

CD REVIEW 130

JOHN GARDNER Symphony no 2 in E flat Op 166
JOHN VEALE Symphony no 2 in D minor
Royal Scottish National Orchestra Martin Yates
Dutton CDLX 20794 (67.56)

I had the privilege of knowing both of these composers well and wrote about them (see wrightmusic.net). Not only were they fine composers but exceptionally decent human beings lacking in arrogance, pomp and narcissism. John Veale dedicated his Symphony no 3 to me.

John Veale was a friend for 30 years and we spoke to each other almost every day. In his latter years, and retaining his clear mind, he changed in many ways. He said that he was no longer an atheist but more an agnostic. He was disgusted with the Labour party and Tony Blair's illegal invasion of Iraq and he hated any further association with Labour and left wing politics.

When I revealed his letter in which he stated these facts, I was subject to some abuse from staunch Labour supporters in his own environment. The fact that I was the only person who had a copy of his String Quartet, which John Turner kindly typeset, was the only reason why it was recorded and yet, as far as I am aware, no acknowledgement was given to me or Mr Turner.

Lewis Foreman's sleeve notes of Veale's symphony are another excuse for his despicable lies about William Glock, Controller of Music at the BBC. Foreman insists that Glock did little to promote British composers writing in the tonal idiom in favour of the avant garde. That is sheer nonsense. Glock did not like the avant garde. In fact, he talked of a riot in Italy when a work of Nono was played and how frightening the consequences were. Glock promoted British music in the tonal idiom as set out clearly in my article about him on my aforementioned web site which lists many composers of tonal music Glock promoted.

I call upon Foreman to correct his false statements. Even John Veale seeing the proof admitted that Foreman was wrong!

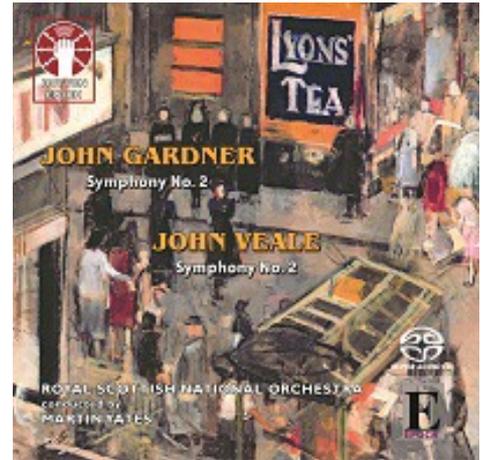
Foreman also brags that he was responsible for the premiere of John's gorgeous Violin Concerto. What he does not say is that my recommendation to the violinist Lydia Mordikovitch, who loved it, and her later contact with John led to her recording of it for Chandos.

Bryden Thomson fought hard to perform John's Symphony no 2, but Glock was overruled by BBC hierarchy.

Foreman's analysis of the Symphony is faulty. He claims it is a sad and tragic work. John would disagree. It is a work of longing and desire, a pursuit of happiness and fulfilment, he wrote to me and the finale indicates the successful quest. The third movement Andante with variations is quite magnificent and the orchestration is superb.

To say that Ruth Gipps orchestras were not professional is not strictly true. They were made up of professional performers. And Ruth was a professional.

John Gardner's Symphony no 2 is absolute music and E flat is only clear in the final chord of the work. It follows on from his successful Symphony no 1 of 1951 and is in a real symphonic structure. It is well written often with lyricism and invigorating energy. It is everything a symphony



should be. I do not have a score and so I cannot add any more comments except to recommend this work.

Martin Yates is to be acknowledged for his excellent work particularly with regard to the symphonies of my friend Richard Arnell. In the Veale there are few moments which appear to be not quite in line with the score , which is before me, but these are trivial points. We are glad to have these two fine symphonies.

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