

John Locke: A Perspective on a Composer's Legacy

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Independent

In the 1930s, the early works of John Locke were performed in London alongside other 'young English composers',¹ gaining him a promising reputation. Most—but not all—of his compositions, however, remain unpublished and have lain neglected for many years. A chance letter to *The Times* in the summer of 2019, referring to the existence of his manuscripts and querying what might become of them, led to unexpected interest and to the production of this article.

Locke was born in Walthamstow in September 1907 into a musical, literary, and Fabian Society-supporting family. After an early boyhood spent in Eastbourne, he moved in 1920 with his parents to Derby. His father, James, had been appointed to a directorship of the music shop, Foulds.² James was an elegant pianist, favouring the music of Chopin, Schumann, and Grieg, and taught his son to play. It was to be the only musical training he would receive. It was an incredibly tight family unit, exemplified by the recent discovery of a collection of weekly four-page family 'newsletters' from the late 1920s, entitled *The Looking Glass*, for which he produced poems and skilfully drafted pencil sketches. Some examples may be found in Figs. 1a-c.



Fig. 1a.

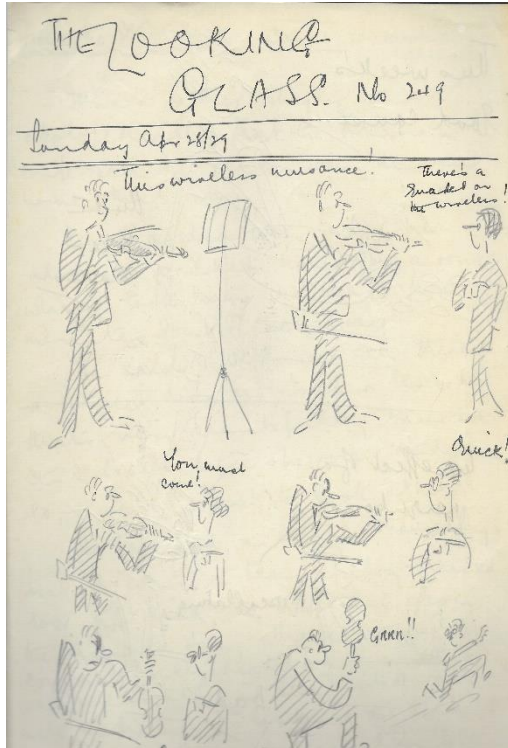


Fig. 1b.

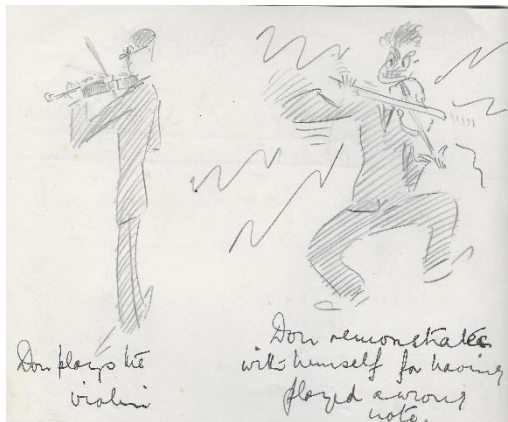


Fig. 1c.

Figs. 1a-c: Sketches by Locke that feature in *The Looking Glass*.

Inexplicably discouraged from undertaking further or higher education—perhaps because it threatened to break up the family—Locke left school to work with Messrs. Doulds & Sons, a textile manufacturer in Derby.³

His extremely bright and somewhat eccentric younger sister, Mary, was awarded a scholarship to Oxford, but sadly she was not allowed to accept it. A consequent attempt to take her own life resulted in the paralysis and subsequent amputation of her right arm. The youngest brother, Donald, also won a scholarship to Oxford; this he accepted, but he died of an ear infection, aged twenty-one, while in his final year. Both these tragedies had a bearing on some of Locke's early works as one resulted in the composition of a number of piano pieces for the left hand; the other in the loss of a talented violinist who appeared alongside him in concerts.

His obituary in the *Derby Evening Telegraph* (published in April 1980)⁴ notes that Locke began, 'according to his own words', composing from the age of eleven, 'with singularly little success'. (However, the first known public reference to him appears in the *Derby Daily Telegraph* of February 1934, reporting that he began composing at fourteen or fifteen.) He began to gain meaningful recognition in the early 1930s, not just through an increasing number of local performances of his works, but also in Cambridge and London, and a couple of radio broadcasts. The first public reference to any of his compositions may be found in a local review—dating from February 1931—of a concert in Derby, which with Wadna Keil⁵ included a performance of a now lost Violin Sonata of 1928. This review records:

It is obvious that in Mr Locke Derby possesses a composer of great promise; one who is well worth close attention and may leave an important mark on British music.

Locke's proficiency as a pianist may be inferred by the complexity of his piano writing. There is a tendency towards fast-moving, contrapuntal textures which will be referred to later in more detail: the frequent use of octaves and thick chords, and more intricate, syncopated melodic lines. He frequently performed his own works in the 1930s and '40s, whether at the Derby Diocesan Training College, The Queen's Hall Assembly Rooms, the Becket Rooms, or the Municipal Art Gallery. The

Derby Daily Telegraph records regular performances, describing him as a 'brilliant pianist'. On occasion he also conducted.

One of Locke's regular fellow musicians in these concerts was the flautist, Joseph Slater, who, as a member of the British Flute School, was influential in helping define a twentieth-century style of flute playing.⁶ Perhaps it was Slater's likely acquaintance with the flautist of the Sylvan Trio, John Francis, which led to the first and most significant public recognition of his talent. (Locke's name also appears several times in programmes and accounts of performances alongside composers such as Elisabeth Lutyens, Eugene Goossens, and Gordon Jacob, as well as the dancer and choreographer Penelope Spencer, who, as will be discussed later, staged a number of ballets with Locke's music. It was Spencer's sister, Sylvia, who performed the two chamber works discussed below. Was there perhaps a Fabian Society link which brought them together?) Two concerts took place in February 1934 and January 1935 at the Mercury Theatre in London—previously The Ballet Club—as part of the Macnaghten-Lemare concert series, focusing on 'new works by young English composers'.⁷

As the *Derby Daily Telegraph* reported,⁸ 'the distinction of having a work included in the programme is much coveted, especially as many prominent critics attend the concerts'. (It was not just the attendance of the critics, whose number included Edwin Evans of the *Daily Mail*, but eminent composers too: Vaughan Williams was in the audience for the first of these concerts.) Locke's unusually scored Quintet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, and Cello (1932) was performed on the first evening, programmed with works of the same instrumentation by Robin Milford, Christian Darnton, and Walter Leigh. 'Four coincidences among six composers' the critic, 'W. McN' used as a headline in his (unidentifiable) review of the evening. Locke must have been accepted as part of their circle. The works were played by the flautist, Albert Fransella, the oboist, Sylvia Spencer (a pupil of Léon Goossens and a member of the Sylvan Trio, of which more shortly), and clarinetist, Alan Frank. The violinist is not recorded specifically in the programme, neither is the pianist—though, Grace Williams and Adolph Hallis were regularly on hand at the Macnaghten concerts and may have performed that evening.

Locke clearly found great satisfaction in the occasion:

He informed the Telegraph today that the Quintet was beautifully performed and that he was well pleased with its reception. The players told him that they found the work very interesting and asked him to let them see any other chamber music he had composed.⁹

Edwin Evans reported that the piece made a 'favourable impression', adding that: He comes from Derby and is said to be self-taught. If so, he may be congratulated on his teacher, for he has plenty of dexterity and some invention.

Other new works performed in the 1934/5 series included those by Benjamin Britten, Elisabeth Lutyens, Gordon Jacob, Phyllis Tate, Alan Rawsthorne, and Elizabeth Maconchy. For this second concert the programme featured another new work by Locke – a Suite for Flute, Oboe, and Piano. The performers were the Sylvan Trio, who worked with him on future occasions, including two broadcasts on London Regional Radio in July of the same year, and the Home Service in September 1940. Locke never forgot approaching Lutyens on that evening to congratulate her on the first concert performance of her Four Songs for Tenor and Piano, to be blanked!

Two other works of this period are frequently encountered in contemporary accounts and are still in print today: *Charivari*¹⁰ (1927) and *The Fantastic Ballet* (1933), both of which were published by J. & W. Chester. The former is a collection of short movements, which, unlike the later work were 'not difficult to play'.¹¹ The published piano version of the Ballet contains a number of positive reviews of *Charivari*, including one by 'Pan' from the *Musical Standard*, who reported, 'these little pieces are highly original and yet both rational in thought and sensitive in feeling', adding, 'we await with interest a longer and more broadly-conceived work from Mr Locke'. The chronology relating to the composition and performance of *The Fantastic Ballet* is complex: published in 1933 as a collection of four pieces for piano—two of them were performed (also in a piano version) in a stage work entitled *Peter's Parade*¹² (as will be described later), though interestingly with different titles. Were they additional movements? Later, the Ballet was orchestrated, receiving its first broadcast in that form on Midland Radio in May 1939, conducted by Eric Warr.¹³ The work was cited as 'an invigorating experiment with modern

dance rhythms', an idiom very much in vogue at the time in the music of Constant Lambert and William Walton,¹⁴ amongst others.

The image shows a musical score for 'The Mysterious Dancers' from 'The Fantastic Ballet' (1933). The score is in 12/8 time, marked 'Allegretto In strict time'. It features a piano accompaniment with a melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'mp' and 'cresc. poco a poco'. The piece is marked 'con Pedale'.

Ex. 1: *The Fantastic Ballet* (1933), I: 'The Mysterious Dancers', bb. 1-7.

There are several contemporary accounts recording Locke's interest in what he himself described as 'modern tendencies in music'. In March 1934 he gave a lecture on the subject at a meeting of the Society of Corresponding Members of the Royal Schools of Music in Derby, describing 'the use of the somewhat unfamiliar twelve-note and whole-tone scales and the introduction of jazzy rhythms in otherwise "straight" music'. Four years earlier, he had teamed up with a local writer, M. G. Kendall, to produce a dramatic work entitled *Theme and Variations*. It was an 'attempt to show how musical and dramatic ideas can be linked together and used to aid each other's shortcomings as methods of expression'. Despite 'more than

usual' interest in the production, it did not seem to be well received. A notice follows below:

The composer has hampered himself from the start by the adoption of a modernistic style of composition in which deliberated discord is a prominent feature, and the playwright has allowed his anxiety to retain his theme to overshadow the vital factor of all plays – interest.

Yet how far can Locke's style be described as modernistic? It is certainly not atonal. There is no evidence of him, for example, engaging in depth with the Second Viennese School. An exception is Alban Berg's First Piano Sonata, which Locke played later in life – a work whose melodic lyricism set against uncompromising harmonies and occasional resolutions is not dissimilar to Locke's own style.¹⁵ Otherwise he could regularly be heard playing the piano music of Debussy, Milhaud, Poulenc, Hindemith, and particularly John Ireland; as well as listening to the recorded works of Britten, favourites being the *Spring Symphony*, *Missa Brevis* and the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*. Some contemporary observers thought that his compositions were indeed modernistic. The critic in the *Derbyshire Advertiser*, for example, commented in February 1928 that 'Mr Locke has departed from the beaten path and like many other moderns, is trying to find self-expression in the exploration of an entirely new country'. 'G. A. H.' in another unidentifiable review of the performance in February 1934 of the *B-flat Trio*, reckoned that 'Mr Locke has evidently accepted the guidance of Prokofieff and other composers who favour percussive methods.' 'C. H.' in the *Derby Express* commented that Locke in the 'several pianoforte compositions' performed on 13 February 1931 'takes definite and courageous sides with the moderns and the music he played was written in accordance with the new freedom in the use of the scales'. The writer of another tantalisingly unattributed newspaper snippet enjoyed the 'saucy' *Charivari* 'which pranced along frequently in two keys simultaneously': see Ex. 2.

Allegro (♩ = 116)

Ex. 2: *Charivari* (1927), II: 'The Fairy Ring', bb. 1-9.

The extent of his modernistic tendencies depended presumably on the viewpoint of the critic, and our perception of what is 'modern' today is understandably different in hindsight. Despite the view that Locke's style 'sided with the moderns', his music frequently betrays a mischievous sense of humour, a characteristic frequently commented upon. Phrases such as 'jaunty gaiety', 'saucy [suite], prancing along gaily' are not uncommon. He used to chuckle at the cellos 'getting stuck', as he used to put it, in the Trio section of the Scherzo in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and loved the rumbustiousness at times found in Haydn's music. It is not surprising that he played Haydn's piano sonatas much more frequently than those by Mozart. Locke's own writing is peppered with syncopations (especially in fast movements – see Ex. 3), clashing harmonies which resolve in unexpected ways (as in Ex. 4), and seemingly simple motives which become entangled in complex textures—yet, many of his melodic lines are exceedingly lyrical.

Allegro moderato giocoso [♩ = 116]

Ex. 3: Sonata for Tenor Recorder and Pianoforte, II, bb. 1-7.

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of a Sonata for Cello and Piano, composed by John Locke in 1970, spanning measures 41 to 49. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system features the Cello (Violoncello) with a melodic line starting on a whole note, followed by eighth notes, and the Piano with a harmonic accompaniment of chords and moving bass lines. Dynamics include *mf* and *pp*. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system shows the Cello with a melodic line and the Piano with a harmonic accompaniment, ending with a fermata and a dynamic change to *mp*.

Ex. 4: Sonata for Cello and Piano (1970), III, bb. 41-49.

It is becoming obvious from the discussion so far that Locke had an advanced and mischievous sense of humour. This is demonstrated in his sketches, musical style, whimsical musical titles and, towards the end of his life, comic poems and fables which he recorded on a weekly basis for BBC Radio Derby. A series of three popular songs and monologues, dating from the mid-to-late 1930s, was published by Reynolds & Co. They are still in print, though not under the name of John Locke.

Maybe he felt that they demeaned his reputation as a ‘serious composer’, for he wrote them under the pseudonym of Edwin John. (In the 1970s he gave himself another – John Probyn – for his local radio contributions.) *The Sufferer* (1934) set music—which begins with a reference to Chopin’s ‘Funeral March’—to the words of L. E. Baggageley who, prolific in the field of musical monologues, also performed the piece. Two others, *The Aeronauts* (1936) and *Bill’s Trombone* (1938)—see Fig. 2—had both words and music by Locke: again, at least in the case of *Bill’s Trombone*, with L.E. Baggageley undertaking the performance.

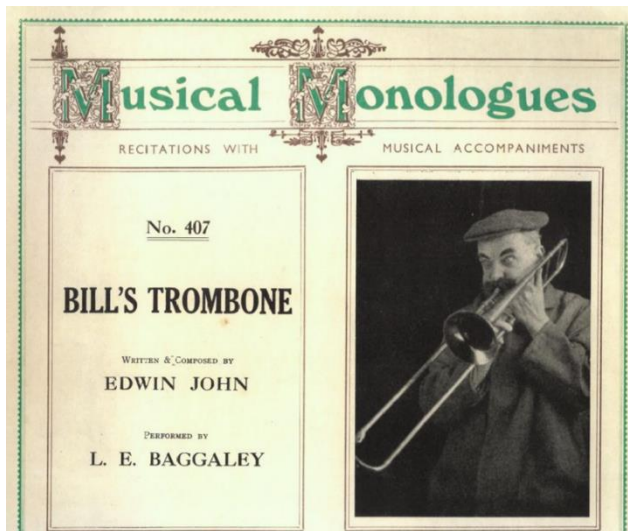


Fig. 2: Frontispiece of *Bill's Trombone*.

The 1930s had been a promising period for Locke, but from the ‘40s onward there were fewer public performances of his works. His life during and immediately after World War II took on a new direction. His involvement with the Royal Observer Corps led to a lifelong friendship with Howard Smith—a Director at Smith of Derby, a well-known clock manufacturer—and to a change of employment. He joined Smith’s as Office and Sales Manager in 1945 where he remained until his retirement in 1972. A significant feature of Smith’s activity lay in church clocks, and Locke’s musical

skills were put to good use in the setting out of old and new public carillons, seemingly an early interest of his which had already resulted in a composition for piano in 1944, titled *Prelude, Elegy and Carillon*. His first marriage came to an end around this time; then, while at the Royal Observer Corps, he met Mona Mather, whom he married in 1945. The birth of two daughters in 1947 and 1951 seems to have led him down the path of family man, perhaps to counter his own early home experiences. But he never stopped composing.

Most of his subsequent output lay with the piano, where his writing, both in style and choice of form, was hugely influenced by J. S. Bach. Preludes and Fugues from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* were played daily, and *The Art of Fugue* was never far from hand. (Indeed, he worked on a completion of this seminal work, an achievement for a self-taught composer.) Not surprisingly, he has left behind many Preludes and Fugues, mostly composed in the 1970s – some of them dating back to 1941, as well as other contrapuntal works. Among the collection of piano works for left hand, written for his sister, Mary, there are not only Preludes and Fugues but a Toccata and Fugue (1951) as well as a *Chaconne for Three Hands* dating from the same year. The third movement of his Piano Sonata of 1958 is a Passacaglia. Six Inventions for Descant Recorder and Pianoforte, composed in 1956 for his friend, Peter Roscoe, suggest from the movements' titles that counterpoint did not inevitably need to be taken too seriously:

- I: Canon
- II: Inverted Canon
- III: Canon by Augmentation, Cancrizans and what have you
- IV: Canon in Two Keys
- V: Canon in Two Directions; ending, perhaps inevitably, with
- VI: Fugue.

One of his final contrapuntal enterprises, written only a few months before his death, was a three-part verbal fugue with the subject, 'BBC Radio Derby, ninety-six point five, ninety-four point two, every day on the air ...': as reciter, he recorded all three voices at that station.

RADIO DERBY FUGUE John Arbryn.

1 *C* B B *C* | Ra de o Der by | nine ty six point five nine ty four point two ev ry day on the |

2 *C* | | | B B *C* |

3 *C* | | | |

1 air it's there when ev er you are | nev er too far | up there in |

2 Ra de o Der by | nine ty six point five nine ty four point two ev ry day on the |

3 | | | B B *C* |

1 der by shine or down in | tes ter shine or by the | side of Trent |

2 air it's there when ev er you are | nev er too far | Ra de o Ra de o |

3 Ra de o Der by | nine ty six point five nine ty four point two ev ry day on the |

1 there are sent | news and views and | ows to whos the man to | watch these days |

2 Ra de o Ra de o | news and views | news in flint y | Mat lock Bath |

3 air it's there when ev er you are | nev er too far | Heaje | God now Park |

1 B B *C* | Ra de o Der by | nine ty six point five nine ty four point |

2 and Tib shelf and Melbourn | all can hear | to cat news Burton on | post too all these are |

3 all can | tune in to the to cat B B *C* | Ra de o Der by |

1 two nine ty four | point by two | on the air on the air | point? der in, der in, der in old St |

2 sent to | ev ry day | on | B B *C* | Ra de o Der by |

3 nine ty six point | five nine ty four point | point bet by point half a point |

Fig. 3: An extract from Locke's *Radio Derby Fugue* (1979).

J. S. Bach influenced several composers of this period – these include Busoni, Arnold Cooke, Christian Darnton, and Tippett. Their music did not seem to feature in Locke's studies, though Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis* was frequently at the composer's piano. A contrapuntal idiom is a general feature in Locke's pianistic textures. A simple, melodic opening phrase as in his Piano Sonata (1942) soon develops a more intricate structure—see Ex. 5a-b.



Ex. 5a: Piano Sonata (1942), I, bb. 1-5.



Ex. 5b: Piano Sonata (1942), I, bb. 10-14.

His Sonata for Cello and Pianoforte (1970) has a lyrical cello line which is subject to constant imitation and inversion between the two hands of the accompaniment, as shown in Ex. 6.

Con moto moderato

Violoncello

Piano

mf **Con moto moderato**

mp dim.

Ex. 6: Sonata for Cello and Pianoforte (1970), I, bb. 1-9.

Beethoven was his other idol, not least in the way of thematic development.¹⁶ His sonatas for solo piano as well as those for other instruments generally follow the classical format of four contrasting movements, usually including a scherzo. But it was Beethoven's use of variations and fugue in his last works which intrigued Locke all his life. Theme and variation form features throughout Locke's output.

Reference has already been made to the not-very-successful attempt to translate this musical form to the theatre, but as keyboard pieces Locke based his variations both on original as well as familiar themes, examples of the latter include *Variations on a Well-Known Tune* (1953)¹⁷ and *Variations on an American Ditty* (1940) – ‘Momma don’t want no peas, no rice, no coconut oil’ – which was later arranged for recorders in 1977, appearing too as the seventh movement of an earlier set of twelve piano pieces.

It is unlikely that anyone else has performed his piano works—apart from those dedicated to his sister—and yet one wonders whether he had hoped they might be one day. The existing manuscripts are extremely detailed, and easily decipherable. Dynamic markings and changes in tempo—of which he was fond—abound. There are occasional instructions, such as ‘passages which are beyond hand-stretch imply the use of the sustaining pedal’,¹⁸ as if he were conversing with future performers. He chooses his tempi thoughtfully, without providing specific metronome markings. The second and third movements of his Piano Sonata (1940), for example, are headed ‘allegretto deliberato’ and ‘serioso con moto’ respectively. Most intriguing is a piano arrangement of his own Symphony in D (undated). A run-through took place one Saturday afternoon in the 1960s by a local orchestra in which he played timpani. The full score and parts have been subsequently lost – a hope that they were perhaps languishing in some Derbyshire Music Service archive has recently been dashed.

If Locke’s output was principally for the piano, his friendship with Peter Roscoe¹⁹ led to several compositions for recorder as well as music for schools. A lively Sonatina for Tenor Recorder and Piano (1978) has been identified by the recorder player and editor, John Turner, as a rare example of a work for that instrument; it is published by Forsyth’s. Two years earlier, Roscoe’s group, The Alpha Consort, was presented with a witty collection of *Four Pieces for Four Recorders*, the first entitled ‘Invention (patents applied for)’; the third, a ‘Fitful March’ bears the instruction, ‘more of an amble actually’. The work received at least one public performance on 25 February 1977, where the players gave ‘a truly professional account’²⁰ of the work. His music for schools clearly reflects the instruments—and skills—available:

An *Antic Dance* of the same year is written for the combination of descant, treble and tenor recorders, glockenspiel, xylophone, chime bars, violins, percussion, and piano. A letter from the composer accompanying the delivery of *March for School Band* (1968) to the Athelstan Junior School in the July of that year states, 'I'm afraid the recorders will have to breathe through their ears but I expect they are used to it'. It is not known whether a more ambitiously scored *Concert Piece for Brass* (1975) was written for a school band – although, judging from the simplicity of the parts, it may have been.

The City of Derby—then still a town—was rich in cultural activity, and Locke's name is frequently to be found in accounts of concerts and lectures from the 1930s onwards. The Musical Society of the Derby Diocesan Training College put on regular and unusual concerts. An event in February 1931—only two weeks after the concert at the Queen's Hall, referred to earlier—saw, for instance, a programme of music by Katherine Eggar, Roussel, and Eugene Goossens (*Serenade*, listed as opus 3, especially written for Joseph Slater) as well as Locke's own *Charivari* and *Fantastic Ballet*. The programme for this event advertised a forthcoming Gramophone Lecture on 'Modern Music'. Three months later their programme featured Locke playing in a recital of music for two pianos, with either a Mr W. Veitch or Nancy Preston.²¹ The programme included music by Paul Ladmirault, Stravinsky, and Debussy. In the mid-1940s, the Derby Music Club, which was part of the Derby Federation of Musical Societies,²² was programming works by composers such as Frank Bridge, and Locke performed his own music as well.

On 7 October 1946, there was a first performance of a new piano duet, specifically written for the occasion: '*La Follia*': *Eighteen Variations and Fugue* (which he played with his father), in addition to an illustrated talk, titled 'Some notes on Art and Artifice in Modern Music, with examples from *Saudades do Brasil* by Darius Milhaud'. There were educational activities, including participation in a series of Dr Markham Lee's Extension Lectures, in which Locke performed his own music. The *Derbyshire Advertiser* commented, 'it was an honour both for Mr Locke and the town of Derby that he was chosen by Dr Markham Lee to illustrate the modern idiom at the last of a recent series of University Extension Lectures in

Derby'. Later in life, he held regular sessions for the Workers' Educational Association, which went on for many years. His unorthodox approach in engaging the novice with the canon led to memorable moments, for instance when one of his class members approached him at the end of a series, saying, 'I love Schubert, page 68, don't you?'. His longstanding chairmanship of the Derby Recorded Music Society allowed him once a year to give a piano recital, often including one of his own works.

In 1923 the Dove Churnet Festival held its programme for the first time in Derby and became known as the Derby, Derbyshire, and North Staffordshire Musical Festival. There is a record of John Locke later playing *The Fantastic Ballet* at the Becket Rooms to assist the funds of the Festival. From the outset there was a significant involvement of staff from Foulds Music Shop. James Locke and his wife, who became Director of Competitions, saw an increase in the number and variety of classes until the Second World War. After the War, John Locke and his wife, Mona, took over much of the running of the Festival: John moving from the role of General Secretary in 1949 through to Chairman, Director of Competitions and finally to Vice-President, a position he held until his death in 1980.

Another longstanding and stalwart local organisation remains the Derby Shakespeare Society. Locke was particularly active with the Society in the 1960s and 1970s, composing, in close collaboration with the producers, songs for *The Merchant of Venice* (1967 prod.), *The Tempest* (1968), *Twelfth Night* (1976), as well as incidental music for *Henry V* (1969). A further Shakespeare setting—one of 'Fear no more the Heat o' the Sun' from *Cymbeline*—was written for his elder daughter and a friend to sing at the Derby Music Festival in 1963. An undated song, published by Walsh, Holmes & Co. Ltd, entitled *Who'd Ride?* for which Locke wrote his own text is the only example of works of this medium outside the Shakespearean context.

Throughout the 1940s, Derby boasted its own 100-strong opera and ballet company, the Alan Turner Opera Company. Turner was the Director of a car manufacturing company in the town and was clearly an influential cultural figure, with the annual Alan Turner Opera Ball a feature in the Mayoral Calendar. The

repertoire was mainly light opera, with young amateurs engaged as singers. Any profits from productions went toward local charities – these being, for example, The Mayor’s War Memorial Fund, or, not surprisingly, the Motor and Cycle Trades Benevolent Fund. The *Nottingham Evening Post* records on 20 February 1948 a production of *Die Fledermaus* under the baton of the young John Pritchard. Such was the standard, the company was also invited to perform occasionally in London: Johann Strauss’ *Der lustige Krieg* was given in January 1939 at the St Pancras New Town Hall; Turner provided an English version of the libretto and was also involved as a performer.

However, it was Turner’s association with a young—Sadler’s Wells-trained—dancer, Sonia Langridge, that led to the commissioning of a new ballet entitled *Off the Ground*, for which John Locke composed the music. Langridge was the choreographer.

Three performances in Derby, the first of which attracted a disappointingly small audience, were followed by two performances in October 1949 at the Fortune Theatre in London, at which most of Derby was optimistically ‘expected to be there’. The ballet was based on the poem ‘Off the Ground’ by Walter de la Mare from *Peacock Pie* (1913), and the music, for two pianos, had been pre-recorded. This was not the first time that Locke’s name had featured in a London ballet programme: in 1932, two pieces from *The Fantastic Ballet* – ‘Waltz’ and ‘Foxtrot’ – were included in a list of five as part of a series of ‘chapters’ in a play by Peter Godfrey titled *Peter’s Parade*, and performed in the intimate setting of the Gate Theatre in Villiers Street. Penelope Spencer was the choreographer, and the other musical contributions were by Ravel, Albeniz, and Gavin Gordon. Locke’s association with Spencer continued the following year with a dance recital at the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich, where ‘Toby Tongue-in-Cheek’—a section from *Charivari*—together with a seemingly independent piece entitled *Débutante*, were performed alongside music by Schumann, Debussy, and Villa Lobos.

A consequence of Locke’s association with Sonia Langridge was a close friendship with her father, the railway engineer, Eric Langridge, with whom John played piano duets two or three times a week for many years, making the most of

his father's substantial library of scores. Locke added to this mainly classical collection with duet arrangements of his own, ranging from the more traditional Haydn string quartets (opuses 54, no. 1, and 76, no. 2) to Sibelius' Fourth Symphony and Benjamin Britten's Second String Quartet. This latter arrangement was produced in 1956. Two further examples of domestic music-making are both for cello: the first Sonata (1956) – dedicated to his friend, a Leicestershire surgeon named Gordon Cruickshank; the second, written for the composer's daughter in 1970.

Since the summer of 2019, there have been signs of interest in the music of John Locke, the whereabouts of parts of his output currently not known. A private performance of his Second Cello Sonata was given by Gabriel Waite (of the Royal Northern Sinfonia) and Yoshie Kawamura to positive acclaim in the September of that year. His Sonatina for Tenor Recorder and Piano will be published by Forsyth's shortly, and the Suite for Flute and Tenor Recorder (1960) is to be published by Peacock Press; also, there are early discussions regarding the production of a CD. A decision has yet to be made about a home for his many manuscripts. Whatever the next steps may be, this has been a welcome opportunity to reintroduce a forgotten composer of his time, who might have done more in his lifetime to capitalise on his early successes and make a mark on the landscape of British music of the early twentieth century.

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Worklist*

A. Piano Music

Solo Piano (two hands)

Sonata. Dedicated to Mary Locke. Undated.

Dance. Undated.

Prelude in D major. Undated.

Caprice. Undated.

The Fantastic Ballet (published by J. & W. Chester, No. 184, 1933)

Charivari: Six Pieces for the Pianoforte (J. & W. Chester, No. 156, 1937)

Variations on an American Ditty (1940); arr. for recorders in 1977.

Twelve Pieces (1940/1)

Fugue (1941)

Sonata (1942)

Prelude, Elegy and Carillon (1944)

Sonatina (1950)

Music for Evening (1952). 'For my father.'

Variations on a Well-Known Tune (1953)

Sonata (1958)

Theme and Variations (1961)

Sonata (September 1975)

Theme and Twelve Variations (October 1975)

Prelude and Fugue (May 1976)

Seven Preludes and Fugues (1976/7)

Prelude and Fugue (June 1976)

Prelude (1978)

Sonatina (1978)

Solo Piano (Left Hand)—composed for his sister, Mary

Prelude and Fugue. No date.

Sonatina (1943)

Toccata and Fugue (1951)

Chaconne for Three Hands (1951)

Variations on a Well-Known Tune (1953)

'*On my Left....*': Suite for Pianoforte (1956)

Prelude and Fugue (1956)

Sonata (1962)

Prelude and Fugue (1972)

Piano Duet (four hands)

Prelude, Saraband, Jig (1943)

Arrangements

For Piano Solo:

John Locke: Symphony in D. Undated.

For Piano Duet

Beethoven: Fugue for String Quartet, opus 137. Undated.

Haydn: String Quartet—opus 76, no. 2. Undated.

Debussy: Sonata for Violin and Pianoforte (1917). Undated.

'*La Follia*': *Eighteen Variations and Fugue*. 1946.**

Britten: String Quartet No. 2, opus 36 (1945). 1956.

Haydn: Symphony No. 80 in D minor, Hob. I:80. 1958.

Sibelius: Symphony No. 4 in A minor, opus 63. Undated.

For Piano Duo

Haydn: String Quartet—opus 54, no. 1. Undated.

B. Chamber music

Sonata in G major for Violin and Piano (1928)**

Allegro con forza

Scherzo: Vivace – Molto Moderato

Allegro Moderato

Quintet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and 'Cello (1932)**

Lento—Allegro moderato

Lento moderato

Allegro

Suite for Flute, Oboe and Piano (1934)**

Prelude—Moto Perpetuo—Fantasy—March—Pastorale—Dance

Six Inventions for Descant Recorder and Pianoforte (1956)

I. *Canon*

II. *Inverted Canon*

III. *Canon by Augmentation, Cancrizans and what have you*

IV. *Canon in Two Keys*

V. *Canon in Two Directions*

VI. *Fugue*

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano (1956). Dedicated to Gordon Cruickshank.

Suite for Flute and Tenor Recorder (1960). Published by Peacock Press, 2020.

Sonata for Cello and Piano (1970). Dedicated to Liz (daughter).

Four Pieces for Four Recorders (1976)

I. *Invention (patents applied for)*

II. *Mainly Phrygian*

III. *Fitful March*

IV. *Travel by Ricercar*

Variations on an American Ditty (1977) for Recorders. The original work is scored for Solo

Piano: see Section A.

Sonatina for Tenor Recorder and Pianoforte (1978). Forsyth Publications, 2020.

C. Music for schools

The Maiden's Ditty, Unison Song for Girls' Voices (1944).

March for School Band (1968). Piano Score.

D. Music for Orchestra

March for Percussion, Violins and Piano (1968)

Antic Dance for Descant, Treble and Tenor Recorders, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Chiming Bars, Violins, Percussion and Piano (1968)

Concert Piece for Two Clarinets, Four Trumpets, Three Horns, Two Trombones, and Bass Trombone (1975)

Symphony in D. Undated.** See Section A re: arrangement for Solo Piano.

E. Music for theatre

Music for The Alan Turner Ballet, *Off the Ground* (1949)**

'Tell Me Where Is Fancy Bred', *Merchant of Venice* (1966)

Trumpet Music for *Henry V* (1969)

Come away, Death, with lute accompaniment (1975)

F. Songs

'Fear no more the Heat o' the Sun', from *Cymbeline*. Scored for Two Sopranos. 1964.

G. Popular songs and monologues (words and music under the pseudonym Edwin John)

The Sufferer (words by L. E. Baggaley). No. 386 in a series of Musical Monologues; Reynolds & Co., 1934

Who'd ride? Walsh, Holmes & Co. Ltd., 1935

The Aeronauts. No. 397 in Musical Monologues; Reynolds & Co., 1936

Bill's Trombone. No. 407 in Musical Monologues; Reynolds & Co., 1938

H. Miscellany

Radio Derby Fugue (August 1979). Written using the pen name of John Probyn. This is a verbal fugue.

Notes:

* All scores are in manuscript, unless otherwise stated, and are currently in the possession of John Locke's daughter, Elizabeth Manning.

** Whereabouts of the score unknown

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Elizabeth Manning is John Locke's elder daughter. She read Music at Durham University both as an under- and postgraduate student, and was awarded a PhD for her thesis on the Viennese Nationalsingspiel. Now retired, she spent most of her career at The Open University (OU), focusing on the support of students at a distance from its centre in Newcastle/Gateshead. She managed the University's day-to-day operations in France, Germany and Austria, and led a national scheme to offer OU modules in schools. Since her retirement, she has been a board member of Jazz North.

References

- British Broadcasting Corporation. "Tuesday, 16 May 1939 – 6. 10 [pm]: Midland Composers—4." *Radio Times* 63 (815), 12 May 1939. <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/page/4cfcc13a911c419bb078ddff6aeb38d2>
- Derby Daily Telegraph. "Derby Composer: work well received in London." *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 27 February 1934. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000521/19340227/016/0001>
- Raposo, Jessica Ann. "Defining the British Flute School: a study of the British Flute Performance Practice: 1890-1940." DMA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2007.

Endnotes:

¹ Flyer for the Macnaghten-Lemare concert series, 1934-5.

² The shop, which opened in 1908, is still in existence today.

³ "Tuesday, 16 May 1939 – 6. 10 [pm]: Midland Composers—4", *Radio Times* 63 (815), 12 May 1939, <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/page/4cfcc13a911c419bb078dfff6aeb38d2>

⁴ Several sources for this article are contemporary newspaper cuttings which indicate neither date of publication nor the name of the newspaper. Every effort has been taken to trace the sources, with some, but not complete success.

⁵ A Chilean-born violinist of 'considerable power', according to the *Derbyshire Advertiser* reviewer of the event.

⁶ See Jessica Ann Raposo, "Defining the British Flute School: a study of the British Flute Performance Practice: 1890-1940", (DMA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2007).

⁷ Series flyer.

⁸ On Tuesday, 20 February 1934.

⁹ "Derby Composer: work well received in London", *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 27 February 1934, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000521/19340227/016/0001>

¹⁰ The French word *charivari* represents a folk custom involving the staging of a mock parade with loud music.

¹¹ The *Monthly Musical Record*, one of several short reviews in the 1933 publication of *The Fantastic Ballet*.

¹² This took place in London in 1932.

¹³ Previously conductor at Opera Scotland and the Carl Rosa Opera Company as well as the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, where he was to promote the work of Havergal Brian.

¹⁴ Notably *Façade*.

¹⁵ Maybe it was that piece's lyricism and piquant harmonies which attracted him and reflected his own style.

¹⁶ Locke particularly admired Walton's First Symphony for this reason, and there followed an exchange between them soon after the first performance.

¹⁷ This took some working out before discovering 'Il tema' at the end of the piece which turned out to be 'Yankee Doodle'.

¹⁸ Final movement of the Sonata for Pianoforte (1958).

¹⁹ A recorder player and Head of Music at Athelstan Middle School. He lived in Sheffield.

²⁰ John Locke, letter to Peter Roscoe, 1 March 1977.

²¹ As pianist, Nancy Preston performed Locke's Violin Sonata in G major three years earlier.

²² John Pritchard was very much involved in Derby music-making at this time, conducting the Derby String Orchestra, the Derby Philharmonic Orchestra, and accompanying soloists on the piano.