

Patronage through Dissemination: Louise Hanson-Dyer's Patronage of Gustav Holst

Daniela Kaleva

Gustav Holst has a reputation as one of the most prominent representatives of the English national school of composition from the early decades of the twentieth century. His compositional language was highly original and was influenced by English folk song and Eastern philosophy. Although Holst composed works in a wide range of genres, he is best known for his orchestral suite *The Planets*.

Notwithstanding the great public acclaim of *The Planets* (which premiered at Queen's Hall, London, on 15 November 1920),¹ his later compositions were less successful with both audiences and critics,² and he underwent several difficult periods during which he lacked motivation and inspiration for composition. During the last decade of his life, when his popularity was fading,³ he benefited from the patronage and friendship of Melbourne-born patron and music publisher Louise Hanson-Dyer (see Fig. 1).⁴ Hanson-Dyer is known for her award-winning music press and record label *Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre*, established in Paris in 1932, which championed early music, contemporary classical music and young musicians. Although Hanson-Dyer did not engage in direct patronage of Holst by providing funding, or commissioning or publishing his works,⁵ she nevertheless played an important role in promoting his music in Australia

¹ Imogen Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music* (London: Faber Music, 1974), 125.

² Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), esp. 161, 170, 190.

³ See Short, *The Man and his Music*, 237–41.

⁴ Her hyphenated surname carries the names of her two husbands: linoleum businessman James Dyer and Dr Joseph Birch Hanson. See Jim Davidson, 'Dyer, Louise Berta Mosson Hanson (1884–1962),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 8 (Melbourne: MUP, 1981), 392–93.

⁵ This is contrary to statements in Orhan Memed and Maureen Fortey, 'Oiseau-Lyre, L,' *Grove Music Online*, <www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/16890>.

Figure 1. Photograph of Louise Hanson-Dyer in her Paris flat; State Library of Victoria



and Paris between 1921 and 1947, mainly by curating and subsidising live performances of his works and purchasing his scores for library collections in Melbourne.

Hanson-Dyer's patronage activities have been well documented by her biographer Jim Davidson and others.⁶ In this article, however, I will use research into American women patrons by Kathleen D. McCarthy, and P. R. Locke and Cyrilla Barr,⁷ which allows for a broader definition of patronage, that casts a new light on Hanson-Dyer's activities to promote Holst's music. I will consider some of the factors that may have contributed to Hanson-Dyer's interest in the music of Gustav Holst, and will explore the ways in which Holst benefited from Hanson-Dyer's patronage, drawing upon newly available concert programs and archival materials held at the State Library of Victoria and at the Louise Hanson-Dyer Library, University of Melbourne.

Louise Hanson-Dyer's entry into arts patronage was enabled by her privileged upbringing, her high status in Melbourne society, the advanced music education she received, and the

⁶ See, for example, Jim Davidson, 'Louise Hanson-Dyer (1884–1962): Melbourne Benefactress, Parisian Music Publisher' *L'Oiseau-Lyre: The Work of Louise Hanson-Dyer and the Lyrebird Press*, University of Melbourne 27 March–26 April 1985 (Melbourne: University Gallery, University of Melbourne, 1985) 7–14; Jim Davidson, 'Louise Hanson-Dyer: The Emergence of a Patron,' *Australian Cultural History*, ed. S. L. Goldberg and F. B. Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 1988) 242–51; Jim Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising: Louise Hanson-Dyer of Oiseau-Lyre, 1884–1962* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1993); Monique Geitenbeek, "'Spread This Notion of the Music Club": Dynamics of Class and Patronage in Melbourne 1900–1940,' *Context: Journal of Music Research* 8 (1994–1995): 46–51; Daniela Kaleva, 'The Gustav Holst and British Music Society of Victoria Collections at the State Library of Victoria,' *Fontes artis musicae* 55.1 (2008): 170–79; Daniela Kaleva and Eileen Chanin, 'Louise Hanson-Dyer: Leading by Example,' *Music Forum* 15 (2009): 27–29; Daniela Kaleva, 'Treasured Ephemera: Chronicles of the Early History of Professional Chamber Music in Melbourne,' *La Trobe Journal* 84 (2009): 92–103.

⁷ Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1991); P. R. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, eds, *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 37–42.

support of her family and an influential network of artists and musicians.⁸ She drew on her father's entrepreneurial skills, her brother's influence in Melbourne circles, her husband James Dyer's fortune and her own knowledge and love of music and astute business sense to develop a reputation for lavish music productions and publications. As I have argued elsewhere, this seems to have been motivated not by a love of the spotlight but because she considered it important to be useful.⁹ Her second husband, Dr Jeff B. Hanson, summarised her life in an interview two years after her death: 'My wife devoted all her life and her fortune—everything she had—to music and I had the wonderful experience of sharing this with her for the best part of twenty-five years.'¹⁰

Locke and Barr identify types of women patrons in the United States in the period 1860 to 1960, differentiating between passive patronage characterised by funding of individual artists and organisations, and active patronage facilitated by the creation of organisations, buildings, libraries, presses, music and instrument shops and creative involvement, event organisation, publicity and journalism.¹¹ They adopt the patronage typology used by McCarthy for American arts patrons, which delineates three types of patrons: 'individualists' who had salons and / or subsidised individual artists; women patrons who worked in groups as 'separatists' in women-only organisations; and women who worked as 'assimilationists' in mixed-gender institutions.¹² The 1920s were Hanson-Dyer's first prolific period of music patronage, centred in Melbourne. She did not limit her support to endowments but worked actively as an individualist patron out of her salon, first at Torryburn and then Kinnoull, and as an assimilationist patron, through her involvement in the Old Girls' Association of the Presbyterian College, the *Alliance Française*,¹³ and the establishment of new arts institutions such as the British Music Society (Victorian Branch) in 1921.

Hanson-Dyer's patronage of Holst can be divided into two main stages. The first was her promotion of Holst's music in Melbourne through the British Music Society (Victorian branch) in the early to mid-1920s. The second stage began in 1927 when the Dyers moved to Europe. Hanson-Dyer and Holst became friends, and Hanson-Dyer helped Holst persist with composition during a difficult period in his career. She initiated the publication of a catalogue of his music, established the British Music Society library of his scores in Melbourne and assisted in promoting his music in Paris.

The British Music Society (Victorian Branch) provided the vehicle through which Hanson-Dyer popularised Gustav Holst's music in Melbourne during the 1920s. Holst's compositions were featured at BMS events from the birth of the society. The society's inaugural meeting was held in the Dyers' home, Torryburn, on 11 November 1921,¹⁴ and the program included

⁸ Davidson, 'Dyer, Louise Berta Mosson Hanson,' 9–88, 392–93. For more on her brother, the architect Sir Harold Gengoult, a one-time city councillor and Lord Mayor of Melbourne from 1931 to 1934, see Robyn Anear, 'Gengoult as a Melbourne city councillor,' *A City Lost & Found: Whelan the Wrecker's Melbourne* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2005), 303.

⁹ Chanin and Kaleva, 'Leading by Example,' 28.

¹⁰ Kevin McBeath, 'The Lyrebird in Paris. Interview with Dr J. Hanson,' *Record Society Monthly Review* 5 (1964): 3.

¹¹ Locke and Barr, *Cultivating Music in America*, 12.

¹² McCarthy, *Women's Culture*.

¹³ Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 48, 76–87.

¹⁴ The opening of the branch was advertised in 'Music Week November 6–13,' *Argus* 4 Nov. 1921: 11.

Holst's *Four Songs for Violin and Voice*, op. 35, which had been premiered in London three years earlier and published by Chester in 1920. They were performed by Lilian Stott and Isabel Langlands, and were programmed with new music by Thomas Dunhill and Fritz B. Hart, and English madrigals by Thomas Weelkes, Thomas Morley and Henry Lawes. The madrigals were introduced by English choirmaster, composer, examiner and music critic Dr Alfred Earnest Floyd, and performed by the Albert Street Conservatorium choral class under Fritz Hart's baton. Holst, Hart and Ralph Vaughan Williams had been classmates at the Royal College of Music,¹⁵ and Holst had used Hart's texts for several of his vocal works.¹⁶

The printed program for this event outlined the rationale of the new society and its leadership (see Fig. 2). Dame Nellie Melba is featured as patron on the cover page, and the inside cover lists the society's committee members and office bearers, which included President Thomas Brentnall and Vice-Presidents Hart, William Laver and Alberto Zelman Jr. James Dyer is listed as Treasurer, Hanson-Dyer as Secretary, and a number of local musicians make up the rest of the committee. The four objectives of the society, as listed on the program, include the propagation of British music and fostering 'the spirit of international music.' Support for the compositions of Gustav Holst, therefore, was entirely consistent with the objectives of the society.

The Society's first public concert took place on 29 April 1922 at the Assembly Hall, which, according to the *Argus*, presented 'an all British program of vocal and instrumental music by Elgar, Ireland, Holst, Stanford, Grainger, Hart, Walford Davies and Frank Bridge.'¹⁷ It was not until 1925 when the society gained a strong foothold that frequent concerts were given.¹⁸

In 1923, Holst's close friend W. Gillies Whittaker visited Melbourne in the role of examiner for the Associated Board and the Royal College of Music, and gave a lecture on new British music that influenced the BMS's programming in the years to come. The noted English conductor, Bach specialist and champion of new British music was a guest at Kinnoull and established a close relationship with Hanson-Dyer during this visit. He later reported:

The Victorian Branch, centred in Melbourne, owes its existence to the energy and enthusiasm of Mrs James Dyer, a woman of remarkable personality and wide outlook. She broadmindedly combines the positions of President of the *Alliance Française* (in connection with which she was recently decorated by the French Government) and Secretary of the British Music Society. Not content with organization and endless detail work, she frequently throws open her beautiful home for meetings, and provides an ideal setting for music by her original schemes of floral decorations, afterwards entertaining her guests with real Australian hospitality.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Mary Christison Huismann, *Gustav Holst: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 81; Fritz Hart, 'Early Memories of Gustav Holst, Part 1,' *Royal College of Music Magazine* 39.2 (1943): 43–52; Fritz Hart, 'Early Memories of Gustav Holst, Part 2,' *Royal College of Music Magazine* 39.3 (1943): 84–89.

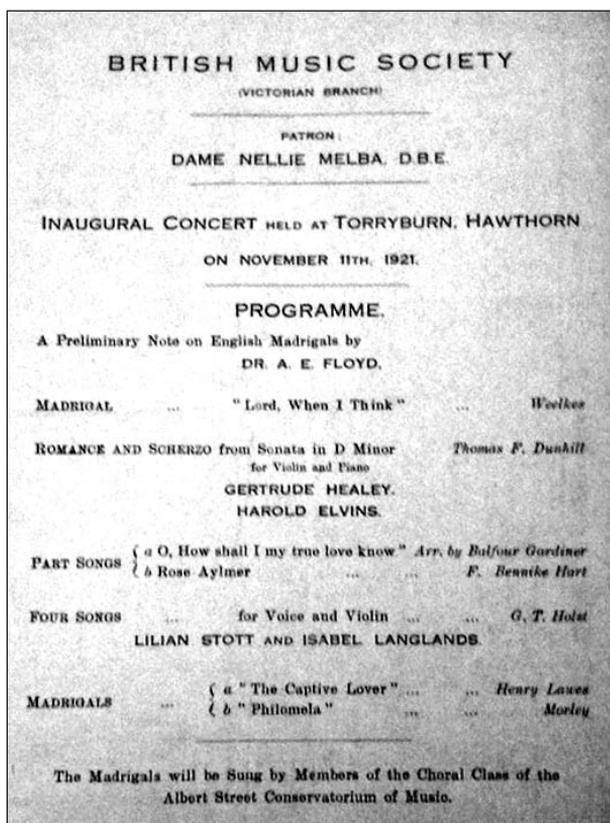
¹⁶ *Clouds o'er the Summer Sky* (1913), *Ianthe* (1894), *The Idea* (1896), *The Magic Mirror* (1896, incomplete), *The Revoke* (1895), *Summer Welcome* (1894), *Water and the Birds* (1894) and *Water and the Birds* (1893); see Michael Short, *Gustav Holst (1874–1934): A Centenary Documentation* (London: White Lion Publishers, 1974), 10–71.

¹⁷ 'British Music Society,' *Argus* 22 Apr. 1922: 18.

¹⁸ See Kaleva, 'Treasured Ephemera.'

¹⁹ William Gillies Whittaker, 'The B.M.S. in Australia,' *Music Bulletin* 5.12 (1923): 18.

Figure 2. Program for the inaugural concert of the British Music Society (Victorian Branch); Rare Collections, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, the University of Melbourne



Whittaker gave lectures to British Music Society members in both Sydney and Melbourne on 'The Present Day Musical Conditions in Britain.' The Melbourne lecture was delivered at Kinnoull on 11 October 1923, together with a recital of mostly English repertoire, including two compositions by Whittaker himself.²⁰ He sang and was accompanied by Percival Driver, who was also visiting as an Associated Board examiner.²¹ Hanson-Dyer had the lecture and concert program printed by Ruskin Press, with a cover by Australian artist Thea Proctor.²²

Whittaker's address to the members of the British Music Society began with the premise that 'music holds the highest place in the world at the present day.' He covered the history of English music and stated that 'there have been times when England was supreme ... the tide has turned again in our direction, and there is nowhere to be found achievement and activity comparable with that existing among the British peoples at the present day.' He went on to enumerate great English musicians, and to list the 'chief composers of the day.'²³ Whittaker

²⁰ Short, *Centenary Documentation*, 273.

²¹ 'Progress in Australia,' *British Music Society Bulletin* 6.1 (1924): 19.

²² Kaleva, 'Treasured Ephemera,' 95–96.

²³ The concert program and printed lecture are held at both the State Library of Victoria; British Music Society theatre programs and at the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne.

singled out Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams as ‘the two most prominent figures of today,’ and briefly described their compositional styles and key works. Whittaker’s lecture concludes: ‘It only remains for the British people to have faith in this remarkable group of composers, and to see that their works have frequent and adequate performances.’ This is exactly what Louise Hanson-Dyer set out to do; the lecture served as a manifesto for new British music programming at subsequent BMS concerts.

In 1924, the Dyers travelled overseas and spent some time in London. During this visit Hanson-Dyer briefly met Holst in person and they stayed in touch afterwards,²⁴ although the composer later regretted that he ‘was feeling very seedy’ at the time.²⁵ She also purchased British sheet music to take back to Australia.²⁶ The Dyers returned to Melbourne in 1925, and the 1925–6 season of the British Music Society was an especially intensive period of adventurous programming. Writing many years later, Hanson-Dyer asserted that a society like the BMS ‘should do more than just give a concert ... The Programmes should have much research and be prepared six months in advance.’²⁷ The repertoire for the 1925–6 season included a series of French music concerts, a series of musical portraits concerts, commemoration concerts, Bach soirees, music and poetry concerts, and instrumental music. English music, early and modern, and particularly the works of Holst and Vaughan Williams—the two composers singled out by Whittaker—featured prominently.²⁸

At this time, Holst was at the height of his celebrity: he was offered honorary degrees and roles in music organisations and his music was performed frequently in England²⁹ and was being made available in print by major publishers such as Ricordi, Curwen, Stainer & Bell and Augener.³⁰ Holst’s keen interest in early music was another major attraction for Hanson-Dyer, who had a lifelong interest in early and new music. As evident in the concerts from this period and in the output of *L’Oiseau-Lyre*.³¹ In a publication on Gustav Holst’s output underwritten by Hanson-Dyer’s press in 1947, Holst’s pupil Edmund Rubbra summarised Holst’s compositional language as informed by ‘an absorbing interest in folk-song’ and

the most potent influence, as in all virile composers of the modern English School, is the Elizabethan (and Purcellian) one. No philosophical or moral attitudes are taken, but instead is a sheer delight in a clear statement of beauty through texture. Such delight, allied to adventure and integrity of purpose, is the basis for Holst’s achievements in music.³²

This, together with Whittaker’s encouragement of programming the music of British composers such as Holst, the personal contact that Hanson-Dyer made with the composer, and

²⁴ Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 109, 114, 165.

²⁵ Michael Short, ed., *Gustav Holst: Letters to W. G. Whittaker* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1974), 102.

²⁶ ‘Music in England: Mrs Dyer’s Impressions,’ *Argus* 1 Jan. 1925: 9; and ‘British Music Society,’ *Argus* 17 Apr. 1925: 13.

²⁷ Letter, Louise Hansen-Dyer to Sibyl Hewett, 20 March 1942, manuscript collection of the State Library of Victoria. In the letter Hansen-Dyer expressed disappointment and the safeness of the Society’s programming practices during the Second World War.

²⁸ Kaleva, ‘Treasured Ephemera,’ 97–103.

²⁹ Short, *The Man and his Music*, 216–17; Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 96–102.

³⁰ Louise B. M. Dyer, *Gustav Holst, Music by British Composers: A Series of Complete Catalogues* no. 1 (London, Melbourne: OUP, 1931); Short, *The Man and his Music*, 190, 197.

³¹ See the catalogue of *L’Oiseau-Lyre* publications in Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 477–86.

³² Edmund Rubbra, *Gustav Holst, Contemporary British Composers* 1 (Monaco: Lyrebird Press, 1947), 48–49.

his fame and prominence in England at the time, all combined to ensure that the 1925–6 BMS concerts, which included the premieres of many of the Holst works that had been mentioned in Whittaker's 1923 lecture:³³ *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, *Cloud Messenger*, *Ode to Death*, *Hymn of Jesus* (the first work to establish his reputation thoroughly), the chamber opera *Savitri*, the satirical comedy-opera *The Perfect Fool* and, of course, *The Planets*.

The first concert in the 1925 series, held in the seven-hundred-seat Assembly Hall on 19 June,³⁴ included the Australian premiere of *The Planets*, five years after the London premiere in November 1920. It was performed by William James and Harold Elvins in an arrangement for piano duet by Nora Day and Vally Lasker that had been published by F. & B. Goodwin in 1923.³⁵ The program comprised the *Vedic Hymns* (op. 24, 1907–8) for piano and voice, the songs *Loving Kindly and Kindly Loving* and *The Heart Worships*, the carol *In the Bleak Midwinter* and the piano duo arrangement of *The Planets*. The program was repeated for society members, also at the Assembly Hall, on 29 June 1925.

The cover of the program was a portrait of Holst (see Fig. 3),³⁶ and the program itself presented an outline of the seven movements of *The Planets* as well as musical excerpts of characteristic themes, explanations of associated astrological aspects and descriptions of the

Figure 3. Program cover of the British Music Society (Victorian Branch) concert devoted to music by Gustav Holst, 1925; State Library of Victoria



³³ William Gillies Whittaker, *The Present Day Musical Conditions in Britain* (Melbourne: Ruskin Press, 1923), 4.

³⁴ 'The Assembly Hall,' *Victorian Heritage Database*, accessed 22 Aug. 2009, <vhd.jtribe.com.au/vhd/heritagevic#detail_places;9658>.

³⁵ I. Holst, *Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music*, 120–21. Davidson (*Lyrebird Rising*, 168) states that Day and Lasker came to Australia in 1926 to perform *The Planets* and met Louise Hanson-Dyer.

³⁶ Concerts featuring music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Peter Warlock and French composer Albert Roussel also featured portraits of the composers (Kaleva, 'Treasured Ephemera,' 97–98).

orchestration (see Fig. 4). A review in the *Argus* stated that the concert was ‘a demonstration of the immense power of British music as exemplified in the writings of Holst, the concert was a complete success.’³⁷

Figure 4. Concert program, British Music Society of Victoria, 19 June 1925; Ephemera Collection, State Library of Victoria

THE PLANETS:
Op. 32
SEVEN PIECES FOR LARGE ORCHESTRA
GUSTAV HOLST
Arranged for Two Pianofortes
by
NORA DAY and VALLY LASKER
(First performance in Australia)

1st Pianoforte WILLIAM JAMES
2nd Pianoforte HAROLD ELVINS

MARS, THE BRINGER OF WAR



The persistent rhythm of five-time is the striking feature of Mars. There is little melodic interest. Even the few times which escape from the monotonous and almost maddening rhythm, are at war with each other. It conveys the impression of the brutality and sheer stupidity of war, none of the glory of it, just naked strife and horror. The music is astonishingly direct and uncompromising.

VENUS, THE BRINGER OF PEACE



The peace suggested is not so much the absence of activity, or the sensation of freedom from disturbance, but of sheer beauty. It is a kind of ideal state of mind, untouched by strife and anxious thought, in which our's vision of bliss and ethereal existence hold sway. The horn solo as the beginning takes one away into a beautiful world, where there is neither rest nor strife. The symphonized chords which accompany several instrumental solos have a lulling effect on the listener. The colorization is of a "silvery" character, bringing into play such instruments as the harp, celesta, and Glockenspiel.

MERCURY, THE MESSENGER OF THE GODS



Astrologically, Mercury has no characteristic of his own, but takes his "color," as it were, from whichever planet is nearest. It represents pure mind, the flight of thought, freedom from time, space, or any material thing. The composer has set out to suggest lightness and grace. Mercury being the messenger between the two worlds, the keys are written in two keys and in two times at once. The scale consists of the first four notes of that of B flat, and the first four of B. Part of the orchestra plays in two-time, and the other in three. In form it is a perfect scherzo.

The premiere of the full orchestral version of *The Planets* took place in a concert in Sydney on 2 December 1925, an event in which Hanson-Dyer was once again instrumental. The performance was arranged by the Director of the Conservatorium, W. Arundel Orchard (President of the British Music Society in Sydney), and performed by the New South Wales Conservatorium Orchestra. The *Argus* reviewer wrote that the concert ‘drew a crowded audience’ and that the ‘performance was enthusiastically received, and at the end Mr. Orchard repeated the last movement, the mystic Neptune, in which the unseen choir of women is heard.’³⁸ The same article reported: ‘That Sydney was given the opportunity of hearing *The Planets* was due, as a program note announced, to Mrs. James Dyer, of Melbourne, who placed the score at the disposal of Mr. W. Arundel Orchard.’ An advertisement in the *Sydney*

³⁷ ‘Holst Concert,’ *Argus* 20 June 1925: 27.

³⁸ ‘The Planets Production in Sydney,’ *Argus* 3 Dec. 1925: 12.

Morning Herald named Holst 'one of the most distinguished men of the new British school' and commended the Conservatorium on the explanatory lecture given by Orchard and for 'keeping in touch with the newest developments in music, and at the same time, direct [ing] attention to the position occupied to-day among British composers.'³⁹ The work was repeated by the Sydney Conservatorium Orchestra at the beginning of the next season.⁴⁰

On 30 September 1926, the Australian premiere of Holst's chamber opera *Savitri* took place in Melbourne.⁴¹ English opera producer and baritone Clive Carey was instrumental in this production. Carey, who had produced the professional premiere of *Savitri* at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith on 23 June 1921, in which he had sung the Voice of Death, had offered, according to the *Argus*, to produce the opera in Melbourne in order to raise money for the BMS(Vic) endowment fund.⁴² Hanson-Dyer agreed, recognising a good opportunity to capitalise on Carey's expertise and status. Bernard Heinze conducted the opera and Madame Goossens-Viceroy sang the role of Savitri. The score and parts were obtained in correspondence with the publisher and Holst.⁴³

Amongst the numerous newspaper advertisements and articles that informed Melbourne society of the upcoming event,⁴⁴ there was also a lecture given by Fritz Hart on 5 September 1926 to members of the Music Club. Coming from a respected Melbourne musician who knew Holst personally, the lecture could only have favourably influenced Melbourne audiences. Addressing a misunderstanding regarding his position on Holst's compositional language in *Savitri* from the lecture, Hart wrote to the editor of the *Argus*:

In his earlier days, like most of us who were his contemporaries at the Royal College of Music, Holst was obsessed for a time by the mighty spirit of the Bayreuth master: but in my opinion 'Savitri' is one of the first works in which Holst declared his complete individuality, even though it cannot be accepted as wholly representative of the composer of 'The Planets' and 'The Hymn of Jesus' ... In view of the forthcoming production in Melbourne of 'Savitri,' and in order to remove any possibility of misunderstanding, I wish to state emphatically that this beautiful work by one of my best and oldest friends is as truly typical of Holst as 'The Pastoral Symphony' is of Vaughan Williams and 'The Song of the High Hills' is of Delius.⁴⁵

A review in the *Argus* on 1 October, commenced with praise for Hanson-Dyer:

In the hands of Mrs James Dyer, the Victorian Branch of the British Music Society is a force to be reckoned with, and such an achievement as the concert given last night in the Playhouse deserves to be fully recognised and gratefully acknowledged. An immense amount of thought had clearly been given to the planning of this entertainment, and an equal amount to its accomplishment. Mrs Dyer had good reason to feel the results were

³⁹ 'Holst and his Works,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 Nov. 1925: 12.

⁴⁰ 'The Planets,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 March 1926: 10.

⁴¹ "'Savitri': Performance at Playhouse, Elaborate Production Planned,' *Argus* 21 Sep. 1926: 15.

⁴² 'British Music Society: Gustav Holst's "Savitri,"' *Argus* 11 Aug. 1926: 16.

⁴³ Holst, *Thematic Catalogue*, 86.

⁴⁴ 'Savitri,' *Argus* 8 Sep. 1926: 22; "'Savitri': Performance at Playhouse, Elaborate Production Planned,' *Argus* 21 Sep. 1926: 15; 'Music and Drama: "Savitri,"' *Argus* 27 Sep. 1926: 14; 'Performance "Savitri" To-night,' *Argus* 30 Sep. 1926: 8.

⁴⁵ 'Holst's 'Savitri' To the Editor of the Argus,' *Argus* 6 Sep. 1926: 20.

commensurate with this lavish expenditure, and that the cause of music in general, and of British music in particular, has been materially served. The choice of music reflected, in a striking manner, both one phase of the present renaissance in English music and those roots in the past whence it may be seen to have sprung.⁴⁶

The performance was an artistic and financial success, raising £500 in addition to the £1,000 which had been raised for the endowment fund before the performance.⁴⁷ This money helped the Victorian branch of the BMS to survive the Depression years, despite the fact that its parent body disbanded in 1933 due to financial strain.⁴⁸

In 1927, the Dyers again left Australia for Europe,⁴⁹ marking the end of Hanson-Dyer's close involvement with the BMS(Vic). The move coincided with the beginning of a new phase in her patronage and support of Holst and his music. London was the first city that the Dyers settled in after leaving Melbourne and they stayed in England during 1927 and 1928. The association between Hanson-Dyer and Holst strengthened during this period and they developed a closeness based on personal affinity and common interests.

Davidson has written about the development of this friendship, explaining that Hanson-Dyer began by sending Holst books and inviting him to dinner. Davidson is somewhat sceptical about the nature of Holst's friendship with Hanson-Dyer and suggests that it may have had more to do with the potential benefits to Holst rather than any personal warmth between them. He writes:

That the composer got on well with Louise would have surprised some, for Holst loathed what he termed gushing females, and in full flight she seemed a fair specimen. But her enthusiasm was fired by both intelligence and sincerity, quite apart from her proven efforts to promote his music.⁵⁰

Yet it seems that Holst and Hanson-Dyer simply enjoyed each other's company, sharing a capacity for action and farsightedness and a love of beauty. This new friendship had a significant impact on the ways in which Hanson-Dyer continued to promote Holst's work.

Holst's compositional career was often characterised by self-doubt, leaving him in need of encouragement and moral support. David Galenson has suggested that there are two essentially different types of creative artists: conceptual innovators and experimental innovators. Applying Galenson's methodology of creativity allows for a deeper understanding of how Holst functioned as a composer and, as a result, how Hanson-Dyer's patronage style may have benefited and encouraged him. Conceptual innovators such as Mozart and Picasso make major breakthroughs at an early age.⁵¹ Holst, on the other hand, was an experimental innovator who reached his creative peak late in life. It took him several years to liberate himself

⁴⁶ 'British Music Society: Holst's "Savitri" Striking Production,' *Argus* 1 Oct. 1926: 12.

⁴⁷ See "'Savitri": Performance at Playhouse, Elaborate Production Planned,' *Argus* 21 Sep. 1926: 15 and 'British Music Society: Falling off in Membership,' *Argus* 2 Aug. 1927: 17.

⁴⁸ John G. B. Perry, *A Brief History of the Lyrebird Music Society Inc. 1921–2011* (Melbourne: Lyrebird Music Society, 2011), 2. See also correspondence with Louise Hanson-Dyer from the last parent body held in the manuscript collections of the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library at the University of Melbourne.

⁴⁹ See 'Presentation to Mrs. Dyer,' *Argus* 1 April 1927: 8.

⁵⁰ Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 165.

⁵¹ David W. Galenson, 'Old Masters and Young Geniuses: The Two Life Cycles of Human Creativity,' *Journal of Applied Economics* 12.1 (2009): 1–9.

from the influence of Wagner and to find his own idiom, and he was 46 years old at the time of his first triumph as a composer.⁵² His creative process involved prolonged and organised labouring, continuous learning and experimentation and development of skills. According to Galenson, the impact of this type of creativity on the creator's sense of fulfilment is not always positive:

Experimental artists are motivated by aesthetic criteria ... They are uncertain how to do this, so they work by trial and error, cautiously and incrementally. Their uncertainty about their goals means that these artists rarely feel they have succeeded, and their careers are often dominated by the pursuit of a single objective.⁵³

In a letter to his friend Vaughan Williams from May or June 1926, Holst expressed both his self-doubt and a sense that the Vedic Hindu principle of Dharma fuelled his tenacity and led him to focus on the path of music composition rather than planning future success:

Your letter acted as a much needed tonic and made me do some hard thinking while walking yesterday ... I find that I am a hopeless half-hogger and am prepared to sit on the fence as long as possible, partly through laziness and through force of habit, but chiefly through discovering that if I am a fool in music I am the damndest of damned fools in everything else ... Or to put it in other words, I still believe in the Hindu doctrine of Dharma, which is one's path in life. If one is lucky (or maybe unlucky—it doesn't matter) to have a clearly appointed path to which one comes naturally whereas any other one is an unsuccessful effort, one ought to believe in doing so without worrying about the 'fruits of action,' that is success or otherwise. It applies to certain elementary teachers I have met and Bach. Of course in an emergency one has to throw all this overboard but I fear I only do so at the last moment. And if I don't—if I try and think things out carefully and calmly—I am always wrong. This happened so often that I am convinced that Dharma is the only thing for me. This is all first person singular but cannot be helped. I suppose it is really a confession.⁵⁴

In Holst's vulnerable state, a patron such as Hanson-Dyer must have provided a sense of support and encouragement.

After Hanson-Dyer moved to England, she was able to disseminate Holst's work in several new ways. For example, she published a review in the *Herald* of Holst's incidental music to John Mansfield's play *The Coming of Christ*, which premiered at Canterbury Cathedral on 28 May 1928.⁵⁵ She criticised the costumes and Mansfield's writing, stating that his play 'lacks the naiveté found in the old mystery plays,' but had only praise for Holst's music. She claimed that 'the best lines are those which have been so successfully set to music by Gustav Holst' and that his music 'enhanced the words, and by its aesthetic simplicity made the underlying structure of the play. There is economy of effort, and that restraint which is so characteristic of Holst, and is here so fitting.' She was also impressed by Holst's talent for melody:

⁵² The two premiere performances of *The Hymn of Jesus*, op. 27, both sold out at Queen's Hall in 1920 and was the first sign of success; see Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst* (London: OUP, 1938): 54, 59.

⁵³ Galenson, 'Old Masters and Young Geniuses,' 2.

⁵⁴ Ursula Vaughan Williams and Imogen Holst, *Heirs and Rebels: Letters Written to Each Other and Occasional Writings on Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst* (London: OUP, 1959), 63.

⁵⁵ See Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 160–61.

The song of the *Coming of Christ* is a folk-tune written by Mr. Holst, and bears the name of Hill Crest, Mr. Mansfield's home. It is a nervous, virile tune, with a fine melodic line. It will someday take its place amongst the famous folk tunes of England.⁵⁶

In 1928 the Dyers spent some time in Rome. Holst was experiencing a particularly dry compositional period at this time, so he set out for the continent and joined the Dyers in Rome, where they spent Christmas together. At this point, Hanson-Dyer came up with two new ways in which she could promote Holst. The first was a catalogue of his works published as part of a series titled *A Series of Complete Catalogues: Music by British Composers*.⁵⁷ According to Holst's daughter Imogen, the composer helped with the preparation of this catalogue.⁵⁸

The second idea was to establish a library collection of British music, encompassing composers from Henry Purcell to William Walton, to be the largest in the Southern hemisphere. This was not the first time Hanson-Dyer had been involved in making music available through library collections; she had previously established and subsidised the British Music Society of Victoria Library Collection. This collection serviced members of the British Music Society (Victorian Branch) from the 1920s and is one of the oldest chamber music collections in Australia, with holdings predominantly of works by classical composers, and British and French music from the first half of the twentieth century. The British Music Society Collection contains some of the first printed musical scores of Gustav Holst's chamber works, part-songs and vocal scores of his operas, all of which were available to members. In 1928 it offered vocal works, three full orchestral scores and fifty copies of five-part songs by Holst, as well as other modern and early English music.⁵⁹ In 1999 the collection was purchased by the State Library of Victoria. It currently holds approximately twenty-six works by Holst, which is at the high end of holdings of British composers, and a much larger number of works by J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Handel and Mozart. In 1926, Hanson-Dyer had also supplied the newly established Melbourne University Conservatorium library with four hundred copies of Holst's *First Choral Symphony* (op. 41).⁶⁰ Purchasing Holst's scores for these collections not only disseminated his music but also contributed directly to his royalties.

In 1929, Hanson-Dyer began her new library initiative with a collection of Holst's published music.⁶¹ In 1930 or 1931, seventy-six of Holst's scores, mainly choral and orchestral music, were donated to the Public Library of Victoria (currently State Library of Victoria) with an arrangement for them to be made available to the public.⁶² Only one third of the works listed

⁵⁶ Louise M. Dyer, 'John Mansfield's Mystery Play, Cathedral Performance, Beauty of Words, Sound and Colour,' *Herald* 26 July 1928: 12. The review is dated 30 May 1928.

⁵⁷ See Hanson-Dyer, *Gustav Holst*. Another catalogue was produced for the music of Edward Elgar, see Louise B. M. Dyer, *Edward Elgar, Music by British Composers: A Series of Complete Catalogues no. 2* (London, Melbourne: OUP, 1931).

⁵⁸ Holst, *Thematic Catalogue*, xi.

⁵⁹ Rose Mansley Greer, 'Annual Report,' (Melbourne: British Music Society Victorian Branch, 1928), Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne.

⁶⁰ Peter Tregear, 'Never a Place out of Notes,' *Keeping Scores: 100 Years of the Music Library*, ed. Stephanie Jaehrling (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Library, 2008), 11.

⁶¹ See Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 207–8, 528.

⁶² Dyer, *Gustav Holst*, cover verso. The Gustav Holst Collection at State Library of Victoria also includes original Sanskrit manuscripts, predominantly from the *Rig Veda*. The catalogue was printed privately by Augener in 1928; see Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 485.

in the published catalogue were delivered, however, due to problems with customs duties.⁶³ The establishment of these libraries not only made performance and research scores available to Melbourne musicians, but the purchasing of scores for the collection also generated royalty income for the composer.

Holst's trip to Italy inspired him to compose something for Hanson-Dyer on his return to London. He presented her with the full score of the opera *The Perfect Fool* and the autograph score of the *Twelve Songs* (op. 48) on texts by Humbert Wolfe for her birthday on 19 July 1929, just before she and her husband left London to settle in Paris. He wrote:

I began it on May 19 and ended it on your last day here. It was the first music I had written for 13 months and the first song for 13 years and the first song with piano accompaniment for 20 years. 6½ songs are now done—I've not done so much in a busy term for many years.⁶⁴

The *Twelve Songs*, op. 48, were premiered at the house-warming party of the Dyers' new Paris flat on 9 November 1929.⁶⁵ Dorothy Silk (soprano) and Vally Lasker (piano) performed the songs in front of a select audience that included numerous diplomats and socialites as well as noted figures in the world of modern music such as James Joyce, Albert Roussel, Arthur Honegger, Jacques Ibert, Darius Milhaud, Edgard Varèse, Francis Poulenc and Henry Prunières.⁶⁶

This event was important to Holst because it restored the balance following the fiasco of his beloved symphonic poem *Egdon Heath*. The first Paris performance, also arranged with the help of Hanson-Dyer,⁶⁷ was given on 20 October 1929 by Pierre Monteux and l'Orchestre Symphonique de Paris. Michael Short writes of the reception of the premiere in Paris:

although the rehearsals went well, the performance itself was hissed by the audience, giving audible expression to feelings which English audiences had been too polite to articulate.⁶⁸

The New York and London performances were also poorly received, while the fourth performance, in Cheltenham, succeeded only because Holst himself 'educated' his audience and programmed the concerts.⁶⁹

The house-warming concert was also important for Hanson-Dyer as it was her initiation into the Parisian musical milieu. The event was designed to make a strong statement about

⁶³ Kaleva, 'Collections at the State Library of Victoria,' 170–79. See also Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 208.

⁶⁴ Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 168.

⁶⁵ The songs were premiered under the title *The Dream City* without No. 11 *Rhyme* and No. 12 *Betelgeuse*; see Short, *The Man and his Music*, 391. The first public performance was given on 5 February 1930 by Dorothy Silk and Kathleen Marshall in Wigmore Hall, London. The songs had been refused by three publishers before they were printed separately by Augener in 1930; they were published in one volume by Galliard in 1970. See Holst, *Gustav Holst*, 152 and Holst, *Thematic Catalogue*, 176.

⁶⁶ Short, *The Man and his Music*, 170. See also Holst, *Gustav Holst*, 141.

⁶⁷ Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 169.

⁶⁸ Short, *The Man and his Music*, 284.

⁶⁹ Short, *The Man and his Music*, 390–91; see also Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1969), 141.

her aspirations to establish an influential salon and artistic network and to prepare the way for the launch of her new career in music publishing in Paris.⁷⁰

Hanson-Dyer used her connections and influence to promote Holst's new works in Paris, and introduced Holst to Nadia Boulanger on 11 November 1929. Hanson-Dyer was aware of Boulanger's influence and prestige, and that she frequented the famous salons hosted by Countess de Polignac and M. and Mme Henry Gouin,⁷¹ and thus invited her to the housewarming, but Boulanger was unable to attend. Nevertheless, after meeting Holst, Boulanger wrote in November of that year:

Dear Mr Holst,

I have read with great joy the pure, exquisite and moving songs Mrs Dyer had the charming idea of giving us—I explained her what my disappointment had been not to join the friends welcoming you ... But quite by myself, I have been somewhat consoled with these pages I did not know, I am ashamed to confess. And I beg you to find here all what I am unable to express—awkward in French, paralysed in English I am, knowing so poorly your language—but you will understand, it is not, Dear Mr Holst, in which deep feeling of sincerity, I thank you.⁷²

In another letter written in the same month, she continued:

Could I make you feel how often mother & I are speaking of the wonderful evening we owe you & your friends ... Indeed what we feel toward your music helped a great deal, at the phone unknown the one to the others ... It meant so much & it is so wonderful.⁷³

It must have been heart-warming for Holst to receive acknowledgement from this influential teacher, who at the time was already well recognised for her composition teaching.⁷⁴

Holst died on 25 May 1934, after a long period of illness. Yet Hanson-Dyer's support of the English composer continued for some years after his death. Her last venture that promoted his compositions was the publication of a monograph in 1947 featuring Edmund Rubbra's essay on Holst's music.⁷⁵ Rubbra's book presented an analysis of Holst's works together with a list of works and recordings. As with all of Hanson-Dyer's previous Holst projects, it was intended as part of a series that aimed to disseminate knowledge about contemporary British composers. She planned to include books on Bax, Britten, Elgar, Ireland, Rubbra, Walton

⁷⁰ Hanson-Dyer clearly desired to emulate the Parisian salons of 1915–16; see Sylvia Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester, 2003), 195, 226.

⁷¹ Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 235.

⁷² Jon C. Mitchell, *A Comprehensive Biography of Composer Gustav Holst with Correspondence and Diary Excerpts Including His American Years*, Studies in the History and Interpretation of Music 73 (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 391.

⁷³ Mitchell, *Comprehensive Biography of Composer Gustav Holst*, 392.

⁷⁴ Boulanger was named 'Princess of music' by the popular women's magazine *Minerva* on 15 July 1928; see Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger*, 221 and Caroline Potter, 'Nadia Boulanger as a Teacher,' *Nadia and Lili Boulanger* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 127–47.

⁷⁵ Rubbra was a journalist who, during the period 1932–1949, wrote several articles in the *Monthly Musical Record* and *The Listener* on Holst as a composer and teacher. These were republished in a book in 1974. Some of these articles were again republished in Edmund Rubbra, *Edmund Rubbra's collected essays on Gustav Holst*, ed. Stephen Lloyd and Edmund Rubbra (London: Triad Press, 1974).

and Vaughan Williams.⁷⁶ This postwar publication project seems to have been associated with the interests of her second husband, Dr J. B. Hanson, a literature scholar; *Oiseau-Lyre* printed only five other books that came out in the period 1947–1951, two of which were in a series of *Contemporary British Poets* and one of *Musiciens français contemporains*.⁷⁷

Louise Hanson-Dyer's patronage of Gustav Holst took place in the context of her efforts to popularise new British music in Melbourne and Paris. She supported him by disseminating his music in printed formats and facilitating live performances of his works. This is an example of combined individual and assimilationist patronage enabled by a local network of influential musicians in Melbourne and the network of modern British composers to which Holst's friends Fritz B. Hart and W. Gillies Whittaker helped her to gain access. It is clear that her artistic appreciation and moral support, along with the financial support provided by purchasing and hiring of scores, was an important form of financial aid and encouragement for Holst during the latter part of his life, when his popularity was diminishing.

⁷⁶ See Rubbra, *Gustav Holst*, 48.

⁷⁷ The booklets were discontinued after poor sales; see Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 363–64, 485.