

(Pianist: Michael Jones) Note: Only No. 3 and No. 4 were included in this performance.

List of Pianola Rolls performed by Howell for the Aeolian Music Roll Company in July 1924.

Prelude No. 1 (T. 23694 A)

Prelude No. 2 (L. 30227 A)

Prelude No. 3 (T. 23695 A)

Prelude No. 4 (T. 23779 A)

Prelude No. 5 (T. 23696 B)

SPW 12: Spindrift, 1920

Comments: Howell performed this piece regularly during her life time. The Anglo-French Music Company published editions available at EUL, LCM, and RNC. Original manuscript available at DHT.

Press reception: 'Her piano pieces oscillate between whimsical gaiety and sadness, are of transparent texture, and require deft finger work for proper interpretation. Spindrift might be called Snowdrift by reason of its lightness. If a sly humour and careless abandon are found in many of the piano pieces and songs, there is also a finely sustained elegiac feeling in the 'Boat Song' for piano, 'Phantasy' and 'The Moorings' for violin and piano. Miss Howell is not an explorer; she prefers traditional moulds and her language is mostly a diatonic one. Her own personality is greatly reflected in her music.' (Musical Opinion, December 1927, Vol. LI)

Key Signature: A minor

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Allegro vivace*

Catalogue No: AFM Co. 115

Performance history:

January 1st, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

March 16th, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

September 5th, 1924. Birmingham Grand Hotel.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

April 6th, 1925. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

February 18th, 1926. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

February 27th, 1926. 2.45pm. Crane Hall, London. Dance and Pianoforte Recital.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell
Dancer: Ivanava

(Note: The prima ballerina, Ivanava, devised choreography for *Spindrift* and *Air in F minor*)

May 27th, 1926. Radio Broadcast: London 2.L.O. *Children's Programme*.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

January 27th, 1927. Radio Broadcast: London 2.L.O.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 13: Toccata, 1922

Comments: Solo piano work published as part of the Anglo French Music Company piano series. Copies: Ink manuscript (eight pages) at DHT, and published edition at the LCM.

Key Signature: C minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: Allegro con brio
Catalogue No: A. F. M. Co. 115

Performance history:

February, 1923. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

March 16th, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

April 6th, 1924. Radio Broadcast: London 2. L.O.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

September 5th, 1924. Birmingham Grand Hotel: The Grosvenor Room.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 14: Boat Song, 1920

Comments: Included as No. 22 in the 'Mortimer Edition' of *Repertoire Series of Pianoforte Music by Modern British Composers* published by Ashberg, Hopwood and Crew, this work for solo piano is stylistically typical of Howell's chromatic piano writing during the early 1920s. Other composers in the series included Charles Villiers Stanford (*Ballade* - No. 1 in the series), York Bowen (*Three Serious Dances*- No. 3), Herbert Howells (*On a May Evening* - No. 8) and Arnold Bax (*A Romance* - No. 10). A copy of the published edition available at the DHT and LCM.

Key Signature: E minor/ C minor
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Andante*
Catalogue No: A. H. & C. Ltd. 10, 253

SPW 15: A-shopping We Will Go, 1923

Comments: Published as No. 8 in the Edward Arnold's Educational Pianoforte Music series, edited by Thomas F. Dunhill, this album is divided into four sections. Other composers in the series included Charles Villiers Stanford (*Three Fancies*, published separately as No. 17 – 19); A. Herbert Brewer (*My Lady's Bower* and *Valse Lente*, No. 14 – 15) and the little remembered Ernest Austin (*Dream Days* and *The Faery Forest*) who was championed by Sir Henry Wood with works such as the *Vicar of Bray* (Op. 35) and the *Stella-Mary Dances* (Op. 58) being featured in Proms concerts in the 1910s. Printed copy at DHT.

i. Half a Pound of Butter

Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Allegro marcato*

ii. A Yard of Dainty Silk

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegretto grazioso*

iii. (Some) Nice Ripe Tomatoes

Key Signature: B flat major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Con spirito*

iv. (and) A Pennyworth of Milk

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Vivace*

Performance History:

May 14th, 1925. Radio Broadcast: London, 2.L.O. *Children's Programme.*

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

January 26th, 1927. Radio Broadcast: London, 2.L.O. *Children's Programme.*

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 16: Puppydogs' Tales, 1925

Comments: Copy at BL. Unavailable for viewing in October 2014.

Performance history:

January 21st, 1926. Radio broadcast: London, 2. L.O. Children's Programme.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 17: Chinese Dance, 1926

Comments: Written for a pupil of Ivanova who was appearing in a pantomime in London – no reference can be found as to the title of the show. This short work exists in a four page manuscript edition at the DHT. It is a stylistic work and has typical 'oriental' features such as use of pentatonic melody, grace notes and staccato melody.

Key Signature: G major, B major

Time Signature: 2/4

Composer's Notes: Play the opening section twice; 16 bars of Introduction then as follows)

SPW 18: Air in F Minor, 1926

Comments: Howell wrote several pieces for a lecture-demonstration by the Prima Ballerina Ivanava which took place at the Crane Hall in London; the performance was a survey of the development of ballet technique from the 16th – 20th century. A loose note kept in the file for this concert at the Dorothy Howell Trust describes the nature of the programme: ‘This lecture-demonstration is presented by artists – two dancers, both members of the Russian Ballet [Anna Ivanova and Mary Skeaping], a pianist-composer [Howell], a singer [Sheila Melville] and a lecturer [June Melville]. The performance lasts two hours and includes musical and well as dance illustrations.’

Performance History:

February 27th, 1926. 2.45pm. Crane Hall, London.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 19: Variations on French, English and Dutch Folk Tunes, c. 1927

Comments: Only one of the above is known to survive; an unpublished arrangement of a Dutch folk. Howell does not give the name of the Dutch folk tune, but I have traced it to be *De Poppenkraam*; an otherwise obscure tune, at least to English people at that time, it is likely that Howell was introduced to the music whilst performing a ‘Dutch’ family play at her home in Handsworth during the early 1900. Still photographs show Howell clad in clogs next to a prop windmill. Merryn Howell recalls the piece being used as an encore for recitals. Two hand-written manuscripts exist at the DHT, one in faint pencil and another, much later, biro edition.

The now lost variations are on the French folk tune (*Elle etait un begere*) and the English folk tune *Tinker Tink*.

Performance history:

January 26th, 1927. Radio Broadcast: London, 2. L.O. *Children’s Programme*.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

July 10th, 1926. Radio Broadcast: London, 2.L.O. *Children’s Programme*.
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

SPW 20: Three Preludes for Piano, 1929

Comments: Published by Oxford University Press as part of the Clarendon Piano Series (edited by John Ireland), these three pieces are Dorothy Howell’s contribution to a series which ‘attempts to provide solo pieces of high musical value and varying difficulty, for recital, festival and practical purposes.’ Publicity for the series also claims the pieces included in the series would ‘[No doubt] figure in many concert and wireless programmes in a short time.’ However, many of the pieces remain obscure today. The series also included works by Moeran (*Summer Valley* and *Bank Holiday*), York Bowen (*Three Preludes*) and

Hilda Cooper (*Tarn Hows*). Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and BL.

- i. Prelude No. 1
Key Signature: F minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Andante*
Metronome: ♩ = 76
- ii. Prelude No. 2
Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Moderato Semplice*
Metronome: ♩ = 116
- iii. Prelude No. 3
Key Signature: A flat minor
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Allegro Vivace*
Metronome: ♩. = 144

SPW 21: All the Year Round: May (The Cuckoo Calls), 1934

Comments: Published by Oxford University Press, this simple piece for piano was published as part of the *All the Year Round* series. The only available score I have been able to locate is a copy of the published edition at Stellenbosch University Library, South Africa.

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Allegro*

SPW 22: All the Year Round: August (The Harvest Field), 1934

Comments: Published by Oxford University Press, this simple piece for piano was published as part of the *All the Year Round* series. A copy of the published score is at DHT and SUL.

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Lento e languido*

SPW 23: Learning to Waltz, 1940

Comments: A very simple waltz for beginner piano published as part of Leonard, Gould & Bolttler's *Graded Festival Solos* series as No. 4 in Grade 2 (Elementary) book. Copy at RAM (4 pages).

Key signature: C major

Time signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Non troppo Allegro*

Catalogue No: L. G. & B. 9891.

SPW 24: Homage to Scarlatti, 1945

Comments: The first of four contribution made to the *Chesterton Series of Graded Music* (No. 5) edited by Thomas F. Dunhill. This pastiche work was set as a Grade IV piece. Copy at RAM.

Possible Catalogue No: (J.W.C. 2293 – based on Howell’s other compositions in the Grade IV collection listed as 2294 and 2295 respectively).

SPW 25: Borne on the Breeze, 1945

Comments: *Chesterton Series of Graded Music* (No. 18) the work was set as a Grade IV piece, it is a short work (40 bars) in ternary form. Printed edition available at DHT.

Key Signature: E major/ A major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegretto*

Metronome: ♩ = 112

Catalogue No: J. W. C. 2294

SPW 26: Danse Levantine, 1945

Comments: *Chesterton Series of Graded Piano Music* (No. 21), it was classified as a Grade IV piece. Printed edition available at BL, DHT, LCM and RAM.

Key Signature: A major

Time Signature: 5/8

Tempo: *Ritmico*

Catalogue No: J. W. C. 2295

SPW 27: Scherzo, 1945

Comments: *Chesterton Series of Graded Music* (No. 12) this piece was categorised as being of Grade V standard. At present no copy (manuscript or published edition) is known to exist.

SPW 28: Prospect, 1948

Comments: Available at DHT; an ink manuscript in very poor condition. There is no reference to the work in correspondence, so it would seem that Howell did not write the piece with the intention of publication. At the top of the manuscript we are told the prospect to which the title refers is that of the 'city of Bath for Prior Park Landscape Garden, Somerset.'

Key Signature: E flat major/D major/C major/D flat major/ G major
Time Signature: 6/8

SPW 29: Sonata in E Minor, 1955

Comments: Although this piece has never been published, it was recorded by pianist James Waller as part of a tribute to the composer on BBC Radio 3 in December 1982, following Howell's death. A well persevered manuscript and several photocopies of this piece can be found at the archives of the DHT. Printed copy at RNC.

Howell had not formally completed the manuscript at the time of the first performance telling an interviewer: 'It is partly in my head and partly in hieroglyphics which nobody could understand. I have been working on it the past few months and finished it only two days ago. I may yet make a last minute change.' ('Just in Time' *The Birmingham Post*, Tuesday 6th December, 1955.)

First Movement:

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Moderato*
Metronome: ♩ = 60

Second Movement:

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Tranquillo non troppo lento*
Metronome: ♩ = 46

Third Movement:

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Allegro con brio*
Metronome: ♩ = 120

Performance History:

First performance:

Tuesday December 6th, 1955. (7pm) *Recital of Works by Dorothy Howell.*

Location: Birmingham School of Music Concert Room

Pianist: Dorothy Howell

May 28th 1998:

Location: Holy Innocents Roman Catholic Church Hall, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

Pianist: Michael Jones

(2004) Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music, pianist: Sophia Rahman (Dutton Digital: Epoch British Music, B0006840MA)

SPW 30: Alla Mazur, 1960

Comments: This miniature piece for piano was published in 1960 by Josef Weinberger Ltd. A printed copies at BL, DHT and BCL. In the file for this piece at the DHT there also exists correspondence (October 20th 1960) with a young pianist, Rosemary Phillips, aged ten, whom Howell sent a signed copy.

Key Signature: D major/ E major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegro/ Con grazia*

SPW 31: Tim Went A-walking, 1960

Comments: Published by Josef Weinberger alongside *Alla Mazur* and Keyboard Work for Harmony Students. Copy at BL.

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: Andante

SPW 32: Off to the Tourney, 1962

Comments: Published, along with the Knight Forlorn, as No. 54 of Banks and Son's *Instructive and Tuneful Pieces for The Pianoforte Series*. The manuscripts of both pieces were sold to the publishers, according to correspondence from the publishers (March 16th, 1962). No copies available.

SPW 33: Knight Forlorn, 1962

Comments: See above. (No. 55 in the *Instructive and Tuneful Pieces for The Pianoforte Series*).

SPW 34: Keyboard Work for Harmony Students, 1962

Comments: Published by Josef Weinberger Ltd this work is a collection of commentaries on keyboard technique alongside musical examples. The work offers the only known insight into Howell's improvisatory technique: '[The] economy of material is preferable to fussiness and overloading – What is being improvised here and now need only be simple and adequate. Polish and perfection of detail can be dealt with in your written work.' (p. 10) Copies at BL, DHT and RAM.

Chapters:

- i. The feel of the Keyboard
- ii. Towards Improvisation
- iii. Melodies to be harmonised

SPW 35: Soliloquy, c. 1970

Comments: See Lost Works.

SPW 36: Wedding March, c. 1972

Comments: Composed for the marriage of George Sampson (Howell's nephew) to Penny Constable at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Cirencester. A six page manuscript copy exists in the private hands of the Sampson family in Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

SPW 37: Zapateado: A Piece for Left Hand, 1980

Comments: Howell composed this piece for a fellow resident at Perrin's Retirement Home, Malvern, who had lost the ability to use their right hand and still wanted to play on the piano. The piece was published posthumously by the Society for Disabled Music Performance in 1983. The piece was performed at the chapel of Davenham Retirement Home, Cheshire, on Tuesday 8th September, 1981. Copy: DHT

SPW 38: Frivolous Air on a Ground Bass, 1980

Comments: Along with the Celtic Fugue in memory of J.B. McEwen. The incomplete manuscript is dated July 1980. It is a short 17 bar piece based on a simple five note pentatonic theme. A handwritten manuscript is kept at the DHT archive; the work was never published.

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 6/8

SPW 39: Prelude and Fugue in memory of J.B. McEwen, 1980

Comments: Also dubbed a 'Celtic Prelude and Fugue' by the composer it was to be her final work composed simultaneously alongside *Frivolous Air on a Ground Bass* – written whilst she was at Perrins House. Today it exists only in an incomplete manuscript form on a scrap of paper at the DHT (although a digital copy has now been made). It was among Howell's personal papers found after her death in 1982.

Key Signature: D major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegro*

Works for Two Pianos (WTP)

WTP 1: Spindrift, 1920

Comments: Two part version published by the Anglo French Music Company. Printed edition and two page manuscript available at DHT and RAM.

Key Signature: A minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Allegro Vivace*
Catalogue No: AFM Co. 115

WTP 2: Recuerdos Preciosos, 1934

Comments: Two copies of each *Recuerdos Preciosos* (published by Murdoch, Murdoch & Co.) exist in the DHT one set is marked DH, the other is marked 'Hilda' for Hilda Bor. Although *Recuerdos Preciosos No. 1* was first performed at the RAM, pianist Eric Brough wrote to Howell asking if a concert of the complete set at Wigmore Hall could be called the first performance on the basis that he and Hilda Bor would be playing the piece in public for the first time (Letter to Dorothy Howell, 7th April 1934) A signed postcard of the façade of Barcelona Cathedral testifies to the source of the first *Recuerdos Preciosos* (precious memory), but, at the time writing, it is unclear as to what the second *memory* refers to specifically. Copies at BL and BCL.

'This young lady is one of the few women composers who deserve to be taken seriously. Her symphonic poem *Lamia*... was praised by E. Newman, and that means something. The gift of modal tonality accompanies a bell-like theme in the first of these pieces, but it is not overdone; the key colour is well handled and blends nicely and the melody lines are firm.' (March, 1935 – The Music Teacher)

'Hilda Bor and Mr. Eric Brough introduced... a novelty for the occasion in some attractive pieces by Miss Dorothy Howell.' (Evening Standard, 16th May 1934)

Recuerdos Preciosos, No. 1

Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 3/8
Tempo: *Larghetto*
Metronome (marking inscribed in the score by Howell) ♪ = 108
Catalogue No: M. M. & Co. 628

Recuerdos Preciosos, No. 2

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 5/4: 3/4
Tempo: *Allegro*
Catalogue No: M. M. & Co. 629

Performance History:

First performance (Recuerdos Preciosos, No. 1 only)

Sunday 3rd December, 1933.

Location: Royal Academy of Music: Duke's Hall, London.

Piano 1: Ruth Harte

Piano 2: Vivian Langrish

First 'Public Performance':

Tuesday, May 15th 1934. 8.30pm. *Recital of Music for Two Pianofortes.*

Location: Wigmore Hall, London.

Piano 1: Hilda Bor

Piano 2: Eric Brough

Tuesday, March 19th, 1935. *Programme of Two-Piano Recital.*

Location: Royal Academy of Music: Duke's Hall, London.

Piano 1: Ruth Harte

Piano 2: Vivian Langrish

Tuesday, April 15th, 2003. St. Sepulchre without Newgate, London. *Ballads for a Living Planet.* (Recuerdos Preciosos No.1 only)

Piano 1: Fleur Elliot

Piano 2: Michael Jones

WTP 3: Mazurka, 1937

Comments: Written for two pianos, this work was published as part of The Anglo-French Series of Easier Two-Piano Pieces by Oxford University Press. Copies of the published edition are available at BL, DHT, LCM, RAM and UCT.

The series was prefaced with the following comments:

'Two-piano playing has in the last years become widely practised, and with the crowning example of Ethel and Rae Robertson before many players, of varying abilities, have been encouraged to take up this most enjoyable of musical pursuits. The need for a junior series of pieces has therefore been felt, suitable for use in schools and by amateurs whose technique is at present not sufficiently advanced to enable them to tackle the existing concert repertoire.'

The series included original works by Howell, Thomas F. Dunhill (*Two Pastorals*) and Waddington Cooke (*Cap and Bells*, *Slow March* and *Playtime*) in addition to works by J.S. Bach.

Key Signature: C major/ G major/ A flat major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *Allegro*

Metronome: ♩ = 132

Vocal Solo Works (VSW)

VSW 1: Foxglove, c. 1915

Comments: See Lost Works.

VSW 2: Two Frogs, 1921

Comments: This work was published in two editions: as a single for voice and piano accompaniment, and as part of Boosey & Co.'s *Songs for Schools* series, (No. 30), for unaccompanied unison voices. The work is based on a poem by Mary Viola Howell. A collection of Mary Viola's poetry kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust, also includes a sequel to this poem *Two More Frogs* a comic escapade of two Japanese frogs, however, this was never set to music. A manuscript of a version for orchestra is at DHT. Piano and vocal copies available at BL, RAM, and RNC.

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Giocoso*
Catalogue No: (Accompanied) H. 10331
Catalogue No 2: (Unaccompanied) H. 10717

Orchestral Version:

Strings: 4,3,2,2,1
Wind: 1,1,2,0
Brass: 2,2,2,
Piano or Harp
Percussion: 1 player

VSW 3: The Fairy Queen Went Sailing By, 1922

Comments: The first in a set of five individual songs published as part of the *Anglo-French Unison and Part Songs Series*. For this set Howell collaborated with the poet Rose Fyleman (1887 – 1952) a popular poet who also collaborated with Liza Lehmann. This work is written for two voices and piano accompaniment. Other composers in the series included J.B. McEwen (*At Evensong* and *The Mermaid* – Nos. 104 -105) and Dorothy Hogben (*The Fairy Glen* – No. 1006). A handwritten copy of the poem in Fyleman's hand exists alongside a copy of the published score and ink manuscript at DHT. Published copy at BL.

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Allegretto grazioso*
Catalogue No: A.F.M. Co. 1001

VSW 4: The Bears, c. 1922

Comments: Two voices (unspecified) and piano accompaniment. A copy of the published edition can be found at the BL and DHT (alongside a handwritten copy of the poem in Fyleman's hand).

Key Signature: E minor
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Vivace*
Catalogue No: A.F.M. Co. 1002

VSW 5: The Little Round House, 1922

Comments: Two voices (unspecified) and piano accompaniment. Copies: ink manuscript and published copy at DHT. Other copies: BL and RAM.

Key Signature: E major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Allegro*
Catalogue No: A.F.M. Co. 1003

VSW 6: Dance Song, 1922

Comments: Two voices (unspecified) and piano accompaniment. Copies: ink manuscript (DHT), published edition (BL, DHT, RAM, and UML).

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 2/2
Tempo: *None marked*
Catalogue No: A.F.M. Co. 1004

VSW 7: Dream Land, 1922

Comments: Two voices (unspecified) and piano accompaniment. A copy of the poem in Fyleman's hand kept at DHT. Printed copies: BL and DHT.

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Con moto*
Catalogue No: A.F.M. Co. 1005

VSW 8: Tortoiseshell Cat, 1922

Comments: Based on a poem by Patrick Chalmers, this whimsical piece is one of Howell's best known vocal works. It was published in 1922 by J.B. Cramner as a single and included in the 1994 CD anthology *The English Tenor Repertoire* sung by Gordon Pullin. In the sleeve notes to the anthology, Pullin recalls first hearing the piece when performed on BBC radio by British tenor Wilfred Brown. Copies: BL and DHT.

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Con moto, semplice*
Catalogue No: J.B.C. & Co. 12825

Recording:

The English Tenor Repertoire Volume 1 (Tenor: Gordon Pullin, Piano: Roger Fisher)

VSW 9: If You Meet a Fairy, 1922

Comments: Published by Curwen, this setting of a Rose Fyleman poem (first published in Punch magazine) was written for solo voice and piano accompaniment. Copies of the published edition are available a BL and DHT.

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Allegro non tanto*
Catalogue No: Curwen Edition 71579

Performance history:

Monday, December 2nd, 1929. 3pm. *Women's Musical Club of Winnipeg: Rose Fyleman in her own poetry readings.*

Location: The Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Vocalist: Winona Lightcap

Pianist: Mrs. J.B. Coyne

VSW 10: The Secret, 1923

Comments: Published as part of *Boosey's Choral Miscellany* (No. 89), this work for male voice choir (T.T.B.B) is a setting of a poem by Irish writer Dora Sigerson Shorter (1866 – 1918). Only known copy at DHT.

Key Signature: F major/ D minor
Time Signature: 3/4 & 4/4
Tempo: *Moderato ma con spirito*

Catalogue No: H. 10908

VSW 11: Little Prince, 1923 (Handwritten Fyleman)

Comments: Published as part of *Cramer & Co.'s Concert Success series*. No copy of the score exists at DHT, but a copy of the poem in the hand of Fyleman is among Howell's papers. Copies available at BL and RAM.

Key Signature: A major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Allegretto* (In a stately manner)

Catalogue: JB Cramer etc (J.B.C & Co 12873)

Performance history:

Monday, December 2nd, 1929. 3pm. *Women's Musical Club of Winnipeg: Rose Fyleman in her own poetry readings.*

Location: The Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Vocalist: Winona Lightcap

Pianist: Mrs. J.B. Coyne

VSW 12: Little Princess, 1923

Comments: Unison song published as part of *Cramer & Co.'s Concert Success series*. Copies are available at BL and RAM.

Press Comment: 'We have only one complaint to make against Dorothy Howell's "The Little Princess": (unison song): it is too short. The composer has never been a writer for the many. She is a rare and retiring nature. We believe "The Little Princess" will make friends anywhere and in any company.' (*Musical Opinion*, September 1927)

Key Signature: D major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Moderato*

Catalogue No: J.B.C & Co 12874

Performance history:

Monday, December 2nd, 1929. 3pm. *Women's Musical Club of Winnipeg: Rose Fyleman in her own poetry readings.*

Location: The Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
Vocalist: Winona Lightcap
Pianist: Mrs. J.B. Coyne

VSW 13: Pot-pourri, 1923

Comments: A setting of a poem by Alfred Hayes for solo voice and piano accompaniment, this song was performed several times by the soprano Phyllis Lett. A poor, but complete, published edition available at DHT. Good copy at BL.

Key Signature: A flat major/ E major
Time Signature: 2/2
Tempo: *Andante*
Catalogue No: H. 11033

Performance history:

Tuesday, December 14th, 1920. *Haywards Heath Musical Society, Grand Evening Concert*

Location: Public Hall, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
Soprano: Phyllis Lett
Pianist: Roger Ackroyd

VSW 14: My White Lady, 1924

Comments: Published by J.B. Cramer in January 1924 as a single song, this work for solo voice and piano accompaniment is a setting of a poem by Mary Viola Howell. The lyrics are untypically romantic in nature in comparison with Mary Viola's other poems, for example:

'White is the blossom of the cherry tree
All radiant in the dawn;
And white the petals of the narcissi
And the pale hawthorn.'

An advertisement on the back of the printed edition publicises *Cramer's Dorothy Howell Song Series* a series of four songs: *Little Prince*, *Little Princess*, *Tortoiseshell Cat* and *My White Lady*. However, the catalogue numbers given suggest that the 'series' was in fact the original editions remarketed rather than a newly published compilation.

Copy at BL.

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Andante con moto*
Catalogue No: J.B.C. & Co. 12998

VSW 15: It's Best to Be a Brownie, 1924

Comments: A song for solo voice and piano accompaniment based on a poem (written for Punch magazine) by Rose Fyleman. A pristine copy of the published edition available at DHT and also BL.

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 2/4 (Chorus: 6/8)
Tempo: *Allegro*
Catalogue No: J.B.C & Co. 13074

VSW 16: Love-In-A-Mist, 1926

Comments: A setting of Rose Fyleman's poem from her larger work *Christmas Eve* for solo voice and piano accompaniment, this song was published as part of Boosey and Co.'s *New and Standard Songs and Ballads* series. Copies: Printed and manuscript (DHT), Printed (BL). Press commentary: 'Quite a dainty morsel is Dorothy Howell's "Love-in-a-Mist," which evinces more than usual freshness and artistry.' *Musical Opinion*, March, 1927

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Andante*
Catalogue No: H. 12083

VSW 17: To Sine in Winter, 1928

Comments: Based on a poem by A.W. Wills for solo voice and piano, published by J. B. Cramer & Co. A copy of the published edition exists in the DHT archives, albeit missing the final page (p6). Complete copy at BL.

Key Signature: E major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Non troppo allegro, ma con bravura*
Catalogue No: J.B.C & Co. 13521

VSW 18: If You Will Come to Corte, 1929

Comments: Part of *The Winthrop Rogers Edition of Choral Music for Festivals* edited by Julius Harrison published by Hawkes and Son. Unaccompanied part song for two sopranos and contralto based on a poem by Rose Fyleman, the published edition also features a piano part for rehearsal purposes. The only known copy of this work is kept at the BL, as part of a miscellaneous collection of part songs for female voices.

Key Signature: G major, E flat major

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Allegro*

Metronome: ♩ = 104

Catalogue No: W.R. 4548

VSW 19: Summer, 1929

Comments: A setting for two voices and piano accompaniment of a poem by Mary Viola Howell, published by Cramer as part of their *Library of Unison and Part Songs* series. Only known copy at RNC.

VSW 20: The Lily-pool, 1929

Comments: Published as part of the *Singing Class Music* series (No. 176) by Edward Arnold & Co., edited by Thomas F. Dunhill. The series also included works by John Ireland (*Mayflowers* – No. 136), Granville Bantock (*The Fairy Kingdom* – No. 144) and Herbert Howells (*A Golden Lullaby* – No. 145). The Lily-Pool is a two part canon setting of a poem by Mary Viola Howell. The published edition is for piano and two treble vocal lines. Only known copy at RAM.

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Moderato e semplice*

Metronome: ♩ = 84

VSW 21: Mrs Barks, 1930

Comments: A setting of a Fyleman poem for unison voice and piano accompaniment, it was published by Edward Arnold & Co in the *Singing Class Music* series. At the time of writing, no copy is known to exist.

VSW 22: Fairy Drapery Store, 1931

Comments: When Thomas F. Dunhill accepted the piece for the *Singing Class Music* series, he noted humorously in a letter to Howell the similarities with one of his own compositions. The two-part song with piano accompaniment was published as 182 in the series. Copy at LCM.

VSW 23: The Muffin Man, 1932

Comments: Published as part of the *Singing Class Music* series (No. 183), this two-part song is a setting of a poem by Mary Viola Howell. The published edition is for piano and two treble vocal lines.

Key Signature: E flat major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Moderato*

VSW 24: Old Mrs Clutterbuck, 1932

Comments: Published as No. 392 in the *Singing Class Music* series. The piece is a unison song with piano accompaniment based on a poem by Mary Viola Howell.

Key Signature: A flat major

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Allegro*

Metronome: ♩ = 100

VSW 25: Bird Song, 1933

Comments: A unison song with piano accompaniment, this work was published as part of the *Singing Class Music* series. Catalogue number unknown. However, no copy is known to exist either in DHT or BL.

VSW 26: Fifty Songs for Schools, 1933

Comments: This collection for the Associated Board of Music began with a working title of Book of Folk Songs; on March 23rd, 1933, Nalder Williams asked H.W. Richards and Howell to select and arrange a number of English, German and French songs for piano. The fifty songs were divided into four categories, Howell contributed to all categories and was the sole composer for the final three: National Songs, Nursery Songs, French Folk Songs and German Folk Songs.

Two versions were published: one for unison voice the 'Pupil's Edition' and the other with piano accompaniment. A copy of the published edition can be found at BL and SUL, whilst handwritten copies of Howell's arrangements are kept in a manuscript book at the DHT archives.

Catalogue No.
Piano Accompaniment A B 509
(Pupil's Edition) A B 510

i. *London Bridge is Broken Down*

Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 6/8

ii. *Lavender's Blue*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 3/8

iii. *I saw three ships come sailing by*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/8

iv. *Dance to your Daddy*

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 3/4

v. *We be Three Poor Mariners*

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance making: *Moderate pace*

vi. *Hot-Cross Buns*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 2/4

vii. *Bobby Shaftoe*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 2/4
Performance marking: *Quick and light*

viii. *The Bay of Biscay*

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 2/4
Performance marking: *With spirit*

ix. *The Roast Beef of Old England*

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 6/8
Performance marking: *Deliberately*

x. *Avenging and Bright (Cruachen na feine)*

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 3/4
Performance marking: *Quick and fierce*

xi. *The Leather Bottel*

Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 6/8
Performance marking: *Briskly*

xii. *To the Maypole haste away*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance marking: *Boldly and rather quick*

xiii. *Now is the month of Maying*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance marking: *Quickly and happily*
(A second arrangement exists in the key of A flat major)

xiv. *Hark! The summons*

Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance marking: *Brightly*

xv. *By the Banks of Allan Water*

Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance marking: *With expression*

xvi. *Le Chevalier du Guet*

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 6/8
Performance marking: *Not too fast*

xvii. *La Mist' en l' Aire*

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 2/4
Performance marking: *At a moderate pace*

xviii. *Ah mon beau Chateau*

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 2/4
Performance marking: *Brisk*

xix. *Remember Thee (Castle Tirowen)*

Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 3/4
Performance marking: *Flowing*

xx. *Under the Greenwood Tree*

Key Signature: A flat major
Time Signature: 6/8
Performance marking: *Brisk*

xxi. *At the Mid Hour of the Night*

Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 3/4
Performance marking: *Moderately Slow*

xxii. The Minstrel Boy

Key Signature: E major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance marking: *Warlike*

xxiii. Es regent auf der Brucke

Key Signature: 2/4
Time Signature: A major
Performance marking: *Gaily*

xxiv. Es Ritten drei Reiter (not included in final published edition)

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/8

xxv. Sur le Pont d' Avignon (not included in final published edition)

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 2/4

xxvi. La Boulangere

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 2/4
Performance marking: *Brightly*

xxvii. Ich hatt' einen Kameraden

Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 4/4
Performance marking: *At a moderate pace*

xxviii. Drei Reiter am Tor

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 6/8
Performance marking: *Boldly*

xxix. Rathasel (not included in published edition)

Key Signature: A major

Time Signature: 2/4

xxx. Eia Poppeai

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 3/4

Performance marking: *Moderately fast*

xxxi. Alle Vogel sind schon da

Key Signature: E flat major

Time Signature: 4/4

Performance marking: *Moderato*

xxxii. Il etait une Bergere (not included in published edition)

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 6/8

xxxiii. J'ai du bon Tabac

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 4/4

Performance marking: *Brightly*

xxxiv. The Land o' the Leal

Key Signature: B flat major

Time Signature: 2/4

Performance marking: *Moderately slow*

VSW 27: Spring, 1934

Comments: A setting for two voices and piano accompaniment of a poem by Thomas Carew, published as part of Leonard, Gould and Bolttler's *Library of Unison and Part Songs for Schools* (no. 21) No copy is known to exist.

VSW 28: Top of the Hill, 1934

Comments: No. 194 of the *Singing Class Music* series. The opening of the poem, by Mary Viola Howell, are uncharacteristically bleak:

‘Skies are grey and gulls are crying,

Fields are brown, the world is dying, up on the top of the hill’

In Howell’s musical setting the piano accompaniment is chordal and simple, before introducing the major key theme followed by the lyrics:

‘Up on the hill the wind is gay,

Birds are singing a roundelay.’

The only known edition of this work is available at the RAM.

Key Signature: E minor/E major

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Andante con moto*,

Metronome: ♩ = 76

VSW 29: Wouldn’t It Be Funny, 1936

Comments: A setting of a poem by Mary Viola Howell for unison voice and piano accompaniment. Published as No. 443 in the *Singing Class Music* series. No known copies.

VSW 30: Reflections, 1938

Comments: Published as No. 630 in the *Singing Class Music* series. The piece is written for two treble voices with piano accompaniment based on a poem by Mary Viola Howell. The text is typically whimsical in nature despite the seemingly pensive title:

‘When I brush my hair I wonder and wonder if I am really there.’ A copy of the manuscript (4 pages) and published edition available at DHT.

Key Signature: E major/ G major/ A flat major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Allegro comodo*

VSW 31: Song of the Jellicles, 1953

Description: Based on T.S. Eliot's poem of the same name from the *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1938). It has a simple two-part treble vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The song was published as part of the *Singing Class Music* (No. 669), which by the 1950s was edited by Herbert Howells following the death Thomas F. Dunhill in 1946. Copy at DHT.

Key Signature: E flat major/G major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Allegro*
Metronome: ♩ = 104

VSW 32: Weather-cocks, 1955

Comments: Published as part of Cramer's *Library of Unison and Part Songs*, (No. 259), edited by Martin Shaw, this song is a setting of a poem by Alfred Noyes for unison voices and piano accompaniment. Copies of the published edition are available at the DHT archive and BL.

Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Briskly*
Catalogue No: Cramer & Co. 15965

Chamber & Instrumental Works (CIW)

CIW 1: *Rosalind*, 1920

Description: One of Dorothy Howell's most widely performed works, *Rosalind* was published by the Anglo French Music Company in 1920. A recording of the piece was included in the Dutton Digital/Vocalion label in a collection entitled Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music with Lorraine McAlsan on violin and Sophia Rahman on piano. Printed copies of the work can be found at the DHT and the BML.

Key Signature: A major/ F major

Time Signature: 2/2

Tempo: Allegro

Metronome: ♩ = 80

Catalogue No: AFM Co. 143

List of known performances:

May 29th 1998; Holy Innocents Catholic Church Hall, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.
(Violin: Andrew Hughes, Piano: Michael Jones)

November 21st 1999; Bewdley High School, Worcestershire.

(Violin: Andrew Hughes, Piano: Michael Jones)

September 27th February 2000; Wyvern Trust Concert, Malvern Hills College, Worcestershire.

(Violin: Rachel Greenwood, Piano: Joan Taylor)

(2004) Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music, violinist: Lorraine McAlsan, pianist: Sophia Rahman (Dutton Digital: Epoch British Music, B0006840MA)

CIW 2: *Dance for String Quartet*, 1922

Comments: Written original as part of the incidental music to Rose Fyleman's play Christmas Eve, this work published separately by the OUP in 1927 as part of their Chamber Music in the Oxford Edition series. Draft papers are kept at the DHT. Printed copy available at CUL.

Key Signature: G major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Allegro*

CIW 3: *Minuet for String Quartett* [sic], 1923

Comments: Published as part of Cramer's Library of String Music, edited by Geoffrey Shaw, a facsimile edition of the full published score and parts available at DHT. Other copies: EML, GHL, and LCM.

Key Signature: D major

Time Signature: 3/4

Tempo: *None marked*

CIW 4: The Moorings, 1925

Description: Originally written for viola and piano in 1924, *The Moorings* was published the following year by Augner in a revised violin and piano edition. Manuscript editions of both versions exist in the DHT. The cello version was almost certainly played by Howell's cellist friend Alison Dalrymple as the cello manuscript bears her name, however, at the time of writing, I have not been able to locate reference of any performance made by her. Other copies: BL and RNC

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 9/8

Tempo: Andante

Metronome: ♩ = 50

Catalogue No: 16320 R

Performance and Recording History:

(2004) Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music, violinist: Lorraine McAlsan, pianist: Sophia Rahman (Dutton Digital: Epoch British Music, B0006840MA)

CIW 5: Phantasy for Violin and Piano, 1925

Description: Commissioned by the music collector W. W. Cobbett in 1924 for the sum of £10, the work was published in the collection *Cobbett's Encyclopaedia of Chamber Music* (1925). It was described in the aforementioned publication as 'Delightfully flowery and melodious – such works in the concert life a change from the eternal sameness of modern programmes.' A contemporary trade journal provided the following summary: 'Phantasy for Violin and Piano [has] a strong and effective opening by the violin [which] leads us to expect much, and we are not disappointed. Although named a phantasy the work is logically developed and well balanced. It is interesting for both instruments and abounds in passages of beauty; modern in feelings but spontaneous and sincere.' (*Musical News and Herald*, January 30th 1926). A performance at the RAM in 1926 received a somewhat patronising response from the college correspondent at the *Musical Times*: 'It was pleasantly played, but is too long. Young composers, and for that matter those of mature years, should ever keep before them the idea that 'Brevity is the soul of wit.'" (*The Musical Times*, August 1st, 1926).

Augner edition available at BCL, DHT, EML, LCM, and RNC.

Catalogue Number: 16329 R

Key Signature: G minor/ D major/ E major
Time Signature: 3/4, 12/8, 6/8, 9/8
Tempo: *Allegro energico quasi recitativo* and *Andante Cantabile*

Performance and Recording History:

Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music, violinist: Lorraine McAlsan, pianist: Sophia Rahman
(Dutton Digital: Epoch British Music, B0006840MA)

Tuesday, May 12th, 1925 (London Contemporary Music Centre, 6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury)

Piano: Kathleen Long
Violin: Katie Gold Smyth

Note: This concert also contained the first performance of William Walton's *Toccata for Viola and Piano*.

Thursday, June 26th, 1926. Royal Academy of Music Students' Concert.

Performers: Unknown

Friday, January 30th, 1987. (BBC Radio 3)

Violin: Desmond Simmons
Piano: Keith Swallows

CIW 6: Miniature Quartet for Cellos, 1929

Comments: This piece was written for the London Violoncello School, Nottingham Place, and dedicated to the cellist Alison Dalrymple. Thomas F. Dunhill and Pablo Casals also contributed pieces for the school in the early 1930s. The work is a set of five variations on the French nursery rhyme *J'ai du bon Tabac*. The final variation is a fugue on the original theme. A very well preserved handwritten score (14 pages) and individual parts can be found at the Dorothy Howell Trust – the piece was never published. The work has been referred to in several ways – Miniature Quartet for Cellos, Variations for four cellos on the air *J' ai du bon Tabac*, and (by *The Observer* in March 1930) as *The Babes' Quartet*.

The *Sunday Times* noted that Howell was among 'various prominent musicians [who have] come forward... to repair the shortage of a works combinations of this kind [cello quartet].' (Fifty Cellos in a Concert, *Sunday Times*, March 30th, 1930). The first performance was at a concert of massed cellos at Wigmore Hall; the concert attracted considerable press attention for what can only be described as novelty: 'It was amusing to watch four diminutive 'cellists, hardly bigger than their instruments, as they gave a sprightly performance of Miss Dorothy Howell's Miniature Quartet.' (London Cello School, *Morning Post*, March 31st, 1930) 'An agreeable novelty was a Miniature Quartet written for the occasion by Dorothy Howell,

performed by four very small 'cellists.' (*Era*, April 2nd, 1930). 'A phalanx of 50 'cellos at one concert looks alarming says a music critic' (Fifty Cellos, *Yorkshire Observer*, March 31st 1930.) Interestingly, Eleanor Warren (whom the composer would later write the Purbeck Pieces, and go on to be awarded the school's Premier Prize in 1934), was lead cellist at a school's concert in October, 1931. *The Strand* reviewed her playing favourably '[Her playing] entailed some very advanced playing in position work... she and her colleagues showed themselves to be quite *au fait* in all parts and to be wholly undismayed by difficulties.' *The Strand*, December, 1931.

- i.
Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Allegro Comodo*
- ii.
Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Moderato Grazioso*
- iii.
Key Signature: E minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Adagio*
- iv.
Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Allegro*
- v.
Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Moderato*

Performance History:

Saturday, March 29th, 1930. 3.15pm. Wigmore Hall, London. London Violoncello School Annual Concert.

Lead Cello: Sarah Nelson

Sunday February 22, 1931. 8.30pm. Paris Conservatoire, Grande Salle Gaveau, Paris.
Audition des Eleves de la Classe de Violoncelle de Paul Bazelaire.

Quartet:

Reine Bessis
Germaine Compostino
Denise Morand
Francoise Peynaud

Saturday, October 24th, 1931. (Afternoon). London Violincello School, 10 Nottingham Place. Private Concert.
Lead Cello: Eleanor Warren

CIW 7: Andante and Allegro, 1930.

Comments: The Times reviewed the piece thus ‘[A] novelty in the programme was an “Andante and Allegro” by Miss Howell, two pleasing movements if not of any special character or individuality.’ (The Times, November 24th, 1931) At the time of writing, I have been unable to locate a copy of the work either in the DHT archives or elsewhere. The piece was not published.

List of performances:

Saturday November 22nd, 1930. *A Concert of British Music*, Duke’s Hall, London.

Pianist: Dorothy Howell.
Violinist: Elsie Owen.

CIW 8: Plaintive Waltz, 1932

Comments: A simple pedagogical work, available in printed form at the archives of the RAM. Written for the ABRSM and included in the 1988 grade 2 syllabus for violin.

A minor, 3/4, Tempo di Valse (p. 17 only) (Book II: Grades 2 & 3)

CIW 9: String Quartet in D Minor, 1933

Comments: See Lost Works.

CIW 10: Three Short Pieces for Violin, 1936

Comments: Howell submitted these works to the Associated Board of Music in December 1935. The pieces were ‘approved [for] possible inclusion in future examination lists.’ (Letter to Dorothy Howell, January 2nd, 1936) on the condition ‘you lengthen the last named piece [An Important Person] which the Committee would like to use for Grade II, 1937.’ Howell agreed and the work was published later in the year. At the time of writing, I have been unable to locate any copies of the works and the only reference to them is in the form of correspondence between Howell at the Associated Board.

- i. Tortoise and Hare
- ii. A Snow Day
- iii. An Important Person

An Important Person, copyright 1936 by the ABRSM (AB 1773)
Alla Marcia, D major, 4/4 (2 pages (20 -21))

CIW 11: Purbeck Pieces, 1936

Comments: Dedicated to cellist Eleanor Warren (1919 – 2005), this collection of two pieces, written for cello and piano, were composed during the composer's trip to Corfe, Wareham, Dorset, from December 1935 – January 1936. The title relates to the Purbeck Downs which Howell visited during the trip.

i. **At Dusk** (1935)

Key Signature: E flat major
Time Signature: 2/2
Tempo: *Non troppo lento*
Metronome: ♩ = 66

ii. **The Wag** (Humoresque) 1936

(Howell's suggested time of performance: 3 minutes)

Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 2/8
Tempo: *Allegro Giocoso*
Metronome: ♩ = 66

Performance History:

First Performance: February 6th, 1936. 8.30pm. Wigmore Hall, London.
(*At Dusk* only)

Cello: Eleanor Warren
Pianist: Ernest Lush

Tuesday, October 5th, 1937. 9pm. American Women's Club. 46 Grosvenor Street, London.

Cello: Eleanor Warren
Pianist: Ernest Lush

CIW 12: Air, Variations and Finale, 1949

Comments: Published by Emerson Edition in 2009 based on a 'rough' manuscript (kept at the Dorothy Howell Trust archives), the piece is an extensive set of variations on an original theme for oboe, violin and piano.

Copies available at BL, BLO, DHT and RAM.
Howell's suggested performance time: c. 10 minutes

i. Air

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Moderato Semplice*
Metronome: ♩ = 116

ii. Variation I

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Poco piu mosso*
Metronome: ♩ = 144

iii. Variation II

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Scherzando*
Metronome: ♩ = 144

iv. Variation III

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Poco Andante*
Metronome: ♩ = 116

v. Variation IV

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 2/4
Tempo: *Allegro*
Metronome: ♩ = 160

vi. Variation V

Key Signature: D minor
Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Andante Grazioso*

Metronome: ♩ = 126

vii. Finale

Key Signature: D minor/ D flat major/ A flat major/ A major/ D major

Time Signature: 2/4

Tempo: *Adagio – poco ad lib/ Allegro Vivace*

Metronome: ♩ = 100

Catalogue Number: E620

Performance History:

November 27th, 1949. Nell Gwynn Sunday Music Club, Nell Gwynn House, Sloane Avenue, Chelsea.

Oboe: Leon Goossens

Violin: May Harrison

Piano: Ella Ivimey

Wednesday June 27th, 2007. 7.30pm. Wigmore Hall, London. *English Allsorts: celebrating the centenary of Elizabeth Maconchy's Birth.*

Oboe: Jeremy Polmear

Violin: Daniel Rowland

Piano: Diana Ambache

(Notes: this concert was dubbed, somewhat strangely, the 'modern premiere' of the work.)

CIW 13: Adagio and Caprice, 1955

Description: This work was written for viola and piano; it was never published and exists in an original manuscript edition at the Dorothy Howell Trust archive.

- i. Adagio
Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 3/4
- ii. Caprice
Key Signature: A major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: Molto Allegro

CIW 14: Two Pieces for Violin and Piano, 1956

Comments: The only known copy exists in the BL, but was unavailable for viewing during a visit in October, 2014.

- i. Greetings
- ii. Espagnole

Undated works

CIW 15: Sonata in F Minor for Violin and Piano, c. 1930s

Comments: The piece exists in a well preserved handwritten draft (35 pages), an incomplete draft (30 pages) omitting the third movement and also a 1954 published edition by Augner & Co. dedicated to the late Elsie Owen. Howell performed the work at the Royal Birmingham School of Art Gallery, Birmingham, in May 1947 with the violinist Ruth Fourmy. The work was favourably reviewed: 'It is wholly conservative in idiom; but, unlike the vast majority of those romantic sonatas still profusely produced by minor composers, there is nothing effect, facile, sticky or diffuse about it. Its material is freshly attractive, it wastes no time in artificial note spinning and it is most beautifully written for both instruments. It certainly sufficed to raise wonder as to why so little of Miss Howell's extended composition has been accessible, either to the ear at concerts or to the eye in print, during the thirty years since Lamia. Just possibly there may lurk, somewhere in history, a warning to critics as to the possible unfairness of extravagantly acclaiming a composers early work.' (A Birmingham Composer: Recital by Dorothy Howell. JFW. May 1949.)

Copies: DHT and RNC.

(Composer's recommended performance time in the manuscript: under 18 minutes)

Catalogue Number: 18318 R

- i. Key Signature: A flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Alegretto Semplice*
Metronome: ♩ = 184
Recommended performance time: six minutes
- ii. Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Andante* - semplice e poco piangendo
Metronome: ♩ = 56
Recommended performance time: six minutes
- iii. Key Signature: F minor/ F sharp minor/ D minor
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Allegro confusco*
Metronome: ♩ = 184
Recommended performance time: five minutes

Performance and Recording History:

May 1947, Royal Birmingham School of Art

Piano: Dorothy Howell

Violin: Ruth Fourmy

Dorothy Howell: Chamber Music, violinist: Lorraine McAlsan, pianist: Sophia Rahman
(Dutton Digital: Epoch British Music, B0006840MA)

CIW 16: The Chelworth Album (c. 1960s/70s)

Comments: A published album of chamber music written for Howell's niece Myfanwy Sampson (1930 – 2014) – the score is in the private hands of the Sampson family, Tetbury, Gloucestershire, which was kindly lent to me for the purposes of this study by Miss Jane Sampson. The piece was written for the private use of the Sampson family (Dorothy's sister Winifred (nee Howell), her husband John and their eight children) when they lived in Chelworth, Wiltshire. Merryn Howell recalls that Myfanwy was a talented cellist and recorder player; her brothers were talented singers and her mother a violinist and viola player. It is a collection of arrangements of compositions by Howell and other composers for a variety of instruments. The scores are all handwritten and there are also notes, in Howell's hand, on hexachords – presumably for educational the benefit of Myfanwy Sampson, although the arrangement contained within in the album are not in any way atonal.

i. **The Fairy Queen Went Sailing By** – Howell (Two Voices, Violin and Viola)

Key Signature: D minor

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Allegretto grazioso*

ii. **Gavotte in G major from French Suite, BWV 816**, – J. S. Bach (arr. Howell for violin and viola)

iii. **Suite from Notenbuch for Wolfgang** – Leopold Mozart (arr. Howell for violin and viola)

iv. **Chaconne** – August Durand (arr. Howell for violin and viola)

v. **Fischer's Minuet** (arr. Howell for two recorders, violin and viola)

vi. **Intermezzo** – Howell (Recorders and Strings)

Key Signature: C major

- Time Signature: 3/4
Tempo: *Poco Andante Cantabile*
- vii. **Air Triste** – Howell (Recorders and Strings)
- Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
Tempo: *Andante Espressivo*
- viii. **Tempo di Valse** – Howell (Treble Recorder and Viola)
- Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 3/4
- ix. **Tarantelle** – Howell (Treble Recorder and Viola)
- Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Con spirito*
- x. **Change thy Mind Since She Doth Change: An Ayre to the Lute** – Lyrics: The Rt. Honourable Robert Earle of Essex, Music: Richard Martin. (Arr. Howell for Voices (Soprano and Bass), Violin and Viola.)
- xi. **There's a huge oak standing nigh** (composer unknown)
- Key Signature: E minor
Time Signature: 4/4

CIW 17: For Myfanwy (c. 1960s/70s)

Description: This work is a short piece for viola and piano that is sentimental in tone. The work was composed for Howell's niece, Myfanwy Sampson, who was an amateur. Judging by the use of biro and the quality of the manuscript paper it is likely the piece was written in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The work was never published and exists in manuscript form at the Dorothy Howell Trust archives.

Key Signature: E minor
Time Signature: 6/8
Tempo: *Poco Andante Cantabile*

CIW 18: Short Fugue for String Trio, c. 1960

Comments: This undated and unpublished work exists in handwritten manuscript form at the DHT archives; it is four pages long and written for Violin, Viola and Cello. Given the use of ballpoint pen and the quality of the paper it is likely that it was composed during the 1960s – the score also has the name Bosworth written at the top, at the time of writing, I have not been able to determine the significance of this inclusion.

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 4/4

Tempo: *Moderato*

CIW 19: Work for String Quartet (unpublished, no decade confirmed)

Comments: At present the only known copy of this work in a faint pencil 17 page handwritten draft – the ink copy was lost by a performer. The work is prefaced with ‘In winter when the dismal rain came slanting down in lines, And wind, that grand old harper, smote his thunder harp of pines.’ I have been unable to identify the author of this verse, but have discovered a monochrome photograph of the pine trees that once stood in the ground of St. Mary’s College, Oscott, with the said verse written beneath in Howell’s hand. It is possible the work was written for Rev. Joseph Connelly and therefore written somewhere between his tenure as Dean of Music (1934 – 1956).

Key Signature: F major

Time Signature: 6/8

Tempo: *Adagio*

Stage Works (SW)

(Note on Howell's work for the Grail: with the exception of *This Way Home*, the majority of Howell's compositions for The Grail are problematic in the sense that Howell wasn't given specific credit for her involvement in writing music. The approach of The Grail was summarised thus: 'What the Grail members do, they do together in groups and chorus, in set formation and concerted movement. Each member is thus trained to forget herself, and to express only what all together express.' (Introductory note in the programme notes to *The Royal Road*, 1937) Therefore, I have only credited Howell in works that we know with absolute certainty she wrote.

SW1: Christmas Eve (play by Rose Fyleman), 1922

Comments: One of the most successful of Fyleman's plays, Christmas Eve enjoyed a run at the Old Vic and also Edinburgh. Howell wrote a series of incidental music and the Christmas Eve Dance was later published as Dance for String Quartet by the OUP in 1927. The work was written for full orchestra, chorus and solo voices. No score exists at the time of writing.

- i. Introduction
- ii. Waits Music
- iii. Beauty Parlour Duet
- iv. "I think, don't you"
- v. Darby and Joan
- vi. Teddy and Bunny's Dance
- vii. Song of the Shop Figures

Performance History:

1922. Circus Street Hall, Nottingham.

December 20th, 1926 – January 1st, 1927. The Old Vic, London. (Number of performances: 9)

SW3: Hound of Heaven, 1936

Description: Howell wrote the incidental music to this play based on the poem by Francis Thompson, produced by The Grail and performed over several days at the Royal Albert Hall. *The Catholic Times* (May 22nd, 1936) makes reference to an audience of 'Twenty thousand spectators' over the course of three days. Howell collaborated with Dom Gregory Murray OSB (who directed a plainchant choir) and Zoe Rorke-Cree 'the famous elocutionist (*The Catholic Times*, May 22nd 1936).

The Object:

The object is to present a beautiful thing beautifully, and if possible by Chorus and interpretation to add to its power of appeal. This object is artistic. It is also wholly religious. The Grail entertain the high hope, and add their prayer, that individual souls may pause in

their flight, and turning, surrender themselves freely and in fullness to the Living God. (John G. Vance)

List of performances:

May 16th – 18th, 1936. Royal Albert Hall. The Grail.

SW 4: Sanctity (play by Violet Clifton), 1938

Comments: The work, written by Howell's sister, was performed by the Religious Drama Society and Catholic Stage Guild in December 1938, with a matinee performance in aid of Czech refugees (Sanctity at the Piccadilly Theatre, *The Tablet*, November 26th, 1938). The plot concerns the life of St. Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary.

Performance History:

(Performed by the Sunday Theatre Company)

Sunday, December 4th, 1938. 8.15 pm. Piccadilly Theatre, London.

Monday, December 5th. 2.30pm. Piccadilly Theatre, London.

SW 5: Our Life in Christ – A presentation in symbol and song, 1936

Comments: Howell wrote the following incidental for The Grail. The same music was used again the following year when the same play was performed in Edinburgh under the title of The Royal Road. Ink manuscript (30 pages) at the DHT.

- i. March for Prologue

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 4/4

- ii. Vexilla

Key Signature: B flat major/ A flat major

Time Signature: 4/4

- iii. Scene Change

Key Signature: C major

Time Signature: 4/4

- iv. Presentation II

- Key Signature: E major
Time Signature: 4/4
- v. Veni Sancte
- Key Signature: D major
Time Signature: 4/4
- vi. Presentation III
Key Signature: G major
Time Signature: 4/4
- vii. Misereire
Key Signature: F major
Time Signature: 4/4
- viii. Scene Change
Key Signature: A minor
Time Signature: 4/4
- ix. Verbum Supernum
Key Signature: C major
Time Signature: 4/4
- x. Veni Creator
Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 6/8
- xi. In Paridisum
- Key Signature: D flat major
Time Signature: 4/4
- xii. Alleluia
Key Signature: B flat major
Time Signature: 4/4

First performance:

Sunday October 25th, 1936

Location: City Hall, Glasgow

Performers: The Grail

SW 6: The Royal Road, 1937

Comments: Same as **SW5** renamed for performance in Edinburgh.

Sunday November 28th, 1937.

Location: Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Performers: The Grail

SW7: This Way Home, 1946

Description: Howell wrote the music for this work in collaboration with the writer P. Stewart Craig. The work was produced and published by The Grail – a progressive Catholic group based in Eastcote, Middlesex, which exists to this day.

Lost Works (LW)

Some of Howell's work have been lost over time, the following is a list of works which Howell made reference to during her lifetime. Where pieces have been catalogued elsewhere (for instance *Nocturne for Strings*) I have included the thematic catalogue number.

LW 1 – 9, 1912 – 1914

Comments: The following works were submitted to the RAM in 1914 in preparation for Howell's entrance interview in late January. All works were completed under the guidance of Granville Bantock.

LW 1: *Three Pieces for Violin and Piano*, 1912

- i. *Air Sprite*
- ii. *Water*
- iii. *Earth*

LW 2: *Sketches for Piano*, 1913

LW3: *Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano*, 1913

LW4: *My Soul is awakened*, 1913

LW5: *Study in F*, 1913

LW 6: *Sing, Sing*, 1913

LW 7: *Duet for Two Pianos*, 1913

LW 8: *Suite for Piano*, 1913

- i. *Prelude*
- ii. *Nocturne*
- iii. *Sing o' the Bees*

LW 9: *Soldiers of Spring*, 1914

LW 10 (SPW 6): Rhapsody in E flat major, 1915.

Comments: No score is known to exist for this piece, but we know that Howell performed it on Saturday February 6th, 1915, as part of *Percy Waller's Pupils' Concert* held at the RAM.

LW 11 (VSW 1): Foxglove, c. 1915

Comments: No copy is known to exist of this piece, although the composer made reference to it her diary. Merryn Howell suggests that the piece was an operetta for children.

LW 12: March Gateau, 1918

Comments: Howell's diary entry for February 6th, 1918, makes reference to a piano piece she composed to commemorate the first anniversary of the marriage of RAM colleague Morfydd Owen to the neurologist Ernest Jones (1879 – 1958). Howell performed the work at their home 69 Portland Court, No manuscript is known to exist.

LW 13 (OW 6): Nocturne for String Orchestra, 1926

Comments: No score available

(Howell's recommended time for performance: 4 minutes)

Performance History:

Monday June 14th, 1926. 8.30pm. The New Chenil Galleries, Chelsea, London. *BBC Spring Series of Chamber Concerts*

Orchestra: The Chenil Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: John Barbirolli

Orchestration:

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

LW 14 (CIW 9): String Quartet in D Minor, 1933

Comments: The work was first performed at a private concert for staff and students at the Royal Academy of Music on Thursday, October 19th, 1933. At the time of writing, no copy is known to exist.

LW 15 (SCW 8): Holy, Holy, Holy, 1958

Comments: First premiered at *A Festival of Psalms* organised by The Grail at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday, July 13th, 1958. The piece opened the concert, with a collection of massed choirs singing under the direction of the priest-composer Dom Gregory Murray O.S.B. It is unlikely that the piece was written as a *Sanctus* for a larger Mass setting because it was written prior to the vernacular reforms of the Second Vatican Council. There are no known manuscripts available at the time of writing.

LW 16 (SPW 33): Soliloquy, c. 1970

Comments: Merryn Howell recalls this piano piece being performed by Howell during the 1970s, however, at the time of writing, no score or recording is known to exist for this work.

LW 17: Rondo and Serabande, undated

Comments: Celia Mike's 1990 study makes reference to two pieces dedicated to Peta Abbott kept at DHT. However, the location of these pieces and instrumentation is now unknown.

Catalogue of radio performances made by Dorothy Howell

During the infancy of public radio in the United Kingdom, Dorothy Howell made several recordings of her own piano compositions and works by other composers. She worked with the London based station 2LO (which upon its inception on May 11th, 1922, was the second radio station to broadcast from its studio in Marconi House on a regular basis in the United Kingdom). Although none of these recordings are known to exist, correspondence with the radio company (alongside notes in Howell's personal diary) provides details about the nature of these recordings. In 1927, 2LO was replaced by the London BBC Regional Programme; Howell continued to record piano music for the BBC thereafter. Her final known radio broadcast was in 1953 for the BBC Home Service.

February, 1923 (Station: 2LO)

Dorothy Howell (piano)

Programme:

Chopin:

Valse in E minor

Impromptu in A flat major

Etude in F minor

Bercuese

Ballard in G minor

Debussy: *Deux Arabesque*

Bach: *Italian Concerto*, (BWV 971)

Liszt: *Gnomenreigen*

Hilda Dederich: *Laughing Water*

Leo Livens: *Hobby Horse*

Howell:

Studies for Piano

Humoresque

Christmas Eve Dances

Toccata

January 27th, 1924 (Station: 2LO)

Schumann: *Arabesque*

Chopin: *Scherzo No. 4*

Howell:

Humoresque
Spindrift
Study in F

Lyapunov: *Carillon*

March 16th, 1924. (Station: 2LO)

Liszt: *Gnomenreigen*

Percy Grainger: *A Reel: Four Irish Dances* (Op. 98.)

Howell:

Humoresque
Spindrift
Study in F (by listener request)
Toccata

July 4th, 1924. (2LO)

Poldini: *Elfengeschiesten*

Purcell: *Dance in D*

Brahms: *Ballad in G*

December 11th, 1924. (2 LO)

Chopin; *Berceuse*

Sydney Rosenbloom: *Concert Study in G flat major*

Paderewski: *Caprice*

Rachmaninov: *Prelude in G* (No. 5)

Leo Livens: *Hobby Horse*

Ludwig Thuille: *Sextette in B flat major* (op. 6) [Howell accompanied wind players]

Arensky: *Trio*

April 6th, 1925. (Station: 2LO)

Howell:

Humoresque
Spindrift
Study in F
Toccata

Cecile Chaminade:

Pas des écharpes
Reveille
Valse Brillante No. 3

May 14th, 1925. *Children's Programme* (Station: 2LO)

Leo Livens: *Hobby Horse*
Francis Edward Bache: *Don Mon Enfant*
Matthay: *Elves*
Howell: *A Shopping We Will Go*

June 30th, 1925. *Children's Programme* (Station: 2LO)

Balfour Gardiner:

Gavotte
London Bridge

Alexandre Boely: *Village Dance*
Chopin: *Prelude in B minor*

July 6th, 1925

Howell: *Piano Concerto in D minor*

October 15th 1925. *Children's Programme* (Station: 2LO)

Dederich: *The Land of Nod*
Poldini: *Two Dairy Stories*
Chopin: *E minor Waltz* (Crossed out in Howell's diary – possibly not included)
McEwen: *Les Hirondelles*

October 27th, 1925 (Station: 2 LO)

Scarlatti: *Caprice*
Chopin: *Berceuse*
Pier Domenico Paradies: *Toccata*

January 21st, 1926. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Programme:

Howell: *Puppy Dog's Tales*

Chopin: *Three Ecossaise*

Dederich: *Laughing Waters*

February 18th, 1926. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Programme:

Leo Livens:

Country Dances

Old King Cole

Godowski: *Trepak*

Howell:

Paper Boat

Leapfrog

Spindrift

Chopin: *E minor waltz*

13th May, 1926. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Howell: *Minuet*

Pieces for the Bairns No. 4 (Book 1)

Arne: *Gigue*

Boely: *Danse Villageoise*

27th May, 1926. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Mendelssohn: *The Bee's Wedding*

Unknown:

Sunset Dance

By a Meadow Brook

Dors Mon Enfant

Poldini: *Elf Tide*

Howell: *Spindrift*

September 6th, 1926. (Station: 2LO)

Debussy: *Deux Arabesque*

Howell:

Five Studies

30th September, 1926. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Chopin:

Ecossaise in G major

Ecossaise in D major

Hedwig McEwen: *Grey Skies*

Olive Pull: *Moths*

Rebecca Moore Park:

Dance of the Pelicans

Cranes

Arne: Gavotte

26th January, 1927. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Howell:

A Shopping We Will Go

French Folk Tune (Elle etait un begere)

English Folk Tune (Tom Tinker's My True Love)

Dutch Folk Tune (De Poppergraam)

Dederich:

Hobby Horse

McEwen:

Quand il plut (When it Rains)
Scottish Reel

April 6th, 1927. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

McDowell:

By a Meadow Brook
To a Water Lilly
To a Wild Rose

Dederich:

Poppies White and Red
Seen at the Circus
Boxing Kangaroo
Waltzing Pomes
Tightrope Walkers
The Clumsy Clown
The Monkey's Dinner Party

July 1st, 1927. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

McDowell: *Br'er Rabbit*

Martin Shaw:

Bear's Dance
The Fox's Ride

McDowell:

From Uncle Remus
Essence of Old Virginia
Minstrel Dance

July 20th, 1927. *Children's Programme.* (Station: 2LO)

Hirondelles:

London Bridge

Poldini: *Elves*

Howell: *Variations on a Dutch Folk Tune*
Dederich: *Laughing Waters*

July 6th, 1925 (Station: 2LO)

Women's Programme
Pianist: Dorothy Howell

Smyth: *Concerto for Piano*

Daily Herald (July 6th, 1925)

Radio Music of The Week: Woman Composer's Work from London Station

'Listeners to 2LO will tonight enjoy the programme of women's music, and will perhaps wonder why women have not taken a more prominent position in this art. The biography of Dame Ethel Smyth supplies the answer, for her works were practically unknown until the suffrage movement (in which she took a prominent and militant part) broke down the sex barriers. The concerto will be played by the composer, Miss Dorothy Howell, who is a young but rapidly rising musician.'

Thursday, January 27th 1927 (Station: 2LO)

Programme:

Schumann – *Arabesque*
Chopin – *Scherzo (No. 4)*
Howell – *Humoresque*
Howell – *Spindrift*
Howell – *Study in F major*

1941 (Station: Overseas Music Department)

Howell - *Humoresque*
Howell – *Spindrift*
Howell – *Recuerdos Preciosos* [Movements 1 & 2]

Friday March 27th, 1953 (Station: BBC Midlands Home Service)

Programme:

Unknown – diary entry makes reference to a ‘13 minute programme of Chopin.’

List of recordings for Anglo French Music Company

AFMC 2072 (matrix 7056 – 57) APR 6014 B Mono

Selection of Dorothy Howell's piano repertoire

Howell was a dedicated concert pianist for much of her career. Below is an abridged selection of highlights from her repertoire as it stood in 1940, the list has been edited to include examples of mainstream repertoire (for instance Chopin etudes and nocturnes) and also some more unusual works by contemporaries of Howell (including Hilda Dederich and Tobias Matthay).

Bach, JS:

Forty Eight Preludes and Fugues (Books 1 & 2)
Wachet Auf (arr. Busoni & arr. Myra Hess)
Jesu, Joy of Man's desiring (arr. Myra Hess)
Largo from Piano Concerto (arr. Craxton)

Beethoven:

Piano Concerto in E flat, Op. 73. 'The Emperor' (played on Feb. 9th, 1920 at Stourbridge Town Hall. Conductor: George Halford. Stourbridge Concert Society)

Brahms:

Rhapsody in B minor

Chopin:

Etudes (Op. 10)
Etudes (Op. 25)
Trios nouvelles etudes

Bowen, York:

The Romp
Prelude

Haydn:

Concerto in D
Six Sonatas

Dederich, Hilda:

Laughing Water
Moonlight under a Cedar Tree

Gardiner, Balfour:

Noel
Five Pieces

Grieg:

Piano Concerto in A minor

Lassimonne, Denise:

Berceuse
The Troubador

Lyapunov, Serge:

Studies in Transcendental Execution

Liszt:

Concerto in Eb major
Concert Study in F minor
Concert Study in Db

Matthay, Tobias:

By my fireside
Romanesque

MacKenzie:

Scottish Concerto

McEwen, J.B.:

Sonata in E minor
Vignettes
Three Preludes

Mozart:

Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major

Mendelssohn:

Rondo Capriccioso

Saint Saens:

Concerto in G minor

Schumann, Robert:

Etudes Symphoniques

Palmgren, Selim:

En Route

The Sea

Scherzo in E major

Rachmaninov:

Piano Concerto No. 2

Rosenbloom, Sydney:

Concert Study in Gb major

Scarlatti:

Sonata in C major (No. 2)

Sonata in D major (No. 5)

Sonata in G minor (No. 23)

Scriabin:

Six Preludes (op. 13)

Five Preludes (op. 16)

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Archival Resources

Archdiocese of Birmingham Archives

City of Birmingham Central Reference Library

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Dorothy Howell Trust Archives

Royal Academy of Music Archives

The Tablet Online Archives

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