The Horror Queen's English: Elisabeth Lutyens and the Paradoxes of Twentieth Century British Music

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THE HORROR QUEEN'S ENGLISH: ELISABETH LUTYENS AND THE PARADOXES OF
TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH MUSIC

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The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate the paradoxical work of British serialist Elisabeth Lutyens. Musical Englishness in the mid-twentieth century was mainly conceived of as tonal, narrative and folk or folk-inspired. Lutyens was an oddity in the English musical scene as a serialist, but she utilized many of the qualities of traditional Englishness while maintaining a modern, idiomatic sound. Although this combination seems paradoxical, Englishness can be understood in far more inclusive terms than simply tonal, narrative, or folk-like. I begin by defining Englishness as it was perceived and promoted through mainstream music festivals or radio broadcasts from the BBC, as well as the origins of English characteristics. Although the BBC was certainly not the only musical institution in England, it was the most widely accessible and well-funded one. Next, I place Lutyens within this context, bearing in mind the conservative opinion of serialism and the general expectations of female composers. In the last chapter, I use my analysis of Lutyens’s 1959-60 orchestral piece *Quincunx* to demonstrate Lutyens’s synthesis of musical Englishness with that of serialism. This thesis will examine Lutyens’s music as stylistically modern and traditionally English while deconstructing the motivation of musical Englishness as a neo-national tool in post-WWII.
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This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my husband Levi and my parents. Thank you for always believing in me.
INTRODUCTION

Agnes Elisabeth Lutyens was born on 9 July 1906 in London to aristocratic parents: Lady Emily Lytton and self-made architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. Early on, Lutyens recalled a desire to study music as both a way to distinguish herself from her siblings and family: “I wanted to take something that none of them knew anything whatsoever about, and therefore would leave me in peace.” Lutyens had the privilege to study at the Ecole Normale in Paris in 1922 (when she was just sixteen years old) for six months before finishing her musical education at the Royal College of Music. Her earliest works traditionally tonal, and she was influenced by both newer and older music. For example, Lutyens recalls Debussy being considered “Modern with a real big capital M” for his radical use of “extended thirds”; she noted that her musical education had hardly incorporated anything as recent as his music. She also cited Purcell’s “egalitarian” four-part fantasias as inspiring her turn towards serialism before she had ever heard music by Schoenberg, even going so far as to say that she had never heard any serial music before or during WWII.

Lutyens was something of a paradox: she began composing in tonal styles and utilized them in her more mainstream commissions for film and theater, yet despised functional

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4 Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”  
5 Ibid. Lutyens biographers Meirion and Susie Harries note that “her detractors have always been irritated by her insistence on her originality. In its most extreme form it led her to say ‘Oh—did Schoenberg use the twelve-tone method too?’, which is taken as a fatuous attempt to force her way into the vanguard and equate herself with a revolutionary and a genius,” p. 90.
harmony. She was also determined to distinguish herself from others (which occasionally meant portraying herself as an outcast) yet had many social connections with internationally acclaimed composers and musicians. Because of these inconsistencies, Lutyens faced many difficulties having her music performed and taken seriously. However, Lutyens’s shortcomings were not the only factors working against her.

These difficulties included being a female serialist composer, and the generally conservative taste geared towards tonal music from national institutions such as the BBC. Lutyens scholars have noted the unstable relationship between her and BBC programmers and music directors. Thought she had connections within the BBC, many of the Music Department Controllers either did not care for her music or personality. There is a growing pool of scholarship on the BBC itself, including its history, personnel, and biases. Both of these resources, while carefully and thoroughly researched, usually do not integrate either modernism or Englishness. It seems that the dichotomy between modernism and Englishness is still prevalent enough to prevent musicologists from discussing them as potentially overlapping styles rather than diametrically opposed genres.6

Additionally, much scholarship on Lutyens focuses on her life and the struggles she faced. Lutyens has rarely been placed within the wider context of twentieth century English music; most often, she is compared/contrasted with other female English composers of her time or discussed as a serialist. But Lutyens can be understood from perspectives other than gender and serialism. I believe that Lutyens can be discussed from a feminist perspective that simultaneously scrutinizes her life and struggles, serial style, connection to traditional

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Englishness, and placed within the wider context of post-WWII England. Feminism in academia can be a double-edged sword, as the attempt to equate the music of women to that of men’s can lead to placing more value on women’s music or comparative scholarship that presupposes men as the standard. Therefore, my feminist perspective on Lutyens will not attempt to prove her work is better than that of her male contemporaries (as that is a value judgment rather than an objective fact) but merely to examine one of her major works with the same serious consideration paid to men’s music. I thus argue that not only does Lutyens combine elements of serialism and traditional Englishness in her music, but that examining two seemingly paradoxical genres can be understood as compatible despite the strict binary.

The purpose of this thesis is not only to recognize an obscure composer, dissect the culture of post-war England, and reflect on its implications, but gain a deeper understanding of how great an impact socio-political factors have on composer reception and legacy. Lutyens understood that “nobody asks us to be composers; we choose. The world does not owe us a living.” While this is sound logic, the hierarchies in place during her life were not conducive to success in a male- and tonally-dominated musical society. Lutyens should not be hailed as a misunderstood genius simply for daring to resist tonality in a tonally-centered culture; nor should she be completely disregarded for not equaling serial pioneers in their creative genius and popularity (which would be unstable grounds for a solid argument given that genius is a highly nuanced and subjective term).

Instead, I attempt to present Lutyens as a shade of gray in the black and white binary of English and “un-English.” She brought together the seemingly incongruous characteristics of serialism and twentieth century English nationalism. This marriage of opposites is especially

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7 Although between WWI and WWII England was rediscovering pre-Classical music, the movement did not become more mainstream until after WWII.
8 Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”
evident in her orchestral piece *Quincunx*, in which 12-tone serialism intersects with English
texts, subtle pastoral imagery, and text-painting, among other techniques. Additionally, I will
explain how constructions of the dominant style of Englishness were actually largely based in
European traditions and techniques. English madrigals, for example, though praised and held up
as great works during the English Musical Renaissance, were mainly an amalgamation of
popular Italian madrigal techniques and English word play. Teleological harmony was also
largely based in romantic German traditions, especially considering that many of the most
prominent composers of the pre- and post-WWII period were educated abroad or by those who
studied abroad. While Lutyens cannot be credited with forging a unique path, she was a pioneer
in that she helped and encouraged younger composers to explore modernity, uniquely used pre-
Classical music as inspiration, and was a major proponent of promoting English composers
(regardless of their style). Lutyens made many varied contributions to music that have not been
studied or discussed in much depth; my research seeks to reconcile the construct of Englishness
and serialism and minimize the chasm between scholarship on modern male and female
composers.

In the first two chapters, I focus on the problem of mainstream musical Englishness and
its proponents and placing Lutyens’s serial music within that context, respectively. In the the
third chapter, I use Lutyens’s 1959-60 piece *Quincunx* as a case study to demonstrate how
Lutyens was able to (paradoxically) synthesize the previously discussed characteristics of
Englishness within her own musical voice.

In chapter 1, I begin by describing the effects the wars had on England and Europe and
how composers and artists responded to them. WWII was the catalyst for the rise and
rediscovery of early music in England and the subsequent appropriation of folk/Medieval themes
referred to as “pastoralism.” Although the shift towards what would later be dubbed the “English Musical Renaissance” was a reaction to the horrors of war, it quickly became the favorite of conservative music lovers at the BBC, who used their various positions to promote it along with a litany of classics. The irony here is that the pastoral, modal, and folk-like music that was implicitly accepted and enforced as truly English was typically derived from German or Italian styles. Lutyens discerned as much when she remarked in a 1961 interview that serial composers were

hardly ever performed; one was jeered at by the players, if silently; one was considered “dotty” and, the chief thing, one was considered “un-English,” and yet a style derived from Bach or Brahms wasn’t considered un-English. But to adopt the procedures of, say, Schoenberg was almost anti-christ.9

As I will demonstrate, the BBC programmed in its Proms concerts far more pieces by an ever-decreasing collection of (usually dead) German/Austrian composers as opposed to living English composers. The Proms held significant prestige for the composers whose music was featured as they were (and still are) internationally renowned. Therefore, the BBC forms an important link in the socio-political chain of English music.

For this chapter, my arguments will be mainly based on a combination of data on the BBC’s Proms programming; the testimonies of composers, critics, and performers in England at the time; and scholarship on twentieth century musical English nationalism. Although the Proms data suggests a strong relationship between popularity and tonality, there are caveats to be aware of. One is that tonality was not the sole characteristic of twentieth century musical Englishness. In relation to this caveat is the fact that there were several distinctive stylistic movements happening simultaneously that could fall under the umbrella of “Englishness.” The purpose of

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9 Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 105. Throughout this thesis, I will use the term “un-English” to oppose the term English in reference to Lutyens’s response to how her music was perceived. Although this was not a common term used to refer to serialists, it is fitting given the strict boundaries drawn between the pastoral folk-like “us” and serial mechanized “them.”
the first chapter is thus to more clearly define the various characteristics of this style. More importantly, it is crucial to understand that I am not attempting to categorize post-war music as either English or “un-English,” and neither were BBC programmers, critics, or composers.

In the second chapter, I place Lutyens within the previously defined context of post-WWII England. I provide insights into Lutyens’s life and experiences while highlighting some of the socio-political issues she faced, particularly from a feminist perspective. A major obstacle that plagued Lutyens was being a woman in a man’s world; not only has Classical music been dominated by men for centuries, but serialism had inherited the gendered coding of the nineteenth century and was largely considered a masculine endeavor. Additionally, there was the sexism of those around her, including family and BBC employees, for instance. Lutyens wrote in her 1973 autobiography that

I never seemed to meet brother Robert without receiving such quips as “You are no Mozart!” (a claim I was innocent of) or “There has never been a great woman composer!” Point taken. Sister Ursula’s contribution was “Wait till you have a baby—that is the only creative life for a woman—you’ll soon give up wanting to be a composer then.” Father alone always treated me and my work with unfailing courtesy and respect—more than I deserved.”

These sentiments were also echoed, for example, by Bernard Palmer, who conducted a BBC artist profile interview with Lutyens, and asked why she had passed over the “safe career of wife, mother with family,” or wondering “how did [she] get into the music world?” Certainly, a male composer such as John Ireland or Benjamin Britten would not have been asked why they chose a career in composition over having children and being a father. Nevertheless, Lutyens was determined to firmly establish herself as a composer and continue to pursue music after having four children and being saddled with the burden of providing for them and her frequently

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11 Lutyens, Goldfish Bowl, 70.
12 Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”
unemployed husband Edward Clark. Meirion and Susie Harries note Lutyens’s brash
determination to continue composing with an anecdote about the birth of her first child:

By the end of June Sir Edwin was informing Lady Emily, “I saw Betty who announced to me with gaiety that there was a possible babe and she had been very sick.” On 12 February 1934, as William Sebastian was born [Lutyens recalled], “with family comments echoing through my gas-blurred head,” she wrote, “I heard myself roar to the astonished lady doctor miles away at the other end, ‘And I still want to write music, fuck you!’”

This quote simultaneously demonstrates her determination to pursue music as well as the pleasure she derived from being shocking. The Harries suspect that her sister Ursula would have described her as “the ‘problem’ sister, always wanting to be different.” Unfortunately for Lutyens, this boldness of character often overshadowed her musical accomplishments. This chapter will thus connect the construct of musical Englishness and its connotative values with Lutyens’s music and personality in order to understand how and why her music was generally considered un-English.

Finally, in the third chapter, I analyze Quincunx to draw attention to Lutyens’s treatment of popular English musical tropes of the twentieth century. Although the piece is composed more or less in a strict 12-tone manner, Lutyens also, and paradoxically, employed older compositional techniques such as hocket and text-painting as well as an English source for the text to incorporate elements of Englishness in an otherwise un-English medium. In addition to my analysis of the music and text, I will detail Quincunx’s conception, premiere, and reviews to provide crucial background on its performance history and subsequent placement in Lutyens’s oeuvre as one of her finest pieces.

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14 Ibid., 100.
This case study will serve as an example of not only English serialism in the post-WWII period, but as an even more general foil for the reception and treatment of women in music. I will briefly discuss some of Lutyens’s female contemporaries and show that the way they were perceived and written about gave a skewed view of their careers. Like Lutyens, many of her female contemporaries had works that were never performed, and whose stage works remain largely unperformed and/or unrecorded. It was still widely believed that women could not match the creative genius of men in composition, and women were often remembered for teaching or performing. Although musicology and academia in general are becoming more inclusive and representative of women and minorities, centuries of discrimination are difficult to eradicate completely.\textsuperscript{15}

Lutyens is currently a minor figure in musicological scholarship, belonging to a small pool of female serialist composers. While serialism faced many barriers (regardless of a composer’s gender), Lutyens was doubly encumbered by being a serialist in the highly conservative musical atmosphere of post-WWII England. During her mature period, both the Early music revival and the English Musical Renaissance defined what musical Englishness sounded like to conservative music enthusiasts at the BBC. While it would be irresponsible to claim that the BBC alone influenced public taste, their Proms concerts were extremely popular events that were specifically geared towards educating the general public. Despite Lutyens’s combining the genres of Englishness and modernism, she was not able to be both radical and traditional in the eyes of critics.

\textsuperscript{15} Although women were often quite successful as performers (because the idea of their naturally emotional disposition was thought to have lent itself well to emotional expressivity), many women were forbidden or strongly discouraged from studying composition, or pigeon-holed into composing for small ensembles or soloists.
CHAPTER 1
THE PARADOX OF MUSICAL ENGLISHNESS

The two World Wars impacted Europe in every way imaginable, particularly through loss of territory, culture, or lives. Many composers blamed the Wars on the perceived disconnect between Romantic idealisms and reality; had they been more aware of growing international and political tension and less preoccupied with self-expression and introspective whims, then the horrors of the Wars might never have happened. This triggered some composers to distance themselves from traditionally expected musical characteristics such as tonality, and began the ever-increasing chasm within classical music between the (supposedly) emotionally disengaged music of intellectuals and the crowd-pleasing narrative music of popular composers.

Serialism, an exemplary genre of the former category, was initially difficult to accept by both trained musicians and composers as well as the general public, but it became generally tolerated by the 1950s in most of Europe. However, those who embraced it were mostly academics, not the general public. The cultural capital afforded by the bourgeois class of the nineteenth century for understanding the transcendental genius of composers shifted to a cultural capital afforded to those with rigorous musical training and education. England was no exception to this divide, though the dichotomy there was between neo-Romantics/neo-Classicists and modernists. This divide was also generally much wider in England than in other countries such as Germany and France, where avant-garde music thrived. However, with the growing accessibility of the classics via the BBC Proms concerts, this culture capital held significantly
less worth outside universities. Diversity in BBC concerts and radio programs declined particularly in the decade following WWII. The main programmers and directors in the music department at the BBC had notoriously conservative taste as well as a cultural chokehold on what the public heard. The result was that the national palate was gradually acquiring a taste for what it considered to be the English tradition that was, ironically, based largely on traditionally German composers, styles, and music.

This would suggest a national tradition built on the culture of others. And while England was typically referred to “the land without music,” in actually there was a long tradition of music there.¹ For example, England had enjoyed casual musical experiences via the “pleasure gardens” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These public spaces were parks where, upon payment of a small entrance fee, patrons enjoyed entertainment and refreshments. In London alone, there were 631 gardens (though only around 60 offered music).² Although the entertainment was not always strictly musical, the pleasure gardens provided social interaction as well as an all-encompassing wealth of musical variety. Edward Croft-Murray notes that all tastes were catered for, with no division between the “ancient” style (Corelli, Handel) and the “modern” (J.C. Bach, Haydn), between serious and popular, or sacred and secular. Many of the composers and performers were English; in fact the pleasure garden was one of the chief institutions in 18th-century England where native music was fostered.³

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¹ Andrew Blake based his 1997 book *The Land Without Music: Music, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) on a quip made by German author Oskar Schmitz. Blake notes in his preface that “in the early months of the First World War, [Schmitz] dubbed Britain ‘Das Land ohne Musik’—the land without music. The insult should really have been translated as ‘the land without composers.’ There was in fact a great deal of musical activity in Edwardian Britain […] but, Schmitz implied, there was not, as in Germany (and Italy, Russia and France), an orderly sequence of ‘great’ British composers,” p. xi.


³ Ibid.
This is supported by an account by the German traveler Carl Philip Moritz, who visited London in 1782 and subsequently wrote a book about the city. His experience suggests a strong presence of an English tradition and composers. Moritz marveled that he observed

old and young, nobility and commoners, I saw them all crossing and recrossing in a motley swarm. […] In one direction, some who wished to see and be seen were going round in an everlasting circle, in another, a group of music-lovers had gathered to delight their ears in front of the orchestra; others were delighting their palates in a more substantial manner at the well-served tables.

The nineteenth century in general saw the growth in popularity of opera and England was no exception. Arthur Jacobs notes that in London, “the promotion of [foreign language] opera in English continued to be pursued by various managements. […] Its repertory consisted mainly of new or recent British composers,” while Cyril Ehrlich et. al. note that concerts became more expensive and, hence, more exclusive.

Yet, from the early years of the BBC Proms, the spotlight shone brightest on non-English composers, both dead and living. For example, during WWII (1939-1945), 316 Wagner pieces were performed, edging out Beethoven (238), Mozart (101), and Bach (159) (see Appendix 1). In comparison, English composers such as Vaughan Williams, Elgar, and Walton had staggeringly fewer performance numbers from these same war years (34, 65, and 28, respectively). Nevertheless, these programming decisions paradoxically led to the increased sense of English nationalism during and after the Wars. This came about through the promotion

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5 Ibid. 46.
6 Temperley et. at., “London (i).”
7 “BBC Proms Performance,” 21 July 2018. http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3SsklRvCSPvfhR13w gz6HCJ/proms-performance-archive. In this instance, the number of pieces performed includes any piece by a specific composer regardless of whether or not the piece had already been performed in a previous concert.
8 See Appendix 1. While German and Austrian composers dominated Proms concerts, they had a significantly narrower pool of composers compared to the English. The Proms featured a small number of pieces and a vast variety of English music and composers.
of a very specific sound, especially by the agency of BBC Proms and radio broadcasts. This sound favored traditional harmony, narrative, and singable melodies. In this way, the English eventually defined their own musical identity by embracing and filtering the musical tradition and legacy of Europe through their own musical dialect. It is crucial to bear in mind the parameters of musical Englishness as it saturated both national and international perceptions of contemporary English music, which created difficulties for Lutyens the serialist.

In this chapter, I will explore the concept of Englishness, as both a national identity and musical sound. I will specifically examine the role that the BBC played in shaping and promoting (whether intentionally or not) this narrow view of musical Englishness. This view coincided with the political climate of the time: conservative directors and programmers at the BBC did not want to promote the music of those they decreed as having unsavory political ideologies or affiliations. Lutyens was doubly disregarded: she was a known communist, and her music did not immediately strike audiences as being particularly English. This can be largely attributed to the narrowness and paradoxical way in which musical Englishness was implicitly defined and reinforced.

Additionally, there is the puzzling question of the origin of this narrow view of musical Englishness. Did the BBC promote tonal musical because it is what they believed the public wanted to hear, or was the inclination of the public the influence of the BBC’s programming? While this question ventures beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that the BBC cannot be considered entirely responsible for creating an ever-narrowing musical taste; the issue of taste is far wider and complex to be entirely understood from just the perspective of national cultural institutions like the BBC. But since the BBC held (and arguably still does hold) a
monumental platform in the musical culture of England, it can be considered a formative institution in Lutyens’s career.

Therefore, it is important to first define Englishness as concisely as possible, but without pigeon-holing all music by English composers as either English or un-English. It is this kind of systematic approach to carefully classifying music into strict categories that leads to the minimization and inaccurate representation of composers, pieces, or movements. Nationalism, like music, is complex and best understood from multiple perspectives. In his Grove entry on the subject, Richard Taruskin lists eight different types of nationalism (from “political nationalism” to “export nationalism”) and notes that

nationalism should not be equated with the possession or display of distinguishing national characteristics – or not, at any rate, until certain questions are asked and at least provisionally answered. The most important ones are, first, who is doing the distinguishing? and second, to what end?9

Likewise, the purpose of this thesis is not to define twentieth century English nationalism as inclusively as possible, but to examine its characteristics in relation to Lutyens’s career and serialism.

Within these parameters, musical Englishness in post-War England can be loosely defined as tonal, teleological music that utilizes English folk or folk inspired sources in either melody, harmony, text, form, or any combination thereof. Eric Saylor credits the turn to pastoralism with the desire of veterans to return to beauty to “[mitigate] their apocalyptic surroundings.”10 Additionally, Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes remark that “in origin and drive, [pastoral/folk music advocates] was a political campaign, intended to fuse ‘national’ with

‘nature,’ and to place the end-product at the center of ideas of Englishness.” The implication attached to folk music borrowings is that the materials being borrowed are generally from or about the Medieval or Renaissance eras. Composers and audiences alike, however, were not particularly discerning about whether these medievalisms were authentic or anachronistic. Similarly, the national or cultural origin of these folk elements was not an especially pressing issue either.

It is therefore critical to have a thorough understanding of the socio-political climate in England during and after the Wars. This will help clarify not only how Lutyens acted within this atmosphere but how it affected her career. First, this requires an understanding of the BBC, the men who controlled its airwaves, and the change in function of the Proms concerts. Next, I will examine the rise of pastoralism and how it and other characteristics, were implicitly labeled and reinforced as authentically English. The exclusivity of pastoralism (and therefore tonality) left little space for serialism in the annals of the neo-national English canon. Finally, I will interpret the implications of the rise and perpetuation of Englishness that will lead to a wider understanding of what role Lutyens played in this musical setting.

**Serialism, the BBC, and Proms**

Before delving into the socio-political climate of post-war England, it is important to have a brief understanding of significant national and international events before the wars that helped create

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12 Themes, forms, timbres, instruments, techniques, etc. believed to be from the Middle Ages (but are actually more modern) are typically referred to by scholars as medievalisms. Though they are rarely ever as old as previous generations were led to believe, they are so widely associated with the Middle Ages that their evocation of the past is still valid. See Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality: Essays*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990) and Isabella van Elferen “Fantasy Music: Epic Soundtracks, Magical Instruments, Musical Metaphysics,” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 24, no. 1 (2013): 4-24.
the climate that Lutyens inherited. Beginning in 1914, the British Empire was losing many of its foreign territories and control:

The British Empire was larger than ever, for Britain added Mesopotamia, renamed Iraq in 1921, and Palestine to her realms in an unofficial form of imperialism, what one historian has called the “scramble for Turkey.” […] The expense of the First World War ruined British global hegemony, along with that of France […]. The post-war settlement was really France’s and Britain’s last hurrah as the great imperial powers they had been for the previous 200 years.\(^{13}\)

This loss of territories and shrinking of the empire on which “the sun would never set” must have come as a national disappointment. Additionally, the rise of the United States as the foremost world power was a bitter reality that contributed to the already large loss of international status. With the loss of empirical control and destruction wrought by WWII, England was in dire need of national rejuvenation. Pastoralism and what would later be referred to as the English Musical Renaissance were the musical responses to this need for a morale boost.

Serialism, however, has never been a hallmark of twentieth century English music (nationalist or otherwise). In fact, traditional tonality had more commonly been the order of the day in English music. English madrigals of the sixteenth century marked a time of prodigious output and held the potential of becoming the roots of a long and glorious English tradition. Saylor comments on the concept of idealizing the past into the cliché known as “Merrie England,” noting that positioning the creative accomplishments of William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, Thomas Morley, John Wilbye, Orlando Gibbons, and Thomas Weelkes as analogous to those of contemporaneous figures like Queen Elizabeth, Walter Raleigh, Francis Drake, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Francis Bacon enhanced the composers’ prestige, playing up their links to a period widely considered to be the most glorious in English history.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Rebecca Fraser, “George V (1910-1936),” in *The Story of Britain: From the Romans to the Present: A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 654.

This corroborates Joseph Kerman’s section on English madrigals in the Grove article on the “Madrigal.” Kerman (like Saylor and any scholar of English madrigals) plainly acknowledges the reliance of English madrigal composers on the Italian madrigals of the time. Despite the obvious and well-recognized relation between English and Italian madrigals, for post-War England, these madrigals almost held elixir properties, as Saylor writes that

Merrie England therefore provided a conceptual framework within which the clock could be rolled back—on capitalism, industrialization, social hierarchies, labor relations, even modernity in general—in accordance with the political or cultural desires of those who adopted it. Although such widely variable perspectives were not the exclusive provenance of social elites, they were frequently instigated and controlled by people of means. This in turn helped reinforce the elites’ social and economic status (and values) among the masses willing to embrace what Merrie England had to offer.

It is no small wonder then that England has never been the birthplace of any kind of modern musical movements (that is, modern movements whose primary concern was inventing new ways to compose, make, or understand music). While some English composers were determined to write the music of the future, others found novelty in music that had long remained dormant.

In England, the 1950s marked the beginning of what would soon become an international interest in pre-Classical music. This interest in English Musical Renaissance composers, however, differed from the Neoclassical interests of composers such as Stravinsky, whose purpose in utilizing past forms was generally to bring a transparency to form and structure and to display a “distinctly contemporary multiplicity of awareness.” In other words, Stravinsky’s Neoclassicism lacked the national overtones of the English Musical Renaissance. This

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excavation of the past eventually flourished with the early music revival and English Musical Renaissance in the 1960s and 1970s.\textsuperscript{18}

The sudden rise of tonal Englishness was easily to capitalize on, hence the BBC’s more frequent use of music composed in a similar fashion. Lutyens was particularly perturbed not only by the elevation of pastoral music, but the ever-increasing limitation of the canon to a small number of masterworks. She wrote in her autobiography on the subject that

all living artists compete with “the towering dead with their nightingales and psalms,” but the average intelligent person is not content to [consume] repeatedly and exclusively the same handful of classics […] Strangely—to me—the music lover wants just this; the same works from the same classical masters week after repeated week, program after repeated program. And most of the musical powers support and encourage this necrophilia. For there the money lies, and the music world becomes as commercial as Christmas and as difficult to escape from.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite Lutyens’s obvious bias against pastoralism and the BBC, tonal Englishness was nearly impossible to match in popularity and marketability.

Thereby, serialism seemingly stood little chance. The genre is largely credited to Arnold Schoenberg, who wished to dissolve tonality in favor of equality between all 12 chromatic pitches, and supposedly claimed in 1921 or 1922 (published later in 1959) that “today I have discovered something which will assure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years.”\textsuperscript{20} This automatically painted serialism in broad, German strokes in the minds of influential English music programmers and enthusiasts who sought to perpetuate the idea of Merrie England.\textsuperscript{21} Consequently, the next chapter will detail how much of her music was passed over in favor of more tonal music for Proms concerts. It is important to note that although

\textsuperscript{19} Lutyens, \textit{Goldfish Bowl}, 68.
Lutyens was on friendly terms with Schoenberg, she never considered herself a pupil or “disciple” of his in her own experimentations with serialism. Lutyens began her compositional career writing tonal music, but (always eager to distinguish herself from her peers) turned to serialism on her own, supposedly before hearing any music by Schoenberg.\(^22\)

Lutyens was perfectly capable of composing successfully in both serial and tonal styles. But when she heard in 1953 from the new BBC Music Controller Richard Howgill that “established” composers were given more seniority when presenting their music for Proms performance, she responded with a series of angry letters complaining that it was still difficult for her to be performed.\(^23\) But these apparently fell on deaf ears. In one response, Howgill wrote to Lutyens, “your work for documentaries and features is much appreciated and possibly is more the real Elizabeth [sic] Lutyens than that of your music which shows you as a disciple of Schoenberg.”\(^24\)

This reveals that the diversity of music at the Proms could only reflect the taste of those in charge and what they believed the public would most want to hear. In other words, they held a cultural monopoly on English music. And this perturbed Lutyens. In a 1973 letter to composer friend William Alwyn, she recalled her growing sense of anger and belligerence: “I’m damned if I’ll be pushed around by a lot of third-rate mediocrities. This makes me obstinate and to many aggressive and has, apparently, resulted in everyone wanting to take me ‘down a peg’ (when I was never ‘up’).”\(^25\)

Other English serialists, even men, such as Humphrey Searle also struggled


\(^{23}\) Rhiannon Mathias, Lutyens, Maconchy, Williams and Twentieth Century British Music: A Blest Trio of Sirens (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 158.

\(^{24}\) Mathias, Lutyens, Maconchy, Williams, 158. Howgill was not the only BBC employee to lay such offenses against Lutyens’s music. Frank Wade (Howgill’s assistant during this exchange) said of Lutyens in 1953 that “most of her concert music strikes everybody as ugly and overblown.” He wrote the next year that “she should know by now that there is no living in composing for her.” As quoted in Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 186.

\(^{25}\) Lutyens as quoted in Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 186.
to gain a steady platform with the BBC despite having worked with them for a short period.\textsuperscript{26}

Searle recalls in his memoirs that “I was given some work as a deputy teacher at the [RCM], but was not allowed to join the staff as the authorities were frightened that I might ‘infect the students with atonality’ as they put it.”\textsuperscript{27}

Thus, composers who frequently featured English folk songs or folk inspired melodies were vastly more successful in being featured in Proms concerts. Elgar’s use of traditional tonality, regular rhythmic meters, and strong resemblance to actual folk songs, for instance, allowed him and composers that followed in a similar style – such as Britten, Vaughan Williams, Tippett, and Walton – to easily find success with the BBC and the public. It was slowly becoming apparent that England was more interested in pastoralism and the growing musical Renaissance than challenging their preconceived notions about what music should sound like.

Pastoralism was particularly attractive in the post-WWII period because, as Saylor observes in his recent book on the topic,

\begin{quote}
the new culture that pastoralists spoke of so quietly—yet paradoxically, with such force—was overwhelmingly one of peace, of remembrance, of understanding the horror that war imparts to anyone it touches: soldiers and civilians, young and old, rural and urban, foreign and domestic. English composers employed the pastoral mode to memorialize without proselytizing, mourn without romanticizing, remember without glorifying. In doing so, they invested it with a power and signification that it had hitherto not received.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

With the wounds of war still within living memory, many critics and a handful of composers thought of modernism and serialism as disrespectful since it reminded them of the mechanical destructiveness of war. Ironically, while England’s composers turned to pastoralism, some composers in France turned to avant-garde and/or jazz infusion and some German composers

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{26} Mathias,  \textit{Lutyens, Maconchy, Williams}, 83.
\bibitem{27} Humphrey Searle, “Lesley, and Rosie’s Pub,” in \textit{Quadrille with a Raven} available online at \url{http://www.musicweb-international.com/searle/lesley.htm}.
\bibitem{28} Saylor, \textit{English Pastoral Music}, 97.
\end{thebibliography}
turned towards serialism as a way to deal with the aftermath of the war. Saylor’s work demonstrates how even in the twentieth century England was still separated from Western Europe in terms of musical trends and movements.

There is also the matter of social politics to consider in the convoluted web of the BBC Proms. Although Lutyens had many social and professional connections to contemporary composers, conductors, and musicians, they did not yield many opportunities. This can be explained in part by Lutyens’s pride: she often did not allow friends or family to offer her financial support. Lutyens was determined to earn her success for herself. For example, her friend William Glock (later knighted), began working as the Controller of Music at the BBC in 1959. Glock had a much more liberal attitude towards new music and therefore programmed much more of it in the Proms than his predecessors. But Lutyens did not ask for favors or special treatment from him; consequently, she became increasingly bitter and confrontational as the decades rolled on and she faced difficulties getting her music performed in Proms concerts.29 Although she had a respectable amount of radio broadcasts through the BBC, the Proms held (and arguably still do hold) the potential for great public exposure, esteem, and cultural capital.

The public shared the BBC’s conservative attitude towards serialism; the question is whether this attitude was a result of the BBC’s programming choices, or if it had always been so, and the BBC merely reflected what the public wanted. This is difficult to assess, however, with a lack of empirical data about taste and listening practices. Additionally, the voices that are most easily accessible from this period about music are largely BBC employees and composers who often had major qualms with the way the other group valued music. While it would be careless to place the responsibility of influencing the entirety of England in its musical tastes on the BBC

29 Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 186.
and its Proms concerts, it is undeniable that the concert series quickly became a symbol of English culture and, during the wars especially, perseverance. Lutyens biographers Meirion and Susie Harries note that “a large proportion of administrators [in the BBC] seemed timid, complacent, backward-looking, suspicious not just of Communism […] but of all that seemed to question the status quo.” It is now necessary for a brief history of the BBC to understand their control and influence over public taste.

The BBC: Its History and its Role

The website of the British Broadcasting Corporation (formerly the British Broadcasting Company) offers a simplified history of their broadcasts beginning in the 1920s and ending with the most current programs and broadcasts of note. What is especially indicative of its rapid growth is that although the BBC did not begin offering radio programs until 1922, it had changed the C in BBC from “Company” to “Corporation” by 1927. Additionally, the timeline states that “following the closure of numerous amateur stations,” it began its daily broadcasts in London, which implies that, even if the BBC was not the cause of these “amateur” stations’ failure, it was already wealthy and/or powerful enough to fill the empty spaces. Within ten years of their first daily broadcasts, the BBC was not only dabbling in television, but provided a magazine listing their radio programs, commissioned a new building to be built for their radio services (which had outgrown their previous location at Savoy Hill), and broadcast groundbreaking cultural and historical events, such as speeches given by English royalty (King George V) for the first time.

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30 Ibid., 182.
32 Ibid.
Although the Proms are now a widely popular summer concert series, they were initially private. From 1895 to 1927, the concerts took place in the Queen’s Hall, and were not yet affiliated with the BBC (which was, as mentioned, not founded until 1922). The concerts went through periods of financial difficulty, but publishing companies sponsored their continuation until the new BBC (now British Broadcasting Corporation) gained control of the Proms in 1927 after more financial difficulties. With new management, a new conductor, and the ability for the concerts to be broadcast, the concerts took on a completely different audience and purpose. Before his sudden death in 1926, Queen’s Hall manager Robert Newman and BBC Symphonic Orchestra conductor Henry J. Wood formulated a new function for the Proms: they repurposed the concerts to be pedagogical. They planned for whole days during the Proms seasons to be dedicated to modern music, usually preceded and followed by more palatable classics. Their goal was to use these concerts as a way to “enable general audiences from all kinds of backgrounds and levels of musical experience to become familiar with and be inspired by orchestral music.” Another staple of the Proms was to introduce novelties, which Jenny Doctor describes as “works that were presented at the Proms as some kind of first performance.” So while the Proms concerts of the 1950s may not have been as keen to present the public with novel music, this had been one of its original functions.

Performers also helped to spread Englishness through public concerts and radio. One such performer was English bass-baritone Peter Dawson who was featured in 32 BBC broadcasts.

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34 Ibid., 93.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 95.
39 Ibid., 96.
between 1930-38 and was also a best-selling recording artist. Dawson, like Newman and Wood, was eager to educate the public through his BBC broadcasts and recordings; he often lamented the disappearance of domestic music-making and sought to rekindle the culture of private entertainment. He did this in part by insisting on singing everything in English regardless of the piece’s original language. This was an artistic decision that endeared him to the public, particularly those whose musical knowledge and education was very limited. He was often praised for his “clarity of diction” and thought himself a “singer of the people” for it. He believed he was “giving the public what they wanted to hear” by singing in their native tongue; surely the BBC employees considered this beneficial to the curating an English musical culture.

Most of the major BBC players in the Proms and radio programming were deeply conservative not only in their musical tastes but politically as well. They particularly despised and feared Communism. This made it difficult for any composer associated with Communism in any way to be trusted or featured in any program. It is therefore important to note that Lutyens joined the Communist Party in the early 1940s as an “anti-Fascist demonstration.” Thus she had to overcome not only the widespread distaste for serialism and the challenge of being a woman in a man’s world, but the misalignment of political ideologies as well. The lingering bourgeois idea that a composer’s music can transcend the mundane realities of their lives and personalities is certainly not true, especially in Lutyens’s case.

41 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 100.
**English Constructions and Cultural Emblems**

One of the reasons serialism struggled for representation during the English Musical Renaissance was because of how these modern constructions of the past (specifically nostalgia and authenticity) reveal much more about those who enforced its “authenticity” than they do the older practices themselves. Often, the way that older musical traditions are presented and practiced are more indicative of modern practices, theories, and beliefs. In the case of post-war England – during a time when much of London was still struggling to rebuild and return to everyday life – the nostalgia for a time before the Blitzkrieg, horrors of chemical warfare, and significant losses manifested in the revival and collection of English folk songs and composers.

Richard Taruskin has thoroughly demonstrated the pitfalls of obsessions with nostalgia, particularly when they compose the foundation of historical authenticity. In his 1995 collection of essays on performance history, *Text and Act*, he argues that

authenticistic, modern audiences have been discovering a Bach they can call their own – or, in other words, that Bach has at last been adapted with unprecedented success to modern taste. Our authentistic performers, whatever they may say or think they are doing, have begun to accomplish for the twentieth century what Mendelssohn et al. had accomplished for the nineteenth. They are reinterpreting Bach for their own time – that is, for our time – the way all the deathless texts must be reinterpreted if they are in fact to remain deathless and exempt from what familiarity breeds.\(^{45}\)

This relates not only to Bach, but any and all music that predated him and found a place in the modern canon. Taruskin declares that there is an inability to preserve music without adding the personal (often anachronistic) stamp of those who seek to preserve it.\(^{46}\) However, he believes this is not necessarily detrimental; immaculacy in music is typically indicative of a lack of interest. In other words, by leaving unique signatures on music in and out of the traditional canon,


\(^{46}\) Ibid.
performers play an instrumental role in defining modernism and indicating what performers, audiences, and composers valued most from performance at the time.

Furthermore, the nostalgia of the English Musical Renaissance is not a new or unique concept. What is now referred to as the Renaissance Era is thought of as a “rebirth” of ancient Greco-Roman aesthetics and philosophies centuries removed from the actual time and culture. The Gothic revival of the nineteenth century was an even more far-reaching nostalgia for the Middle Ages. From this perspective, the English Musical Renaissance of the 1960-70s is far from novel. To invoke Taruskin again, another predicament of nostalgia is that – despite how much time, energy, research, and passion is fed into it – the product is always a modern interpretation of the past and never a faithful recreation. It is the attempt at a recreation of the past that speaks to the intense amount of temporal escapism that had befallen England during its post-war musical renaissance.

Nevertheless, pastoralism became the most popular balm to the burns of war. This is due in part, according to Saylor, to the compartmentalization of pastoral art into one of two basic categories: propagandistic justification of war or Romantic glorification of heroism.\textsuperscript{47} It was especially utilized by composer such as Vaughan Williams and John Ireland, both surviving WWII veterans who used pastoral themes in their music to help reintegrate themselves back into civilian life.\textsuperscript{48} Each of these types of pastoralism was a cultural coping mechanism born from the need for temporal escapism into the imagined simpler time.

In an attempt to salvage national pride and rally the public, music played a crucial role in carving out a nationalist style in England. The search for an idyllic, simpler past can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution. Romantics of the nineteenth century emulated what they

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
believed was the past; pastoral shepherds singing folk songs and reveling in the beauty of the unspoiled countryside were common themes throughout all forms of Romantic art. This nostalgia for a simpler, pastoral time returned during both world wars. It is manifested particularly aggressively in the 1962 documentary on Elgar that will be discussed later. Lutyens and other modernists, however, did not share this enthusiasm for pastoralism. As Saylor notes, there were plenty of “hardline [English] modernists ... who [argued] that the cataclysmic events of the Great War rendered pastoralism irrelevant, even offensive, as a method of engaging with the world.”

The twentieth-century musical English national tradition is nebulous and only becomes more so when attempting to define it. Rather than put the English tradition within a single strict category, it would be better to imagine it as a spectrum, on which pastoralism and folk tradition are but one aspect of Englishness. Nevertheless, folk or music emulating folk music quickly became the pinnacle of post-War Englishness. In his 1954 article entitled “Vaughan Williams and the English Tradition,” Eric Taylor describes why he believes that folk songs held the potential for serving as the basis for a national sound:

frequently, however, [national tradition] can be measured in technical terms: this is particularly true of folk-music, which develops uninterrupted and unhampered by the fashions and vicissitudes of the professional musical world. Folk-music indeed, as Vaughan Williams has often pointed out, is both proof and example of a national tradition, of a native care for music.

While Taylor clearly puts much stock in the creative potential of folk songs, he is careful not to exaggerate the tradition in Vaughan Williams’s music. Yet, despite this attempt at objectivity, the above passage speaks clearly about how folk music was perceived at the time. In the 1950s, England was still recovering from WWII, and the widespread Romantic nostalgia for a simpler, less industrialized time can be heard in Taylor’s language. He describes folk music as

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49 Ibid., 58.
51 Ibid., 525.
“uninterrupted and unhampered,” which paints it as a pure, untouched vestige of some imagined happier time. Throughout the article, he never mentions serialism and emphasizes the beauty of Vaughan Williams’s music because of its folk music spirit. He agrees somewhat with Roussau’s argument that national sounds were influenced by songs and language.52

But Taylor also writes that national sounds coming from folk music was “certainly an inadequate explanation.”53 It is therefore critical to recall that much of the English influence in continental European music came through literature. This is especially apparent in the sheer volume of operas, symphonies, songs, etc. based on Shakespeare’s oeuvre alone: “more than 270 operas and a little over 100 operettas and musicals based on the dramatic works of Shakespeare” have been written.54 These stage works began in the sixteenth century but become increasingly more popular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the latter as a result of the increase in publication of his works and the former as a result of an increasing interest in pre-Classical works).55

David Lowenthal has written extensively on this concept and ideas relating to history and heritage in his 1998 book The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History.56 He dedicates two chapters to a discussion of the challenges in distinguishing heritage from history and discerning the subsequent flaws to teaching and learning history when the two are conflated. Lowenthal notes that history was often taught as the objective truth about past events and that “textbooks are not to be questioned.”57 Once this connection was made, it was nearly impossible to dispel. The

52 Ibid., 522.
53 Ibid., 523.
55 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 116.
trouble lies with mistaking the goals of history with that of heritage: “the most crucial distinction [between the two] is that truth in heritage commits us to some present creed; truth in history is a flawed effort to understand the past on its own terms.” Michael Beckerman also touches on this subject in his article on nineteenth century Czech composers, concluding that even though we cannot precisely define “Czechness,” any more than we can fully articulate “Russianness” or “Germanness,” we must realize that the participants in nineteenth century musical life believed in such things and valued them. As such, they must be considered as “aesthetic facts” without which one cannot clearly interpret the nuances of communication in the music of this period.

Elgar was an exemplary case of how composers were re-branded to in the 1960s to amplify his Englishness. Although Elgar was already considered quintessentially English, Jeffrey Richards’s observes how the origins of Elgar’s English nationalism were repackaged at the time:

Ken Russell’s documentary film Elgar, made in 1962 for the BBC art series “Monitor,” was one of the most popular television films ever made, and with its beautiful and imaginative visual imagery and creative use of Elgar’s music it did much to revive that music in the culture of the day. But the Elgar it portrayed was an Elgar reconstructed for the 1960s. The unforgettable opening of the film [featured] a small boy on a white pony galloping across the Malvern Hills [and] established a dominant theme in the film—Elgar was inspired by the countryside and in particular the countryside of Worcestershire. He starts out in Worcester and eventually returns there, and it always remains the source of his inspiration.

This certainly explains Elgar’s position as the most performed English composer in the BBC proms to date, even beating out composers such as Bach, Stravinsky, and Berlioz. And, although Richards points out that scholars have attempted to subdue Elgar’s political beliefs, he was “a patriot, a monarchist and a Conservative, and his [support of] imperialism was a logical extension of these values.” Coincidentally, the majority of men in charge of the Proms and radio broadcasts in the BBC during the 1960s were very conservative themselves and made

58 Ibid., 119.  
60 Richards, Imperialism and Music, 45.  
61 Ibid., 44.
many nasty remarks about serialism.\textsuperscript{62} In this way, Elgar, and consequentially traditional tonality (of the German tradition), became associated with the English countryside presented in the documentary.

Russell and those who made the Elgar documentary were more concerned with heritage than history. The 1960s were, after all, when the English Musical Renaissance was beginning to gain enough momentum in England to begin spreading to other countries and genres as well. This begs the question: how would serialism, music that abandons traditional tonality altogether, fare in this increasingly conservative, tonally-centered musical culture? It does, after all, also stem from German/Austrian roots. Having addressed this already, it is clear that serialism could not have an equal position besides the music of Beethoven, Bach, or Wagner because of its dissonance and its association with mechanization (and therefore war). How, then, did Lutyens navigate this complex field of English pastoralism, escapism, and tonality?

**Conclusion**

The factors discussed above combine to present a basic idea of how Englishness was conceived in music in post-war England. Constructions of nationalism depended on perceived impressions of an idyllic, unspoiled England. In searching for a time when England could boast of many popular composers, the Renaissance offered such gems as William Byrd, John Dowland, and Thomas Tallis to polish and display along with more recent English composers such as Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and William Walton. Additionally, these composers and other

\textsuperscript{62} One such remark about serialism is from BBC radio assistant Robert Simpson as quoted in Harries, *Pilgrim Soul*, p. 184: “[12-tone composers] have become capable of expressing only hysteria, claustrophobia, manic depression, and all the other cognate states of mind, some of them nameless. Many of them have no intention of expressing such things, which makes the helpless result of their cerebral pattern-making all the more pathetic.”
canonical composers (mainly German/Austrian) were frequently programmed in the BBC Proms concerts, which only served to reinforce the concept that tonality is an English musical quality.

With all of this context setting the scene for post-WWII English musical society, it will be easier to recognize Lutyens within it and understand how it aided and hindered her career. This also complicates the question of whether or not Lutyens’s music can be considered as English as that of Elgar or Vaughan Williams among others. While the roots of twentieth century Englishness in music are mainly linked to non-English sources, it is the perception of Englishness in music that shows what mattered most to composers, musicians, musicologists, theorists, and any person or institution that sought to profit from it. And whether or not this profit led to literal or cultural capital, the cultivation and preservation of an English musical tradition can serve as an example of musical/cultural appropriation and its function in a nation’s history.
CHAPTER 2

LUTYENS IN THE CONTEXT OF TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLISH NATIONALISM

As discussed in the previous chapter, there was a growing interest in pre-Classical music in post-WWII England. As the Harries note, “in Britain […] between 1926 and 1930, the years [Lutyens] spent as a music student, the English Renaissance was nearing its peak.”\(^1\) With tonal Englishness dominating the airwaves and concert programs, Lutyens was eager from an early age to distinguish herself from the herd, later referring to the most famous English composers of the time (Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Holst, etc.) as “the ‘cow-pat’ school of English pastoral—‘folky-wolky modal melodies on the cor anglais.’”\(^2\) While avoiding obvious elements of musical Englishness, Lutyens did add subtle touches of Englishness into her music, particularly in her mature period beginning in the mid-1950s. But the BBC, and consequently the public, was not particularly interested in subtle nationalism. Unfortunately for Lutyens, pastoralism was immensely popular following WWII. As Saylor notes in his book on the subject, “whether as social commentary, public tribute, or private pilgrimage, pastoral music forged a crucial link between the realities of a world split apart by conflict and the ideals of those left to tend the wreckage.”\(^3\) With both wars alive and well within living memory, England was not yet ready to

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\(^2\) Elisabeth Lutyens quoted in Ibid., 53.
accept the modern dissonance of German-born serialism, instead opting for pastoralism, nostalgia for a simple, idyllic past, and the gentle melodies of pastoral composers.

When it comes to understanding Lutyens’s career in the context of musical Englishness, it is important to bear in mind some fundamental questions that will not only shape this chapter but relate to wider issues in musicology today. Lutyens can be considered a very broad case study for how women in twentieth century music were perceived during their time, how she and other women challenged the status quo (or did not), and how our perceptions of them reveal how much the academic discourse has changed.

The first question to ask is whether Lutyens’s career and legacy is based on her accomplishments as a composer or as a teacher. Lutyens, although shy and anxious at first, was a passionate composition teacher whose students idolized her musical boldness and individuality. She sought out young students to nurture and support in light of her own struggle as a young woman trying to succeed in music. Because being an educator is strongly associated with women, it is plausible that Lutyens has been relegated in music history as a “mere” educator rather than composer; information about her can be found mainly in the footnotes in writing about her students.

Lutyens was desperate to carve out her own place in musical society, without the aid of her famous surname or using her musical connections. In a way, Lutyens did accomplish that: she helped found the Lemare-Macnaghten concerts, started the Composers Concourse, and participated in many other musical societies. Lutyens never claimed to be a feminist, and as the Harries note,

[she] was never interested in feminism as an organized movement. In contexts where she wanted to emphasize the difficulty of her life, she would mention the added handicap of being a woman, but she felt it was one that each woman had to overcome for herself, as she had done. She could rarely resist the offer of a performance, so her works did appear
in concerts devoted to “women’s music,” but she consistently refused to take part in discussions or workshops which treated women as essentially separate from men.\(^4\)

Although Lutyens did not label herself as a feminist, many modern feminist musicologists (McClary, Citron, MacArthur, etc.) would likely label her as such because of their shared idea that women and their music should not be treated differently than men’s. This is why interpreting Lutyens from a feminist perspective is a logical viewpoint to assume.

The second question to consider is what implications there were in Lutyens’s attempt to forge a lineage between herself and composers such as Frescobaldi and Purcell while almost denying any stylistic connection between herself and Schoenberg (and the other Second Viennese composers). And, to what extent can this be considered a feminist or non-feminist endeavor? After the death of Beethoven in the early nineteenth century, many composers claimed or were nominated as heirs to his throne. And indeed, the discrepancy over who best attempted to embody the genius of Beethoven waged on for decades and involved many composers from several nationalities. It easily lends itself to a comparison between relatives squabbling over who is next in line for the throne (such as during Tudor times). Lineage, whether genetic or stylistic, is crucial in finding a place in Western music historiography, that is, being able to strike the proper balance between familiarity and innovation. Paradoxically, being simultaneously familiar and innovative is part of what distinguishes the geniuses from the amateurs (among a multitude of other circumstances). In her own way, Lutyens embodied this paradoxical dichotomy; she was desperate for approval (from family, her husband Edward Clark, and her contemporaries) yet so strongly driven to be unique. In her own words,

> From the age of nine I wanted to be a composer. It arose—it was partly the desire in a fairly large family of five—something which the rest of the family couldn’t spoil if I’d been interested, which I am, in all the arts. If I had taken to anything of a visual art, father

would have been leaning over my shoulder. My mother was a granddaughter of [novelist Edward] Bulwer-Lytton. All the Lyttons write nonstop, and if I’d written I’d have had all the Lyttons over my shoulder. So, I wanted to take something that none of them knew anything whatsoever about, and therefore would leave me in peace.  

This innate determination to distinguish herself is evident in her move towards serialism as well as attempts to deny any kind of musical influence while (paradoxically) striving to connect her music with early music.

Finally, there are her social connections to consider. It is entirely essential to understanding her career and legacy to consider how her relationships with composers, teachers, performers, BBC Music Department employees, and music critics affected how she composed, was reviewed, and is remembered. Lutyens was friends with many critics; some of them wrote surprisingly scathing reviews of her music while others were overwhelmingly positive. There is certainly a connection between how biased Lutyens’s reviewers were and their personal relationship with her. It is therefore impossible to gauge just how Lutyens’s music was actually received. She often painted herself as an underdog fighting for a place among pastoralists, crowd favorites, and men, but the words of the composer often cannot be taken at face value; they are biased whether they admit it or not. It is the job of the historical musicologist not to find the objective truth (as this is a nearly impossible task) or interpret the past through one’s own biases, but to create from the available data a plausible explanation for a specific historical phenomenon.

Thus, the goal of this chapter is to give a brief biography of Lutyens that focuses (among other aspects) on her education, influences, ambitions, and social connections. This will help to determine her place in the tapestry of post-war English music. As with any tapestry, pulling on just one thread has the potential danger of distorting the larger picture; therefore, it is important

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to also briefly consider some of Lutyens’s female contemporaries to provide a wider perspective on women’s role in music as composers. While there is much scholarship on how the world wars affected both composers, compositional style, and the public’s taste, there is less on how these social changes may have affected current perceptions of modernity. In other words, if tonality/modality, pastoralism, and nostalgia were the cures to repressing the horrors of the wars, was modernity the disease that rendered it real and painful once more?

Taking a feminist perspective on Lutyens’s career, I explore in this chapter how societal expectations for women in music shaped her career and legacy. I will begin by giving necessary biographical information about Lutyens, including her education, opinions on English musical society, and her unique position within it. Then, I will place Lutyens within the previously discussed context of musical Englishness, accounting for gender, style, and other women of the time to support my argument. Success was difficult for Lutyens not only for stylistic reasons, but because both modernism and Englishness had been implicitly coded as masculine endeavors.

How Lutyens was perceived and reviewed during and after her life speaks volumes about the way that not only women in music were still at a disadvantage, but still are. These disadvantages are obvious when considering how many of their works go unperformed or unstudied, their contributions to music are minimized, and the unfortunate tendency to refer to them as female composers or women composers, implying that the word composer alone refers to a man. It is an impossible task to integrate women into the multitude of classical canons as it would require a reevaluation and subsequent dissolution of the established criteria for judging quality. Despite this, it is still rather important to discuss women in music as their works, lives, and contributions to music add to a deeper understanding of the process of music making.
A Brief Biography of Elisabeth Lutyens

Agnes Elisabeth Lutyens was born on 6 June 1906 to famous architect Sir Edwin Lutyens and his aristocratic wife Lady Emily Lutyens neé Lytton.\(^6\) Lutyens described herself as a “problem child: in fact, I was quite odious with screaming fits and bad temper and was the only one of my family to go to boarding school (which I went from the age of nine to fourteen).”\(^7\) Growing up, Lutyens was surrounded by literature on her mother’s side and drawing and architecture on her father’s. Lutyens described the Lyttons as writing constantly, which she also attempted later in life by writing a romantic novel and her own libretti, such as the theater works *Infidelio* (1954 under the pseudonym T. E. Ranselm) and *The Linnet from the Leaf* (1972).\(^8\) But, being determined to distinguish herself from her siblings and win the affection of both parents, she turned to music—the one art form that was unfamiliar to and unexplored by the rest of her family.\(^9\) From an early age, Lutyens struggled with feeling like the least important child to her parents; Sir Edwin was constantly gone for work or needing to be left alone to work while Lady Emily became completely engrossed with eastern religions and spirituality. In her autobiography, Lutyens constantly refers to her sisters as occupying the position of favorite child, which she yearned for herself.\(^10\)

At age 16, Lutyens was permitted to study music abroad in Paris.\(^11\) At such a young age, this was a particularly influential time for the young composer, as she met other composers and musicians and was introduced to music she had never heard. Lutyens often cited Debussy and


\(^7\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”

\(^8\) Payne and Calam, “Lutyens.”

\(^9\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”


\(^11\) Ibid., 19.
Purcell—two composers whose music she was introduced to during her stay—as major influences on her, especially in moving towards serialism.\(^\text{12}\) Lutyens particularly loved Debussy’s use of extended chords and colorful harmony, as well as his lack of traditional cadences. In fact, decades later in a 1961 interview, Lutyens named Debussy as her favorite composer.\(^\text{13}\) It has been noted in several sources (both primary and secondary) that Lutyens considered Purcell a major influence in her journey into serialism. In the composer’s own words:

> the thing which I think precipitated me towards what is now called serialism was the rediscovery, strange to say, in performance of the Purcell fantasias, where you heard 4 equal parts – coupled with the feeling I should scream if I heard a cadence again (a sort of satiation with a cadence).\(^\text{14}\)

Thus, Lutyens was already bored with Classical and Romantic style harmonic narrative by age 19 and was desperate for a different kind of sound. Although Debussy was no longer modern by the time Lutyens began her musical education, his music—along with the rediscovery of Purcell’s music—was radically different then what she had been exposed to thus far.

Although her time in Paris was brief (six months in 1922), Lutyens was irrevocably motivated to compose in a modern style. Lutyens particularly mentions her Parisan host Marcelle de Manziarly, in whose room she discovered “scores of Debussy’s *Pelleas et Melisande*, Stravinsky’s *Sacre du Printemps*, Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*, and many other exciting and magical works unknown to me till then.”\(^\text{15}\) Additionally, Lutyens’s uncle Neville Lytton, then living in Paris, introduced her to Charlôt Geoffroy-Dechaume and his son Antoine, who was an organist.\(^\text{16}\) Antoine was particularly influential in exposing Lutyens to early music, as she fondly recalled: “The eldest son, Antoine, was seventeen to my sixteen, and already organist at [Notre

\(^\text{12}\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”
\(^\text{13}\) Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 23.
\(^\text{14}\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”
\(^\text{15}\) Lutyens, *Goldfish Bowl*, 21-22.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid., 24-25.
Dame de] Pontoise. He was also extremely beautiful and, for the first time, I lost my heart. Love is a good teacher, and I learnt to appreciate and understand the early music of all schools and countries which I might never have discovered for myself.”

But because her time in Paris was so short, Lutyens did not have time to fully explore and experiment with modernism and finding her distinct style. Eager for the most modern and distinctive sounds but lacking the educational support and opportunity to experience it first hand back in London, Lutyens struggled for many years to find her musical voice.

Back in London, Lutyens continued her musical education at the Royal College of Music (RCM). However, Lutyens struggled to be performed during her time at the RCM (a foreshadowing of her struggles to be featured by the BBC). While at school, Lutyens was not allowed to study composition with Vaughan Williams or John Ireland, the more prestigious composition teachers. She and the Director Sir Hugh Allen did not see eye to eye, to say the least; the Harries note that Allen was “firmly rooted in the English tradition,” and that Lutyens insisted that “he did not believe she had even the vestiges of a talent for composing, and wanted her to concentrate on the viola as her first subject.”

She was instead assigned to Dr. Harold Darke (an organist and counterpoint teacher) as a composition student, but this was beneficial as he encouraged her to experiment and worked tirelessly to get her music performed. Although Lutyens cited this as yet one more hardship, many composition students had difficulty getting their music performed while in school, including Benjamin Britten. The two composers overlapped at the RCM; although Lutyens seemed to infer that Britten was more popular—

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19 Ibid.
referring to him as “wonder-boy Benjamin Britten”—he only had one piece of his performed during his time at the College.\(^{20}\)

Not to be dissuaded, Lutyens and her friends Anne Macnaghten and Iris Lemare put together a concert series (later known as the Macnaghten-Lemare Concerts) in order to give public performances of their own music and that of their peers at the RCM.\(^{21}\) Lutyens noted in a 1970 interview with the BBC that they gave first performances to young composers as well as offered a small fee to performers.\(^{22}\) Macnaghten writes in her 1959 article on the Macnaghten-Lemare Concerts that this concert series became successful and somewhat popular despite the “fact traditionally accepted” that modern English chamber music was not profitable.\(^{23}\) Macnaghten delightedly documented that “in the fourteen concerts given between 1931 and 1935 works by twenty-seven unknown or very little known contemporary British composers were performed.”\(^{24}\) These numbers stand in stark contrast to the miniscule number of RCM students whose works were given public performances elsewhere.

Once Lutyens left the RCM, she continued to struggle finding her musical voice and critics took notice. Once she reached her mature period, she personally destroyed many of her older works because she considered them worthless.\(^{25}\) Many critics remarked that her music was either banal, uninspired, or self-important; others were quick to remark that she must be getting performances because of who her father was.\(^{26}\) However, Lutyens, for all her stubbornness and

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 66. In her autobiography, Lutyens seemed irked not so much by Britten himself, but the audience he drew, as she bitterly noted, “Hubert Foss…arrived with William Walton, especially to hear the premiere of A Boy is Born, by the wonder-boy Benjamin Britten. He left, to my consternation, before the first performance of a string quartet by [Dorothy] Gow, next to whom I was sitting,” p. 52.

\(^{21}\) Lutyens, *Goldfish Bowl*, 50-51.

\(^{22}\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”


\(^{24}\) Ibid., 461.

\(^{25}\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.” Lutyens states that she wishes she could “scrap all the early works.”

\(^{26}\) Harries, *Pilgrim Soul*, 65.
desire to prove herself worthy, was incredibly diligent about not using her famous father as a stepping stone in any way. The Harries write in their biography of Lutyens that a family friend suggested that Sir Edwin put £100 into the production [of her 1932 ballet *The Birthday of the Infanta*], but Betty [Lutyens] refused point blank to let him, afraid this would conjure up the spectre of a rich man’s daughter buying her way into the arts. She was to remain a purist about this sort of patronage all her life. 27

This is indicative of her determination to succeed on her own terms no matter how difficult that would be to accomplish.

In 1929, Lutyens met Ian Glennie, a gifted baritone whom she married in 1933. Initially, Lutyens was convinced that she would not marry because it would end her compositional career. However, once her sister Ursula married and began having children, Lutyens had a change of heart and accepted Glennie’s five-year-old offer of marriage. 28 The two met during one of the many parties that Lutyens hosted in the basement of her parent’s house. She refurbished the old kitchen into a kind of recreation of the cafes in Paris where composers, musicians, and intellectuals alike would gather to discuss aesthetics, philosophy, and their latest projects. Lutyens so loved this kind of social interaction that she later started the Composers Concourse, which was a group of composers who met to exchange ideas, compare methods, and even hosted lectures from a variety of composers. For Lutyens, social interaction and connections were critical to the creative process.

Soon after Lutyens was married she became pregnant, and she worried that her composing would suffer. Her family was not very sympathetic about her fears; her brother Robert bickered with her over her composing saying, according to Lutyens, quips such as “you are no Mozart” and “there has never been a great woman composer.” 29 Her sister Ursula (perhaps

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27 Harries, *Pilgrim Soul*, 65. The Harries frequently refer to Lutyens in their biography as Betty.
28 Lutyens, *Goldfish Bowl*, 64.
29 Ibid., 70.
tried) to reassure her by commenting “wait till you have a baby—that is the only creative life for a woman—you’ll soon give up wanting to be a composer then.”

But, ever the rebellious soul, Lutyens continued to compose after having twins with Glennie in 1936 as well as supporting them through composing during WWII.

Just before WWII, a rift in Lutyens and Glennie’s marriage was made worse when Lutyens met BBC programmer and conductor Edward Clark. With Glennie preoccupied with the War Reserve Police, Lutyens separated from him and took the children to Clark’s apartment. Glennie refused to divorce, but eventually conceded because he knew he would not be able to salvage the marriage and support the children. By the 1940s, Lutyens recalled the difficulty of rationing with children and finding stable work. Lutyens, like many parents, decided to send her children to Sussex with her sister Ursula to protect them from the bombings in London. She resorted to taking any and all compositional work she could get, which typically meant writing commercial jingles or tonal background music for documentaries. Although Lutyens did not find this work satisfying, she insisted on carrying out every commission with careful thought and respect.

Immediately following WWII, however, Lutyens was in a creative and personal rut; she struggled with alcoholism brought on by depression and felt her creative energy had been zapped. Her new husband Clark also struggled financially which added more pressure on Lutyens to make ends meet for her family. Nevertheless, Lutyens admired Clark’s elegance and breadth of knowledge about modern music. The Harries note Clark’s lifelong dedication to English composers, earning them commissions and contacts in the film industry as well as

30 Lutyens, Goldfish Bowl, 70.
31 Ibid., 95-96.
32 Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 99.
33 Lutyens, Goldfish Bowl, 67-86.
34 Ibid.
35 Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 114.
36 Ibid., 74.
keeping the BBC “in touch with developments on the Continent, where he seemed to know every leading musician.”

By the early 1950s, Lutyens experienced a personal resurgence as circumstances in her life were improving; her children (whom she often felt guilty for sending away in order to provide for them) were living with her again, Clark was well after a bout of thrombosis and “insults and humiliations to bear in fields in which he had spent a lifetime,” happily conducting once again; and she found herself in an environment much more conducive to composition. After decades of struggling to establish herself as a composer of note in the London musical scene, Lutyens now began to compose some of her most critically revered works as well as personal passion projects (such as her operatic magnum opus The Numbered (which has, to date, still not been performed). But Lutyens continued to take on films, radio, and theatrical music commissions, and her previous depression and struggle with alcoholism fell by the wayside as she felt a renewed sense of confidence, especially with the success of her Sixth String Quartet in 1952-3, which marked the beginning of her more mature style. From this time until the end of her life in 1983, Lutyens wrote not only her most critically successful pieces but her most idiomatic works as well. Indeed, Lutyens scholars have noted that the last few decades of her life saw her finally grow into her mature musical voice. In addition to the aforementioned critical successes, Lutyens also composed some of her most famous film scores during this period of renewal including Paranoiac (1963), Dr. Terror’s House of Horrors (1965), and The Skull (1965). Set to these films, Lutyens’s trademark serialism was—for a change—considered completely appropriate and

37 Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 80.
38 Lutyens, Goldfish Bowl, 212-214.
39 Payne and Calam, “Lutyens.”
appreciated within the horror/sci-fi genre.\(^{40}\) These works earned her the nickname of “the Horror Queen” and suites based on these film scores would become some of her most frequently performed pieces.

While I have taken a feminist perspective on Lutyens’s career, she never explicitly took up the mantle of feminism (as discussed). But she did acknowledge that there were obstacles to women in becoming successful composers in England. In a 1970 interview, Lutyens stated quite plainly that

I think England is still very, very much a man’s country. I mean, I feel that we are second class citizens in England, rather like the Negros in America and I have always refused to join anything in England—women’s society of musicians, or concerts of women only. It may be news-value being a woman composer; that to me is my private life. I don’t see why you should discuss being a woman composer any more than a homosexual composer.\(^{41}\)

Lutyens’s personal form of feminism focused on separating gender from music. She did not believe that being a woman made her music feminine by default, and she was constantly frustrated by interviewers who insinuated as much.\(^{42}\) These insinuations of femininity and expressiveness lead to more general issues concerning the gender gap in modernity.

**A Woman in a Man’s World**

Lutyens’s film music is some of her most well-known and performed, yet it was difficult for her to write music for film because of her desire to experiment. Film producers rejected Lutyens for film scoring because they did not want experimental sounds, as they fit best with sci-fi/horror films. Lutyens accused film studios such as J. Arthur Rank and film composer/musical director

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\(^{41}\) Lutyens, “BBC Interview.”

\(^{42}\) These insinuations can be easily heard in the types of questions that interviewer Bernard Palmer asked Lutyens in her BBC Artist Profile interview. For example, when he asks her what kind of child she was, he follows up with the remark that “you could have opted for a safe career of wife, mother with family.”
Muir Mathieson of being misogynist, but the Harries note that although they hired fewer women
than men, they did not write them off completely or undervalue their capabilities. The Harries
remark that “the only features she was likely to get were ones which in the opinion of the film
industry spoke naturally with her characteristic voice—and these all had ‘skulls,’ ‘death,’
‘paranoia,’ and ‘screaming’ in their titles.”

For the majority of her career, Lutyens was scoffed at and belittled in critical reviews.
Yet, since Lutyens was well-connected in musical circles since she entered them in the 1920-30s,
she often had personal relationships with the critics, but they nevertheless reported that her music
was banal or trite. One such critic of significance in Lutyens’s career was Constant Lambert.
Lambert was born one year before Lutyens, and was a composer, conductor, as well as a music
critic. His poor health often left him unable to conduct and his love of literature steered him
towards criticism as his primary means of supporting himself. Similar to Lutyens, he was also
very well-connected in musical and artistic circles, with such friends as Stravinsky, Diaghilev,
Walton, Vaughan Williams and many painters and writers. Although Lambert “enjoyed
bohemian artistic circles and salon culture,” his preferred mode of modernity in music was the
incorporation of jazz elements into classical music. In his 1934 book—ominously titled Music
Ho!: A Study of Music in Decline—Lambert lambasts atonality as being unnatural and, therefore,
not a lasting movement on par with other styles and composers he deems more valuable (such as
Wagner and Debussy). In his section on Schoenberg, Lambert muses that

Schönberg at one time was indeed the great isolated figure of Europe, but he has
gradually become the official leader of the official revolutionaries, and is in many ways

43 Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 152.
44 Ibid.
45 Jeremy Dibble, “Constant Lambert,” Grove Music Online, 12 June 2018,
http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-
9781561592630-e-0000015883.
46 Ibid.
the most pedantic of modern composers. He has escaped from an academic set of rules only to be shackled by his own set of rules, and this self-imposed tyranny is taken over *en bloc* by his pupils.⁴⁷

Although Lambert was clearly not an enthusiast of serialism, this did not interfere with his relationship with Lutyens. Yet despite being a friend, Lambert was a harsh critic of her music. Lutyens was seemingly unperturbed by his dissatisfaction with her music, as she arranged a shortened version of Lambert’s 1950-51 ballet *Tiresias* that was eventually broadcast on the BBC in 1995 after decades in obscurity.⁴⁸ Lambert may have been compartmentalizing his friendships in order to objectively critique the music of any composer, friend or otherwise. Yet, his presentation of his beliefs about music do not exude objectivity (e.g., “but whether we like it or not, tonality in music and realism in painting are a norm that is in our blood – departure from them, however successful and however praiseworthy, is technically speaking an abnormality”).⁴⁹ Lambert was also among the numerous critics that gave negative reviews of Lutyens’s music for years. Nevertheless, he did eventually recognize the maturity of her later style, especially in pieces such as *Quincunx* (1959-60).

Even within the social circle of serialists, Lutyens was an outsider as a woman (particularly as an English serialist). Although Lutyens’s life and major works were written well into the twentieth century, the lingering idea of Romantic gendering of musical roles plagued her. Of course, in the nineteenth century, women typically occupied a very restricted status in music; middle and upper-class women were expected to perform simpler parlor music to entertain guests and attract an intelligent husband. Composing was also acceptable so long as women wrote simple music that would not attempt to equal or best the complexity of her male

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⁴⁸ Dibble, “Lambert.”
⁴⁹ Ibid.
contemporaries. There are always exceptions such as Clara Schumann (1819-1896), Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847), and Louise Farrenc (1804-1875). However, the first two are often referred to by their first names in scholarly writing about them, lest anyone confuse them with their brother or husband. Farrenc is also a rather obscure composer despite having an impressive oeuvre and, as Bea Friedland declares,

Farrenc’s role in music history carries significance beyond that ordinarily accorded to competent minor composers. Having worked in a society whose women musicians attained prominence mainly as performers, and in a cultural environment which valued only theatre and salon music, she merits recognition as a pioneering scholar and a forerunner of the French musical renaissance of the 1870s.50

Despite Farrenc holding significant positions and esteem in French musical society, her legacy has faded in lieu of Grand Opera composers, the majority of whom were men.

While these women are now taken more seriously than they may have been ten or twenty years ago, there is still some distance that requires closing when it comes to serialism.

Considering that the Harries’ biography of Lutyens is the only one of its kind and published in 1989, modern women seem to fare only slightly better than their earlier counterparts.

Nevertheless, despite often being credited as one of the earliest (if not the earliest) serialist composer in England, Lutyens receives little consideration in academia. This may be due to the amount of film/television music she composed; often, composers who also dabbled in film scoring are treated less seriously. For example, most scholars would rather attempt to understand Shostakovich’s political convictions through his symphonies as opposed to his 36-odd film credits.51

In addition to the diminished prestige placed on film and chamber music, modernism was considered the product of masculine intellect. Annika Forkert’s exemplary article on Lutyens’s so-called “magical serialism” deconstructs how modernism in general and serialism in particular have been coded as masculine, making it even more difficult for women to be successful and/or accepted in the modern canon. Forkert argues that one of the main reasons why women struggled for recognition in modernist genres of composition is because modernism was associated with intellectualism and genius, which were both male characteristics. But modernism was not the only aspect of music that had been coded as masculine; Jean-Jacques Rousseau has become infamous for his assertion that women—while capable performances because of their ability to tap into their femininity—were simply not capable of the same level of genius as men. Forkert lays out the result of the heavily ingrained tradition:

The difference between the imagined masculine and feminine attributes of composers runs along the lines of a masculine intellect capable of creating intelligent and stimulating music and a feminine mind that is at its best when relying on its body, either as a performer…or as a composer of music with a haptic quality. […] The stereotypical female is limited by her role in physical procreation, but it is the male genius that transcends his sexual drive to procreate intellectually. Male genius is like a woman, but never is woman.

These beliefs may not be explicitly or consciously held by musicologists, but their effect on scholarship has been detrimental. Though all modernist composers suffered critical jabs in the infancy of modernity, it is men who are remembered for their pioneering techniques and mastery of serialism. This kind of selective musicology helps reinforce the idea that intellectualism—

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54 Forkert, “Magical Serialism,” 277.
and consequently the concept of genius—are connected to masculinity. When men are referred to as intellectual, it is usually a compliment, whereas intellect in women is usually seen as diminishing her femininity.\(^56\)

At this point in this thesis, the focus on women’s role in music in twentieth century England has centered around Lutyens and serialism. As I have explained, Lutyens was constantly fighting an uphill battle for acceptance against the gendered coding of serialism as masculine in tandem with the rise of tonal musical Englishness. However, other women writing music at the time in non-serial styles were also struggling for acceptance. Their struggles, however, lay more in the realm of having virtually no lasting legacy in mainstream music history. In an effort to avoid narrowing in on Lutyens’s life and career too closely without providing broader context about the fate of female composers in post-war England, I will now turn to several other female composers in order to gain a wider understanding of Lutyens’s place in musical society.

Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) was the earliest female composer who crossed paths with Lutyens.\(^57\) Both a writer and composer, she was a vociferous supporter of equal representation of women in music (so much so that others believed she only made it more difficult to be taken seriously).\(^58\) Her father did not approve of her pursuing a career as a composer, but she studied at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1877 with Carl Reinecke.\(^59\) Although she ultimately left the conservatory, she remained in Europe for several years and entered social circles that included

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\(^56\) In an uncited article from the Harries biography, a reviewer contemptuously remarks in the 1935 *Glasgow Herald* review of the Macnaghten-Lemare concerts that “two of the most prominent of these cerebrals are Miss Elizabeth Maconchy and Miss Elisabeth Lutyens…Moreover the conductor [Iris Lemare] is of the same serious and mentally burdened sex. Musicians who have been looking on with considerable interest at this branch of the feminist movement are beginning to wonder when a woman composer is going to write some music reminiscent of the sex it used to be,” p. 69.


\(^58\) Harries, *Pilgrim Soul*, 90.

\(^59\) Fuller, “Smyth.”
Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann. Smyth was incredibly enthusiastic about Lutyens’s early works, which critics often rebuked for lack of individuality and creativity. Smyth fared better than Lutyens, Maconchy, and Williams combined at the number of Proms concerts with a respectable 60 features.

Dame Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-1994) was an English composer (with an Irish background) who studied with Vaughan Williams and won many awards during her time at the RCM. She also won scholarships to study, compose, and perform abroad. Her career was greatly hindered after she contracted tuberculosis in 1932, and subsequently moved away from London for her health. Nevertheless, her string quartets, which were described in a 1991 review as more properly formatted than some of Shostakovich’s string quartets, remain some of her most popular and critically acclaimed works. Despite this, Maconchy has not fared well at the Proms having only 19 performances; this may seem a high number compared to Lutyens’s 13 or Williams’s 11, but this must be compared to a composer such as Britten, with 288 features.

Grace Williams (1906-1977) was a Welsh composer who also studied with Vaughan Williams, as well as Gordan Jacob, and Egon Wellesz (the latter in Vienna and the two former at

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60 Fuller, “Smyth.”
61 Harries, Pilgrim Soul, 65. On the subject of Lutyens’s poorly received ballet The Birthday of the Infanta, The Harries note that Smyth “shouted herself hoarse from the balcony in her support for a younger woman’s effort.”
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Martin Anderson, “Review Elizabeth Maconchy: String Quartets,” Tempo New Series, no. 176 (1991): 46. Anderson’s exact words are “unlike, say, some of Shostakovich’s quartets, which occasionally seem to be shoe-horned into their scoring, Maconchy’s materials are very obviously crafted for their format.”
67 “Proms Archive.”
Like Maconchy, she won several awards during her education at the RCM, though much of her early career was dedicated to music education. Although many of her major works were BBC commissions, she has only been featured in 11 Proms performances to date (of which eight were parts or the entirety of one piece titled *Sea Sketches*). Like Lutyens, Williams is also more widely recognized as an educator than a composer, especially in relation to her work on educational radio programs for the BBC.

It is important to note that both Maconchy and Williams studied with Vaughan Williams at the RCM which gave them the advantage of working with “the most important English composer of his generation.” And, while Vaughan Williams’s compositions were perceived as highly English, as a composition student, he was dissatisfied with the musical culture of England and studied abroad with Bruch in Berlin and Ravel in Paris. Although all three of these women wrote music that was well-received overall, their works faded from public performance after their deaths.

Another implicit characteristic of musical Englishness is masculinity and English purity. Elizabeth Maconchy, for example, wrote numerous vocal works based on Shakespeare and other English poets/writers, as well as larger scale works with pastorally evocative titles such as *Proud Thames Overture* (1952-52), *Suite of Irish Airs* (1954), and *An Essex Overture* (1966). Yet, the award-winning composer is remembered for her large body of work written for children and

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69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.


73 Ibid.

74 Cole and Doctor, “Maconchy.”
amateur musicians as well as her educational programming for the BBC, placing her back within the realm of diminished femininity. Similarly, Grace Williams also won many awards for her compositions, performed, and toured Europe for premieres. But despite Williams’s later works being “deeply national in feeling,” she was Welsh, which was just exotic and distant enough to be somewhat disconnected from the more mainstream Englishness of Elgar and Vaughan Williams. What is essential in understanding the Anglicizing of Welsh folk music is that when the Welsh National Orchestra lost its funding and disbanded in 1931, “Wales was [later] granted regional broadcasting status in 1936, [as] the BBC took up the reins and an ensemble was established which set the foundations of the present BBC National Orchestra of Wales.”

Through these kinds of exclusion, musical Englishness continued to be defined by the men who programmed and dominated the British airwaves.

Conclusion

Lutyens was in a difficult position, even once she had regained her confidence in her abilities. While she began her compositional career writing tonal music and utilized tonality for her more commercial commissions, she opted out of the chance to change her style and gain mass appeal through musical Englishness. Lutyens also had many important friends with international platforms she could have utilized to advance her career but again she chose to blaze her own trail. In other words, Lutyens had a very determined, individualistic spirit about her. Therefore, her music cannot be categorized by a traditional understanding of Englishness. However, if

75 Ibid.
76 Boyd, “Williams.”
77 Ibid.
Englishness is viewed as a spectrum rather than a binary, I believe that she did incorporate Englishness into her music. In fact, nearly all the elements of musical Englishness and pastoralism—references to nature, using older forms, structures, techniques, and English sources, etc.—can be found in her 1959-60 piece for orchestra *Quincunx*.

The question of why Lutyens incorporated English and pastoral elements into her music is pressing, and yet another example of her innate paradoxes. Although Lutyens famously degraded pastoralism and tonality, she wanted to be accepted as both a modernist and an Englishwoman. But because of the sharp dichotomy enforced between the two, Lutyens was infallibly categorized as a serialist. The Harries speculate that Lutyens’s gravitation towards serialism stemmed from “an overwhelming need to be original, not an imitator, [and] to be distinct from other people.”^{79} However, the kind of individuality that Lutyens craved was too esoteric for conservative music programmers with the BBC and the public. If the definition of Englishness is expanded, composers such as Lutyens can be placed into more generalized discussions of twentieth century manifestations of English nationalism instead of remaining within a niche subgroup.

With a solid understanding of what Englishness entails and how it was disseminated, of Lutyens’s life and career, and glimpse into the gendered coding of modernism, an analysis of the English elements in *Quincunx* will demonstrate how Lutyens could at once capture the spirit of English nationalism and pride with the mechanical and intellectual designs of serialism.

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^{79} Harries, *Pilgrim Soul*, 92.
Chapter 3

QUINCUNX, A CASE STUDY OF PARADOXES

Lutyens struggled to make a place for herself in the strictly divided worlds of English music and un-English music. As I have explained in previous chapters, Lutyens was doubly disadvantaged for being a serialist among English traditionalists and a woman among men. These two compounding factors were reflected in the way she was often spoken of by BBC officials as well as written about by critics/journalists. Based on the sparse media attention she garnered through the 1950s, it would seem that Lutyens was not only a mediocre composer, but one not at all concerned with current national tastes. However, this could not be further from the reality of her situation. Lutyens was very much interested in English literature and music, which is not evident by merely listening to her music. As with any composer or artist, the deeper the understanding of the person and their society, the more meaningful their works appear.

Having laid the foundation in the previous chapters what constituted Englishness in music in the post-war years as well as fitting Lutyens into this context, in this chapter I will analyze Lutyens’s 1960-61 orchestral piece Quincunx as a case study of the compositional techniques of her mature period. It was not only one her most critically successful pieces, but from an analysis of the music, text, and context, I will show how much English influence can be found and heard in her music, despite its obvious serialist sound. From this, it will be possible to demonstrate how traditional musicological binaries such as English/un-English are misleading. Neither Quincunx nor any work of art should be forced into categories that deny them the
nuances and subtleties that distinguish them in the first place. Such black and white
categorization not only does a disservice to art but society as well, and, ultimately, is more
indicative of the biases of those categorizing than the objects they categorize.

Availability of scores and recordings makes studying Lutyens’s music difficult
(especially her stage and earlier works), but *Quincunx* was successful enough to have been
recorded by professional musicians and have a somewhat accessible score. Although this piece
was selected mainly for ease of access, its English musical characteristics are not unique to it or
this period. For example, Lutyens’s 1966 piece *And Suddenly Its Evening* is written in a quasi-
baroque form that utilizes *ritornello* sections to unify the piece, as well as English text and a
movement titled “Almost a Madrigal” that hints at the madrigal-esque text-painting and themes
that are present in the libretto. Conway notes that “the piece is woven together by constant
*ritornelli*, ‘returnings’ of the various instrumental groups (in the manner of Monteverdi), with the
brass/double bass also commenting on the other performers’ interplay.”¹

Similarly, *Quincunx* possesses characteristics that offer the possibility of a rich “English”
interpretation while opening windows on the discourse on women and serialism. The literature
on this topic is rather narrow and in need of expansion; however, such an endeavor—which
would need to take into consideration the highly nuanced gender and social politics of the mid-
twentieth century among other factors—would focus more on social relationships and issues
between composer and audience and less on composer and national culture. Lutyens perceived
herself to be fighting a war on both sides in that she faced the dual difficulty of being a woman in
a man’s profession as well as a serialist in an ever-increasingly tonal battlefield. While this thesis

focuses more on the latter issue, it is important to consider both of Lutyens’s struggles as their simultaneity contributes to her current position in musicological discourse.

A quincunx is an arrangement of any five objects in which four of them create a square or rectangle and the fifth is placed in the center (such as the five side of a die). This center object typically holds some sort of significance. Lutyens’s arrangement of movements, therefore, mirrors the shape of a quincunx. It is also an expansive work, and so I have limited my analysis to a small but critical and representative number of movements. It is largely an instrumental work, but a texted baritone solo occupies the center (followed by a wordless soprano tutti), and so I have chosen this movement as the basis for the my most detailed analysis. Nevertheless, other relevant and representative sections will be referenced to demonstrate the prevalence of symmetries and other technical features of the work.

In what follows, I begin by explaining the conception and premiere of Quincunx, citing Lutyens’s inspiration and compositional process. This will include a brief description of the Cheltenham Festival where the piece premiered in 1962, as it was a major platform for contemporary music. Next, I will include an analysis of the text and extramusical characteristics of Quincunx, including the implications of the allusions of the text in connection with English pastoralism. Finally, I will provide a detailed analysis of the central vocal movements, particularly Lutyens’s treatment of 12-tone rows and its relationship to the structure of Quincunx. This analysis will show how Lutyens synthesized the two paradoxical styles of serialism and Englishness.
Conception and History of *Quincunx*

By the mid–1950s, Lutyens was able to reinvigorate herself into composing again. This revitalization was the result of several changing circumstances: her husband Clark’s health improved, so he was in much better spirits, and her children (twin daughters Rose and Tess) had moved back in with her.\(^2\) By 1956, she was once again composing both commissioned and uncommissioned works. By the next year, she was sketching out her orchestral tour de force *Quincunx*, but had to set it aside for two years to focus on commissions, lectures, and students. Despite these obligations, Lutyens found time to compose for her own pleasure rather than fame or fortune; Rhiannon Mathias is quick to point out that some of her “finest, most ambitious works” from this period were non-commissioned works.\(^3\)

Although completed in 1961, *Quincunx* was not premiered until 1962 at the Cheltenham Music Festival. The Cheltenham festival began in 1945 as a series of concerts over 12 days intended to premiere modern music.\(^4\) The festival followed the same general formula of the Proms, which involved featuring contemporary music sandwiched between more “palatable” classics. One of the key differences in the spotlighting of new music was the Cheltenham Festival’s focus on British composers in particular. This smaller festival seemed to take the baton from the Proms (which were gradually becoming a concert of familiar classics) and run with it. In fact, until 1962 it was announced as a “Festival of British Contemporary Music,” and primarily featured new works by British composers in a context of more general

programs. In the first 25 festivals a total of 291 works by 142 British composers received their first public performances.\(^5\)

Although the festival was catered towards contemporary music, it was plagued by the same problem as the Proms: conservative taste. As Noël Goodwin notes during the 1950s there was an underlying conservatism of taste in the choice of new works, which encouraged a species of neo-romantic composition nicknamed the “Cheltenham symphony”; the preponderance of such works tended to diminish the festival’s significance amid the opportunities for more progressive music that were proliferating elsewhere. After the 1959 festival there was a move towards the inclusion of more radical works.\(^6\)

Nevertheless, this festival was a major triumph in Lutyens’s career. It helped to change her public image as an un-English writer of frantic serial music to a mature composer who had successfully made a place for herself in English musical culture (albeit a small place). Lutyens’s obituary in Tempo reflects this change in public perception:

> While the memory of her extraordinary personality is still strong, many will find it easy to relegate her to the pigeon-holes she abhorred, amongst them “miniaturist,” “woman-composer.” She wrote several major orchestral works, many of which remain to be performed and which belie the label “miniaturist.” It was not her sex that first attracted attention—it was the music she wrote, always professional and often very rare, fine and powerful enough to be unforgettable and unforgotten.\(^7\)

Lutyens’s music (much like the composer herself) defies concrete categorization. Her serial music is not always strictly 12-tone, she wrote both program and absolute music, and she also dabbled in tonal composing for some of her film and TV engagements. Even some of Lutyens’s contemporaries noted that her early works lacked individuality; Lutyens would seem to have agreed decades later, wishing she could “scrap all the early works.”\(^8\) Quincunx represents the same type of paradoxes as Lutyens: it is a programmatic piece with elements of absolute

\(^5\) Goodwin, “Cheltenham.”
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Elisabeth Lutyens, “BBC Profile,” interview by Bernard Palmer, BBC World Service, April 20, 1970. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p033k2vg](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p033k2vg). Elizabeth Maconchy was one such contemporary to note Lutyens’s initial struggle, as the Harries note that she “felt that [Lutyens] had not yet found a distinctive voice,” p. 55.
music, particularly regarding Lutyens’s thoughts on emotional expressivity of music. The premiere of *Quincunx* was the pinnacle of Lutyens’s gradual ascent to acceptance in the eyes of critics.

*Quincunx* features a typical symphonic orchestra, but expanded with many unusual auxiliary instruments such as bass trumpet, alto clarinet, mandolin, guitar, and many percussion instruments (requiring seven percussionists total). As mentioned, the piece itself is arranged in a quincunx shape: the outer two sets of tutti and soli sections form the two “objects” on either side of the central vocal sections. The center of this quincunx has special significance as it is the only texted section. In addition to this large-scale structure, each “object” or movement is split into a tutti and soli section. At first glance, the piece would seem to consist of ten objects/movements, but the programmatic form of the piece becomes apparent on closer inspection (see Figure 3.1). The baritone solo is labeled as an “Introduction,” and the wordless soprano section that follows is labeled “tutti,” mirroring the previous pattern and ending the piece with soli/tutti. Although this solo seems to disturb the quincunx pairing of movements, it serves as an introduction not only to the central movement of the quincunx, but to the programmatic elements of the piece.

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9 See Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 103-112. On emotional expressivity in music, Lutyens remarked, “music is simply organized sound, and if it is well organized it may have the power to produce emotions in the listener, but those emotions are not inherent in the music itself,” p. 107.

10 Interestingly, at the beginning of the score, along with a list of the instrumentation, Lutyens includes the exact pitches that will be needed for the tubular bells. On first sight, this appears to be a 12-tone row, but is actually only 11 notes, several of which are repeated in a different octave. In total, the number of notes (without repeated pitches) in the tubular bells is ten. This initially seems to be a compositional oddity, but once Lutyens did not necessarily adhere to strict 12-tone compositional rules/guidelines.
Yet, with all the thoughtful organization of timbres, patterns, and structure, it is not immediately apparent that there is organization at all. In a recent article about Lutyens’s compositional ideologies, Annika Forkert discusses Lutyens’s “magical serialism,” that is, her decision not to spend considerable energy and time creating elaborate sketches of tone rows and perceptible organizational structures. By “magical serialism,” Forkert refers to a time in Lutyens’s life when—being fed up with the process of carefully sketching and planning out her compositions—she decided to compose and structure her music in a significantly less transparent manner, allowing the structure to take on the mystery of a magic trick.\(^\text{11}\) This period of introspection and reinvigoration began in 1957, just before Lutyens began composing *Quincunx*. From her autobiography, it seems that *Quincunx* was composed with these more lax ideas of structure in mind. In the composer’s own words,

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\text{I suddenly became completely bored with all these laborious preparations, dull to do and deadly to listen to. I had been writing serial music for almost twenty years now, albeit laboriously, with many trials, errors, academic essays and in conditions that only allowed thinking and working at odd times and in odd weeks bought by commercial writing. Now}
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I said to myself, “Hooey! Just live and write. The technique *should* be there—given confidence.” These little parlez-vous’s stay with me loud and clear, for each produced a decisive effect.\(^{12}\)

Lutyens seems to be implying that her works from this period onward were no longer the result of precise and careful planning but as byproducts of experience and confidence.\(^ {13}\) Yet, as with many other paradoxes surrounding Lutyens, I will explain in greater detail how this sits at odds with the meticulous organization of the piece.

What is important to note is that, despite Lutyens’s self-described frustration with tonality and “satiation with a cadence,” she was a bit of a Romantic at heart.\(^ {14}\) Though she would never have admitted this, it is evident in her desire to break away from her perceived shackles of the canon and live in an avant-garde Arcadia of the 1920s Parisian café, trading compositional advice and the latest musical news with her confrères—not as a “dotty” or “un-English” oddity but an equal.\(^ {15}\) Lutyens longed for a society that was interested in domestic music making and music-based socializing, saying in a 1970 interview,

> you can’t go back to the eighteenth century drawing room. And I was sort of thinking that if one could ever take a place like, say, the Roundhouse [a concert venue in London] and have tables where not only the young, but I mean you could, say, book a bottle and a table and talk and smoke and have a social life—which people need when they get together to an occasion like a concert.\(^ {16}\)


\(^{13}\) See Thomas Bauman “Becoming Original: Haydn and the Cult of Genius,” *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 333-357. This may also be read as a hint of Lutyens’s Romantic ideologies, as she seems to value what Bauman refers to as “natural” genius over “learned” genius, 338-339.

\(^{14}\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”

\(^{15}\) Schäfer, *British Composers*, 105. Lutyens often spoke of her brief time in Paris as a student as invaluable, as it exposed her to more contemporary music and the social circles of musicians, composers, and artists alike. This love of the French comradery led to her formation of the Composer’s Concourse, among her involvement in several musical societies.

\(^{16}\) Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”
This desire for social interaction stems, perhaps, from missed opportunities during Lutyens’s time in Paris, which was joyous time of discovery marred by the fact that she was uncomfortable socializing in French.17

**Englishness in Quincunx: The Paradox of Tradition**

*Quincunx* was, as mentioned, relatively successful, and praise for it typically references Lutyens’s excellent orchestration, structure, and its emotive qualities. Critic Robert Henderson said of *Quincunx* “perhaps most remarkable is the long, carefully poised and sensitively colored central movement in which the imaginatively organized sound patterns, aided by a wordless soprano, create a most effective manner the strange, imprecise world of dreams and the ‘phantasmes of sleep.’”18 Mathias also writes emphatically about *Quincunx* in her book on female English composers, saying “[it is] compelling in its use of instrumental color and emotional intensity,” also noting the “opulent scoring” and the piece’s “eloquent design and voluptuous scoring.”19 The piece was never, however, described as being particularly nationalist or English. But it is clear from the choice of text alone that there is a connection to the same desire of creating something English; it is merely the sound that differs radically from those of her contemporaries. Lutyens utilized many pre-Classical techniques in *Quincunx* that—in other (tonal) composers’ works—would have been perceived as belonging to a folk/English tradition.20

Lutyens’s *Quincunx* bears some striking resemblances to that of early English music and its subsequent revival in twentieth century English music. First, the aforementioned text comes from the Renaissance era as well as featuring the increasingly popular pastoral theme as

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associated with early music. *Quincunx* may not have the harmonic characteristics embodied by post-War conceptions of Englishness, Lutyens instead infused it with subtle hints of Englishness. These English qualities can be generally found in the text, connection to nature, text-painting, and hocket and dovetailing thematic material.

The text comes from end of Sir Thomas Browne’s *Garden of Cyrus* (1654), a treatise on finding proof of the existence and wisdom of God in the natural symmetry of plants and ancient tradition of planting orchards in quincunxes. The text is quite lengthy and highly philosophical in nature, but we must remember that Lutyens was an avid reader and literature enthusiast, given her relation to famous writers and social connections through her father to such writers and poets as Yeats (whom she described in her autobiography and kind but dull) Lutyens excerpts the following words from near the end of the text:

> But the Quincunx of Heaven runs low, and ‘tis time to close the five ports of Knowledge; we are unwilling to spin out our waking thoughts into the phantasmes of sleep; which often continueth praecogitations; making Cables of Cobwebbes, and Wildernesses of handsome Groves.  

Before analyzing the text for meaning, it is already possible to see examples of how *Quincunx* connects to an older English tradition. The spellings of some words (such as phantasemes, praecogitations, and cobwebbes) harken back to the Middle English tradition of Chaucer and those who emulated him later in the 16th century (such as Edmund Spencer). It is unclear which edition/translation of Browne that Lutyens used for her piece, but the editor seems to have been keen to preserve the antiquated spellings of certain words. It is also known that Lutyens had been reading Chaucer in the late 1950s and even used parts of his poetry as libretto

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21 This text as it appears above is taken from the introductory page of the score that lists the dedication (“to Minas Volanakis”) and instrumentation as well as the movements. In the baritone introduction to Tutti 3, however, some of the words have their modern spellings instead (phantasms, precogitations, and cobwebs). Since the score is a facsimile of Lutyens’s handwriting, it is unclear whether she either forgot about these alternative spellings or modernized them for the singer.
for the cantata De Amore (1957). These antiquated spellings cannot be heard in performance, and serve more as an atmospheric direction for the performer.

This text reflects the long tradition throughout European history of attempts to recover or recreate what was perceived to be the Arcadia and romance of ancient Rome and Greece. It is seen in the sixteenth century in Shakespeare’s poetry and dramas (i.e., Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, and Troilus and Cressida). The eighteenth century was the age of Enlightenment, which harkened back to philosophical principles of antiquity. Barbara Russano Hanning notes in her Concise History of Western Music that the term classic was “an adjective that also refers to the ancient Greeks and Romans—because it shares many attributes of the art and architecture of antiquity,” which meant that art should aspire to be as close to its idealized version as possible.

And in the twentieth century with the revival (or reimagining) of the English Musical Renaissance, as Eric Saylor notes “idealized versions of rural England neatly correlate with classical depictions of Arcadia as a haven from the city and may help explain the popularity of pastoral music associated with such themes in the early twentieth century.” This concern with mythology can be attributed to many facets of European life and culture (that far outstrip the boundaries of this thesis), but the prevalence of mythology in music, literature, and art is crucial to understand, as Browne’s The Garden of Cyrus is steeped in history and mythology.

This text, although only four lines, is packed with allusions. The “Quincunx of Heaven” is a reference to the star cluster Hyades, named after the five nymphs in Greek mythology who

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were the daughters of Atlas. The sisters were placed in the night sky to honor and recognize their help in raising the god of wine, pleasure, and madness Dionysus. Before they were placed in the sky, their brother Hyas was killed by a lion and their tears brought rain to the earth. The Hyades cluster is a part of the Taurus constellation, comprising the face of the bull. Taurus appears in the sky from around mid-May to late June, but editor Kevin Killeen notes that the Hyades cluster would only just appear on the horizon around midnight in March (hence its “running low”). The five ports of Knowledge are simply the five senses; Browne is essentially noting that since the Hyades cluster is low in the sky, it is late and time to sleep.

The rest of the text deals with dreams derived from “our waking thoughts” or “precogitations” which are the thoughts had just before sleep. Browne borrows the idea of the soul awakening during sleep from Hippocrates, who wrote “for the body when asleep has no perception; but the soul when awake has cognizance of all things – sees what is visible, hears what is audible, walks, touches, feels pain, ponders.” Therefore, an unwillingness to “spin out … waking thoughts” is the desire to stop bodily contemplation in an effort to experience the more spiritual understanding of dreams. The choice of libretto reveals the Enlightenment rationale behind the discourse. Lutyens only selected four lines from a larger paragraph which reads:

But the quincunx of Heaven runs low, and ‘tis time to close the five ports of knowledge; we are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into the phantasmes of sleep, which often continueth præcogitations; making cables of cobwebbes and wildernesses of handsome groves. Beside Hippocrates hath spoke so little and the oneirocritical masters, have left such frigid interpretations from plants, that there is little encouragement to dream of Paradise it self. Nor will the sweetest delight of gardens afford much comfort in

Footnotes:
sleep; wherein the dulnesse of that sense shakes hands with delectable odours; and though in the bed of Cleopatra, can hardly with any delight raise up the ghost of a rose.\textsuperscript{27}

Though this text is highly intellectual and philosophical, neither of these concepts is mentioned in any reviews. This is likely because while Lutyens was drawing on English discourse for her libretto, it was not the expected kind of source material. Unlike composers who took their libretto from folk songs passed down through oral tradition or Romantic imitations of the past, the themes of the words are often more easily connected to pastoral ones (such as referencing shepherds or maidens). \textit{The Garden of Cyrus} requires more thought and reflection on nature than the more popular and easily digested lyrics expected of true English music. Nevertheless, the Browne text connects \textit{Quincunx} to late eighteenth century philosophical concepts such as Plato’s idea of idealized Forms made popular again in post-WWII England.

Despite the short text, Lutyens’s setting of the baritone solo features text-painting (see Figure 3.2a for the complete baritone solo). One such example can be seen in Figure 3.2b: the first measure of the baritone solo repeats the same note (A) five times with the third repetition being not only the longest rhythmic value, but also emphasizing the syllable “quin-” in quincunx, thereby forming a rhythmic quincunx.

\textsuperscript{27} Browne, “Garden of Cyrus,” 598.
Although text-painting is often discussed in terms of 19th century music, it actually predates the Romantics, as Tim Carter points out,

Word-painting presumes the possibility of a meaningful relationship between word and music. Thus it developed as a characteristic feature of the Renaissance, when this
relationship was carefully (re)constructed by musical humanists on the precedent of classical antiquity.  

Additionally, text painting is also strongly associated with madrigals, which English Renaissance composers were particularly keen to utilize. There are many musical topoi that were associated with certain emotions and moods (such as descending bass lines representing a lament) which would have been fairly common knowledge during its heyday; one such association would have been madrigals with text-painting and clever wordplay. This is fitting as England has long held international esteem for its literary, poetic, and dramatic works. Yet, as with any texted work, the source material is only a small fragment of a piece’s identity.

In addition to the imagery and text, there is also the form of the piece; Lutyens borrows heavily from Baroque concerto grosso in that each of the five parts of the quincunx is divided into one tutti and one soli section. These pairs feature particular timbres in the soli sections, with the first being for woodwinds (see Figure 3.1). These soli sections showcase the capabilities of the instruments themselves as well as their combined sounds. This constant juxtaposition of full orchestra with smaller solo groups is reminiscent of the interplay of a concerto grosso. As Michael Talbot writes in the Oxford entry on the concerto grosso, “the distinction between ‘tutti’ and ‘solo’ (hence of ritornello and episode) is maintained by interpreting the former as the entire ensemble, the latter as a subgroup, either constant or variable in its composition,” whereby a subgroups are the woodwinds, strings, voice, percussion, and brass.

29 Ibid. Carter notes in his Grove entry that “the technique was standard, even conventional [and] … often for witty effect [and] it became closely associated with the term ‘madrigalism.’”
These influences are not intuitively heard in Lutyens’s music. However, a more careful examination of technique, structure, and timbre can reveal more similarities between her own compositions and those of Purcell’s or Frescobaldi’s.31 For example, in Purcell’s Fantasia in G Major, Z. 742,32 there is constant melodic dovetailing throughout the second movement as seen in Figure 3.3a; this hocket technique is especially prominent in the quicker section of the Fantasia beginning in measure 32. With the livelier tempo, eighth notes are introduced in the first violin and are passed around between all four voices so that the listener is enveloped by nearly perpetual motion. This same sense of perpetual motion is heard in Tutti 1 of *Quincunx* as different sections of the orchestra dovetail melodic material in a nearly seamless way (see Figure 3.3b).

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31 Schafer, *British Composers*, 13-23. When asked who her favorite composer(s) were, Lutyens responded “Debussy, Frescobaldi, Webern, Beethoven, in that order.” This interview, although not published until 1963, was conducted in December of 1961, shortly after Lutyens finished writing *Quincunx* and before it premiered the following summer.

32 Although it is unclear from her BBC interview which particular fantasia was the inspiration that moved her towards independent voices and serialism, all seven of the four-voice fantasias share these qualities of hocket and imitation.
Figure 3.3a Purcell Fantasia, movement 2
Figure 3.3b Lutyens’s *Quincunx* Tutti 1 melodic dovetailing
Although *Quincunx* does not always exemplify an exact hocket, there are many passages that are hocket-like in their construction. For example, in Tutti 3, the soprano’s first entrance in measure 6 offers a melodic statement of the $R_4$ row (see Figure 3.4a) but without the final note. But on closer inspection, this note (C sharp/D flat) can be found in the orchestra, completing the row (see Figure 3.4b). Not only does this offer a sense of completion, but the soprano’s final note is the both a beginning and an end; the soprano’s final B is simultaneously the last note of the $R_4$ row as well as the first note of the orchestra’s $I_2$ row (for a complete chart of Lutyens’s use of tone rows in Tutti 3, see Figure 3.5). As with the baritone solo, several rows overlap, giving the tone rows the same illusion of perpetual motion utilized by Purcell in his Fantasias (Figure 3.3a).

Figure 3.4a Soprano mm. 6-7

![Figure 3.4a Soprano mm. 6-7](image)

Figure 3.4b Soprano row completed in orchestra (vibraphone continuing soprano)

![Figure 3.4b Soprano row completed in orchestra (vibraphone continuing soprano)](image)
In addition to the hocket-like technique, there is also a great deal of imitation between the four voices of the Purcell Fantasia throughout the movement as well. Motifs are passed from voice to voice, such as the opening ascending line in the viola, as well its inverted sibling in the cello (see Figure 3.6a). The first ascending motif is also immediately inverted and overlaps with the first. This same imitation can be found throughout Quincunx as well, such as the syncopated falling motif in Soli 1 (see Figure 3.6b).

As Ernest Sanders notes, “such overlapping of phrases can indeed be found in musica cum littera (motets, especially ‘peripheral’ motets and the so-called isoperiodic motets composed in England in the 13th and 14th centuries),” linking another compositional technique to an older English tradition.33 Lutyens did not always complete tone rows before continuing with a new idea, instead overlapping rows or progressing through almost all 12 notes in one

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instrument/voice and completing the 12\textsuperscript{th} note in another voice. This type of serial hocket illustrates how Lutyens utilized older musical forms and techniques in a modern individualistic paradigm. Not only does this symmetry create unity but it also can be found on a smaller scale within the progression of tone rows.

Figure 3.6a Purcell Fantasia movement 2 motivic exchange
**Un-Englishness in Quincunx: The Paradox of Modernity**

As previously discussed, the baritone solo occupies the center of the piece, both literally and conceptually; this is why I have used the solo to determine the matrix for the entire composition. Because the baritone is unaccompanied, Lutyens’s treatment of the tone rows is more readily apparent. The baritone begins with immediate text-painting in the first five notes, and continues to follow the contours of the text (see Figure 3.2a). Although Lutyens cannot overlap voices or timbres with only one voice, she does overlap tone rows (see Figure 3.8). The majority of the
solo is written using text-painting, such as the word “low” being sung on the lowest note of the piece so far, the melisma on “spin out” and “phantasmes,” the repeated Ds that “continueth precogitations,” and the drooping on the word “cobwebbes.”

Figure 3.7 12-Tone matrix derived from baritone solo

The 12-tone matrix derived from the baritone solo is also used for the soprano movement, though with some slight alterations. The soprano movement begins with a sustained unison on B natural before adding in other notes that eventually create a thick, dissonant texture by the time the soprano enters in measure 6. At first, the instrumental entrances seem random but there is in fact a pattern to the entrances. Each new note that is added to the growing dissonance is the next note of P2. Up to four different instruments will enter with a pitch that has not been sounded yet in the sustained notes, which creates an aggregated 12-tone row amongst the entire orchestra.
Although the texture becomes more dense and dissonant as notes are added and subtracted, the new notes are easy to distinguish from the background because of their distinctive timbres.

Figure 3.8 *Quincunx* baritone solo with tone rows identified

While the other movements draw on the matrix derived from the baritone solo, Lutyens also enigmatically alters them. The opening $P_2$ row of the soprano movement is, as shown above, derived from the baritone solo matrix. But, two pairs of its pitches swapped are (C-F-D becomes C-D-F and F sharp-A flat-D flat becomes F sharp-D flat-A flat). The next completed tone row, however, is an unaltered statement of $R_4$. The pattern inexplicably continues with the following $I_2$ row swapping B flat-F-A flat with B flat-A flat-F (see Figure 3.5). Although it may initially seem to be a simple error in identifying tone rows in the baritone, no matter which of the four
rows is used to create a new matrix, the P₂, R₄, and I₂ rows will yield the same results with the same swapped pitches.

There are many ways to interpret such a surely intentional decision to alter tone rows between movements. Lutyens could be making a very subtle type of texting painting based on the “phantasmes of sleep” (a phantasm being the likeness of something but not an exact copy). This idea carries through the movement as the soprano is representative of the thinking/dreaming human element of the Browne text since she does not require words to convey her meaning. Following this interpretation even further would mean that the phantasms of the instrumental tone rows are “making cables of cobwebbes and wilderness of handsome groves” with their nearly identical iterations of the tone rows. Critic and music journalist Robert Henderson wrote of *Quincunx* after its premiere at Cheltenham that

> most remarkable is the long, carefully poised and sensitively coloured central movement in which the imaginatively organized sound patterns, aided by a wordless soprano, create in a most effective manner the strange, imprecise world of dreams and the ‘phantasmes of sleep.’

Although obvious characteristics of Englishness were not reported on, it is the memory of the text that lends the soprano movement its dreamlike mood.

Lutyens’s uses timbre to distinguish pitches of row statements throughout the instrumental sections of the soprano movement by passing them between instruments. This is confined to the A sections (mm. 1-15 and mm. 33-end). The use of timbre to distinguish melody is a much more modern concept than the previously discussed techniques. The concept of *Klangfarbenmelodie* originated with Schoenberg, particularly in his 1911 discourse

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In it, he described how the change in timbre of a single note could be “perceived as equivalent to a melodic succession,” and become not only something for the ear to latch onto but to become a fundamental element of form.\textsuperscript{36} Webern expanded on these ideas in his own compositions; Lutyens, as a self-proclaimed admirer of Webern, surely would have been aware of the \textit{Klangfarbenmelodie} technique.\textsuperscript{37}

But Lutyens, ever the individualistic composer, would not have used this technique as Schoenberg or Webern did, but rather in her own idiom. A combination of this adoption of the \textit{Klangfarbenmelodie} technique in tandem with Forkert’s explanation of Lutyens’s magical serialism may explain why the B section of Tutti 3 immediately departs from the regular progression of tone rows to a much denser texture characterized by its clusters and timbre. In this section, Lutyens sets different sections of the orchestra in contrast to each other. For example, mm 15-18 (see Figure 3.9), the timbre of the orchestra is dominated by brass, but immediately following their decrescendo the woodwinds echo the previous swelling and ebbing dynamic. This once again ties into the concerto grosso form except on a much smaller scale; though Lutyens despised being referred to as a miniaturist, it is compositional flairs such as this that accentuate her keen understanding of writing for smaller forces.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Schafer, \textit{British Composers}, 23. When Lutyens was asked if she had any favorite composers, she responded with, “Debussy, Frescobaldi, Webern, Beethoven, in that order.”
The symmetry of the quincunx is reflected in the structure of the piece in several ways.

The subtlest form of symmetry is the consistent significance of the note A throughout the piece. In the first measure of Tutti 1, an entire tone row has sounded by the second beat (see Figure 3.3b); in fact, almost all 12 notes are sounded immediately except for the A, which is delayed until beat two where it is placed in the extreme registers of flute, piano, and first violins (on A6). The piccolo and xylophone also chime in on this A, adding a timbral coloring to the already sounding As.

In the soprano movement, Lutyens continues to highlight the significance of the pitch A. As with the baritone solo, the soprano begins its first and last melodic lines with the same A;
however, the symmetry of the soprano lines lies not in mirror symmetry as with the baritone (beginning and ending on the exact same note, see Figure 3.2a above), but in its overall structure. This arrangement and symmetrical placement of tone rows can be read as a smaller scale version of the arrangement of the movements. As previously mentioned, the movements are broken into two pieces, tutti then soli. The baritone introduction, however, reverses this pattern (see figure 3.1). By changing the pattern in the middle of the piece, the vocal movements are marked as central—both literally and figuratively. If not for this paradigm shift, the movements would still be symmetrical in that there would still be pairs of tutti/soli sections, but there would be no identifiable center, depriving the piece its quincuncial structure. In the Tutti 3 movement, the first two statements of tone rows in mm. 1-8 are identically restated in mm. 33-40 with only slight alterations to the final measure to signify the end of the piece (see Figure 3.10). This repetition creates a symmetrical ABA structure for the movement.
Similarly, in Tutti 3, the tone row expressed in the soprano line almost always tapers into another instrument of the orchestra, as shown in Figure 3.5. This can be seen in the score in mm. 7-8 and 39-40 especially, as the soprano’s final B natural is taken up in the same octave by the vibraphone both times. This dovetailing is nearly seamless to a casual or first-time listener. There are even passages where it is unclear whether or not the soprano is singing (one such place being the eighth note E flat of the soprano being continued by first clarinet, creating the aural illusion that the note is still being held by the soprano).

Fig. 3.11 Soprano dovetailing into vibraphone.

Not only does Lutyens create a melodic 12-tone dovetailing in this movement, but the tone rows overlap as well. In the baritone solo, the first and second rows (P₀ and R₆) as well as the second and third rows (R₆ and I₁) dovetail in unexpected places such as in between phrases and in the middle of words (see Figure 3.8). Lutyens continues this idea of overlap and layers rows together in the soprano movement. For example, when the soprano enters in measure 6, she begins a new tone row beginning with A that ends with a B natural for soprano and a C sharp/D flat in B flat clarinets, harp, and second violin, which is the end of the R₄ row and the beginning of the I₂ row (see Figure 3.12). Both baritone and soprano generally operate with large sections
of hocket, which are a subtle nod to the past traditions of hocket such as in thirteenth and fourteenth century English motets.  

Figure 3.12 Tutti 3 Row Overlap

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38 Sanders, “Hocket.”
Conclusion

In my analysis, I have demonstrated that Quincunx contains both English and modern characteristics. First, the Browne text connects the programmatic element of the piece to nature, particularly the wonder of natural design. The text also bears the connotative connection to older English traditions through the use of antiquated spellings of several words. Next, although the excerpt that Lutyens selected was short, she reflected the meaning of it through her setting of the baritone who sings it through prolific text-painting. The tradition of text-painting has a strong connection to English madrigals of the sixteenth century, hence Quincunx’s dual association to an older English tradition.

As I have discussed in previous chapters, the difference between tonal narrative Englishness and modernism was typically seen as an either/or situation. Yet Lutyens managed to incorporate elements of Englishness into her serial works. Quincunx, as shown, utilizes modern compositional techniques such as Schoenberg’s Klangfarbenmelodie and general use of timbre to differentiate melodies in addition to 12-tone methods. Not only did Lutyens borrow these techniques from Schoenberg (despite her claims of arriving at serialism through Purcell and Debussy), but she also put her own personal stamp on them by swapping pairs of notes, seemingly at random. This is an especially noteworthy technique as it combines the element of text-painting with serialism.

Despite Lutyens’s incorporation of English elements into Quincunx, the text, pastoralism, and hocket were not strong enough characteristics to earn national esteem. Though the piece was successful at its premiere and in subsequent reviews, it was more commonly praised for its mysterious mood and emotional expression. Ironically, Lutyens did not believe that emotion was inherent in music, revealing the paradox of Quincunx being programmatic in the texted baritone
solo yet absolute in every other movement. Additionally, *Quincunx* embodies the stylistic paradox of simultaneously being English and modern. While composers such as Britten could be deemed both English and modern, the modernism is not quite as diametrically opposed to tonality as Lutyens’s style. However, her successful combination of Englishness and modernism did not, unfortunately, extend to the gender gap of modernism. Lutyens never truly escaped the labels and concepts such as “woman-composer” or “feminine music” (or lack thereof in Lutyens’s music) that, in the composer’s own words, “dogged—or should I say ‘bitched’—me all my life.”

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CONCLUSION

Both of the twentieth century’s world wars deeply affect how artists conceived of their art and its purpose. The Romantic composer’s purpose was, among other things, to express a deeply felt sensibility, individuality, and national unity. But the horrors of the wars amplified the already growing disdain and fear of technology and industrialization. This was especially the case in England where the Industrial Revolution began. Therefore, post-war desire was to dispel the memory of mechanized destruction and replace it with the pastoral “Merrie England” of a collectively-imagined simpler past. Merrie England had a specific sound that maintained the illusion of the past, and serialism was the modern sound that spoiled it.

Twentieth century post-war musical Englishness was thus generally understood as consisting of tonal, narrative, folk, and/or Medieval inspired works. Anything that did not conform to these characteristics was not considered English. Such a binary is what Richard Taruskin criticizes as "the Great Either/Or” in the introduction of his *Oxford History of Western Music* series. Instead, he encourages musicologists to consider that

there is nothing *a priori* to rule out both/and rather than either/or. Indeed, if it is true that production and reception history are of equal and interdependent importance to an understanding of cultural products, then it must follow that types of analysis usually conceived in mutually exclusive “internal” and “external” categories can and must function symbiotically.¹

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In my thesis, I thus argue that this rigid definition of Englishness could be expanded to accommodate non-tonal music. In expanding the definition of Englishness, music that utilizes pastoral imagery, English source materials, or pre-Classical compositional techniques and forms can include works and composers who have otherwise been categorized differently. This not only widens the discourse on twentieth century English nationalism but opens other binaries up to shades of gray. By including less overtly English composers such as Lutyens, allows scholars the opportunity to examine different manifestations of nationalism.

After the war many European composers turned away from pastoralism and romanticism; but for the reasons just discussed, English composers embraced a recreation of an idyllic past. While some composers such as Elgar were fairly patriotic in their own right, the post-war period saw these composers repackaged into monuments in the newly constructed English lineage. Through the new image of Elgar, the rediscovery of English madrigals and folk songs, and the power of nostalgia, tonal Englishness was promoted by conservative BBC employees through broadcasts and the Proms concerts. Although the BBC Proms were certainly not the only concerts and music festivals happening in England, their national prestige and easy accessibility to the public made them a powerful tool in setting national standards. Since the men who controlled the music were highly conservative in taste and tradition, they sought to promote music they liked and felt was what the public wanted to hear. Because of their highly conservative tastes, the music they chose was often tonal music of the English Musical Renaissance.

The paradox is that tonal Englishness is derived from an appropriation of German and English musical tradition. In other words, the popularity and repetition of a relatively small pool of masterworks, along with the centuries old tradition of musical lineage, became the seed of
England’s newly established national style. In addition to the borrowings of German traditions, madrigals experienced a resurgence in popularity, yet English madrigals were heavily rooted in the Italian madrigal tradition. To say that English composers added nothing unique to the genre would be misleading; their contributions were mainly literary as English madrigals were acclaimed for their clever word play and text-painting. Nevertheless, much of the stylistic roots of the English Musical Renaissance were from non-English traditions.

Although Lutyens resented being compared to Schoenberg, she was friends with him and sought compositional advice and discourse from him. It was Schoenberg who said to her that the 12-tone compositional procedures were guidelines not rules; they did not have to be strictly adhered to.² Lutyens notes this in her autobiography and given Quincunx’s frequent splicing of tone rows, this was advice she was keen to utilize. Yet she was also intent on placing herself within a lineage, particularly an old English lineage. Many critics of Lutyens music refer to her as a composer in the Second Viennese School, pupil of Schoenberg, or make direct connections between her style and German/Austrian modernism.³ Even in her interview with Bernard Palmer in 1970 with the BBC, Palmer began a question with “nevertheless, you chose to become a student in the Viennese School of composition, stemming from Schoenberg and through Berg and Webern and so on.”⁴ These comparisons plagued Lutyens until around the last decade of her life, when critics were finally less comparative about her works than descriptive.

The public’s complacency with hearing the same classics and English composers who emulated that style made it all the more difficult for serial composers. Although Elgar and

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² Elisabeth Lutyens, A Goldfish Bowl (London: Cassell, 1972), 244.
⁴ Ibid. Lutyens was quick to respond that she “certainly didn’t come to [serialism] through any knowledge of Schoenberg or Berg or Webern.”
Vaughan Williams were frequently hailed as writing English masterpieces, it is important to realize that both men were learned in the European (German) style of harmony and melody. This is not an attempt to rob them of their creative prowess for infusing their own style into this German model, but instead to recognize the irony of the situation. Lutyens, on the other hand, while mainly educated with this German style model, experienced an earlier iteration of modernism in Debussy and the rediscovery of Purcell and Frescobaldi among others.

In tandem with the difficulties attached to such strict musical dichotomies, Lutyens also faced many hardships in her life that prevented her from dedicating time to composing the music she wanted to write. In order to support herself, four children, and mostly unemployed husband, Lutyens had to take on commissions ranging from commercial jingles, documentary/film scores, and incidental music for radio broadcasts and theater. In a 1961 interview with Murray Schafer, Lutyens remarked

> I’ve had to work for twenty years in the midst of my young children. Whom do the children always come to with their problems? Who has to keep the place clean in spite of the shortage of domestic help? I would love a large sound-proof room with a secretary and a housekeeper. There’s you answer to why there are so few women artists. In the end you simply have to decided that you can’t compose or that you have to do it in whatever circumstances you can.⁵

It is additionally important to bear in mind that Lutyens’s was also teaching composition and was an active member of several musical societies during this time as well. Succeeding in music as a woman was therefore made all the more difficult because of Lutyens’s musical style. These factors—the strong association with Englishness and folk-like music being superior than modernism, being a woman in a man’s world, educational disadvantages, and lack of exposure to a variety of composers—were coupled with the fact that Lutyens was naturally inclined to test

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⁵ Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 107. Ironically, Lutyens made this comment after having just been distracted by the telephone in her work area.
limits and dabble in techniques beyond expected or proper English music written by women at the time. Is it any wonder that it took several decades not only for Lutyens to find her musical voice, but to gain any positive attention in musical societies at the time?

*Quincunx* thus holds a unique position in Lutyens’s oeuvre; it is one of the first pieces of her mature/critically successful period as well as being ambitious in the size of the orchestra. Lutyens was often referred to or thought of as a “miniaturist” as most of her successful works from the early 1930s to the late 1950s were for chamber ensembles. Many of her female contemporaries also faced similar stereotypes as composers of mainly chamber music. Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson document the social faux pas of women playing instruments that went in the mouth or distorted the face as detrimental in learning about orchestration. They write “restrictions on women learning orchestral instruments confined their music making to the home. Unable to play in orchestras, contemporary women composers lacked the experience with instrumentation that their male colleagues took for granted. […] A basic decision…required specialized knowledge.”

Although Lutyens, Williams, Maconchy, and other women eventually studied music at the RCM or other institutes, they were often denied lessons as children; these educational privileges were almost never denied their male contemporaries. Though Lutyens’s years of toiling were not entirely in vain; many of the students and young composers that she taught and nurtured helped to bring modernism from across the pond, providing it with a small space in English public life.

In addition to the difficulty of finding success as a serialist composer, Lutyens struggled to establish herself in English musical society because modernity had been coded as masculine.

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6 Brian Elias, “Elisabeth Lutyens 1906-1983,” *Tempo* no. 145 (1983): 33. Elias notes in his obituary of Lutyens that “many will find it easy to relegate her to the pigeon-holes she abhorred, amongst them ‘miniaturist’ and ‘woman-composer.’ She wrote several major orchestral works, many of which […] belie the label.”

As Annika Forkert has noted in her article, women were thought to be better performers because of their innate female emotions, but those same emotions prevented them from achieving true male genius. The idea that women were not capable of genius was a centuries old belief that still lingers in musicology of today, though much of it has been rooted out. Lutyens rebelled against this idea not by joining societies of women composers or identifying herself as a feminist, but by insisting that her gender had nothing to do with her music and was her “private life.”

Although *Quincunx* was written in a 12-tone style, through my analysis of *Quincunx*, I have shown that the orchestral piece contains both elements of mainstream Englishness and modernism. Unlike music that was popular in the Proms and BBC broadcasts, *Quincunx*’s Englishness lies in its source material and compositional techniques rather than its sound. The use of Sir Thomas Browne’s *The Garden of Cyrus* for the central baritone solo movement of *Quincunx*, the incorporation of hockets and madrigalisms, and the Baroque concerto form of the whole piece demonstrates that Lutyens was aware of and could integrate “old” English techniques into her music. Yet *Quincunx* is quite modern through its 12-tone construction, symmetry, and instrumentation. Lutyens uses an amalgamation of techniques ranging from Webern’s overlapping tone rows to Purcell’s independent part writing. Lutyens was an avid admirer of Webern’s music, yet she did not want to be connected to the Second Viennese School for fear of losing her uniqueness.

When *Quincunx* premiered at the Cheltenham Festival in 1962, it was an immediate success with critics, who generally described Lutyens’s excellent use of the orchestra, the organization, and expressive mood of the piece. Although Lutyens seemed to prefer Stravinsky’s approach to objectivity, her music often had text which is not as easily separated from meaning.

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8 Lutyens, “BBC Profile.”
as abstract musical sounds. It is possible that this is why critics considered the piece to be so expressive, another reason being that since women were generally considered emotional, their music must be emotional as well.

I have examined Lutyens and her music from a feminist, nationalist, and modernist perspective with the aim of placing an unconventional composer within the more conventional stylistic trend of musical Englishness. While it is often a fruitless endeavor to shoehorn women and minorities into the mainstream canon, I believe that to demonstrate Lutyens’s unique use of Englishness in her music shows, on the one hand, her ability to have synthesized many different styles into a coherent, genre-defying style, and, on the other hand, how pigeonholing music into strict binaries can severely limit how widely niche composers and genres are disseminated. By placing Lutyens’s music alongside that of Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Britten, or Delius, the definition of Englishness is greatly expanded without becoming broad enough to lose its individuality. Binaries in any field are potentially discriminatory and usually reductive; accounting for the shades of gray not only adds richness to the any topic but becomes more inclusive to diverse perspectives. This is not to suppose that binaries are the only comparative musicological tools; indeed, the New Musicology movement has largely rendered this type of scholarship obsolete. However, the residual tendency of placing composers, genres, styles, etc., into clearly defined and separated categories is more difficult to abandon altogether.

Musicologists in the past few decades have shifted the general discourse of the discipline: first, by carefully incorporate women and minorities, and secondly, by reconsidering the constructs of genius, canon, and the interpretations that were the foundation to their exclusion in the first place. The difficulty with criticizing older standards and expectations for music is that there is no replacement system that is not also problematic in some way. However, refraining
from having only one universal canon or way of thinking about music benefits the field in such a way that music can be diversely discussed as never before. Lutyens is a prime example of how binaries fail to capture the full richness of a composer’s style, life, and legacy. If modernism is still considered the product of masculine genius (implicitly or not), the modern music of women can never be considered as worthy of study as that of their male counterparts.

Because Lutyens is a fairly obscure composer, there is plenty of further research that can be done about her life and works. For example, an examination of Lutyens’s film scores, particularly differentiating her science-fiction film scores from her documentaries could not only further illuminate the perceived differences between Englishness and modernism, but how modernism’s lack of narrative was relegated to the genre of science-fiction and horror. She also wrote many incidental scores to accompany radio broadcasts and plays. Lutyens’s travels and experiences with spirituality were also a major part of her life that spilled over into her music in the form of influence and exoticism, such as her 1952 score for The Boy from Kumasenu which was “much-praised [for its] evocation of the African atmosphere.”9 This kind of influence on Lutyens’s music could connect her to other modern composers who were influenced by non-Western musics such as John Cage and Steve Reich. Additionally, Lutyens’s connections with composers, performers, critics, BBC programmers, and other artists could fuel research into the interconnectivity of twentieth century artists. Never before had composers had such easy access to music from different countries and eras, as well as those who studied or created it. Lutyens represents another type of paradox in this regard as she was both well-connected yet struggled with getting her music performed.

Lutyens’s music was paradoxical in that it is simultaneously modern and English. But examining composers such as Lutyens in a less categorical way can allow for a wider array of perspectives in the fields of nationalism, modernism, and beyond. Lutyens may serve as a reminder that paradoxes are not always interpretational limitations. She is also an example of how women composing in modern styles were perceived and reviewed. Understanding bias in contemporary reviews and perceptions speaks volumes about the difference between what was expected of men and women in music.

By being mindful of these dichotomies, we can not only begin to break down their significance in musicological discourse, but understand music more inclusively and less as we would like it to be. Inclusivity in all fields is not an attempt to undermine or eradicate the works of the geniuses, but to acknowledge that more than one class, race, or gender was capable producing works worthy of study and consideration. Even viewing current masterworks and their composers in various perspectives can yield fruitful results. As the world becomes more tolerant and inclusive of all types of minorities, musicologists should reflect this in their work. Having a wider variety of interpretations and perspectives only adds value to the field.

Englishness, modernity, and genius were typically exclusionary tools in music that separated women from men. While Englishness was the least exclusionary of the genres/characteristics attributed to music in post-war England, the music of the most successful female composers of this time are not categorized as particularly English. Instead, these women were either remembered for their contributions to musical pedagogy or for their less serious works. Additionally, modernity was also thought of as the result of male innovation. Acknowledging these shortcomings in musicology will help to level the field moving forward.
Graph showing the number of pieces by German/Austrian composers performed in Proms during WWII. Note that there is a relatively small pool of dead composers whose pieces were featured most frequently.

Graph showing the number of pieces by English composers performed in Proms concerts during WWII. Although there is a much wider variety of English composers who were featured, only a select few were given significantly more exposure.
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