

# *Anvil Studio*

## *Guide to the Very Best of Classical Music.*

*Vol: One.*

## ***Johann Baptist Wanhal (Vanhal) (1739-1813)***

Wanhal's life may be divided into five periods. The first lasted from his birth as a bonded servant on 12 May 1739 in the Bohemian village of Nechanicz until he moved to Vienna to begin his career in 1760 or 1761. During these twenty years he received excellent training from fine teachers in several Bohemian towns and villages so that he became an accomplished violinist and organist, and a composer of both instrumental and church music. At the same time he prepared himself for a move to Vienna by learning to speak German. His attractive personal characteristics (happy, modest, honest, personal warmth, good looks, personal deportment, deeply religious, etc.) together with his pragmatic and independent spirit foretold his later success.

The second period of Wanhal's life began when the Countess Schaffgotsch, to whose family he was in bondage, offered to take him to Vienna. The exact date is not ascertainable, but it was fortunate because he arrived at a crucial time in the history of instrumental music. It was the beginning of an approximately twenty-year period (1760s - early 1780s) when, supported by the exhilaration of a booming economy, the nobility in Vienna were competing with each other and the newly rich burgers for the prestige derived from having the most glamorous musical soirees - with new music performed by their own orchestras. It also coincided with the tempestuous rise of the printed-music industry in Paris that reflected the massive upsurge of interest in music that was sweeping Europe. Wanhal was quickly accepted into the centre of the activity as a violinist, composer and teacher. Problems of authenticity and dating negate any attempt to be absolutely accurate, but I estimate that during the first nine or so years he composed more than thirty symphonies along with chamber music, and music for the church. The competition between those who wanted to have their own orchestras during the opulent decade of the 1760s dictated that Kapellmeister were needed who could recruit and train musicians, provide music for them to play, care for the practical aspects of an orchestra, such as managing the affairs of the personnel, arrange performances, etc. That Wanhal possessed all the essential musical and personal qualities was recognized by Baron Issac von Riesch of Dresden, who wanted to establish his own Kapelle. He accordingly persuaded Wanhal to accept his financial support and go to Italy - which was considered a kind of finishing school - where he could spend a substantial period of time rubbing elbows with the leading musicians, writers and intelligentsia - and thus acquire the final polish necessary for the leader of a Kapelle.

May 1769 to September 1770 demark the third period of Wanhal's life, which was spent in various Italian cities (especially Florence). His association with many famous persons included leading composers such as Gluck. He also met the great social reformer, Emperor Joseph II, an encounter that I believe had special significance since Wanhal had, in the previous decade in Vienna, been able to buy his freedom from the bondage inherited from his birth in Bohemia. During this same period he was also able to contemplate the heavy demands of the position in Dresden for which he was being groomed - and be evermore aware of his enormous debt to Baron Riesch.

At the outset of the third period in 1770, Wanhal's return from Italy put him in the awkward position of being obligated to accept a position that he did not desire. Nonetheless, his utilitarian and independent nature caused him to refuse the position.

There are no accounts of what transpired, but the embarrassment and notoriety must have been very unpleasant, and he was depressed for some time. Furthermore, he found himself with only the support he could derive from teaching and composing - his situation when Burney visited him in 1772.

During the following years he was several times (from 1773 to 1779) invited by Count Ladislaus Erdödy, one of the great patrons of musicians, to his estate in Varazdin, Croatia. There are no records of when or how often these visits occurred, other than a few dates found on several works composed for the nuns in a convent in Varazdin. However, the music Wanhal produced in Vienna and published in Paris in the 1770s bears witness to his constant activity on the musical scene. The gradual increase in his published compositions shows that he was successful in supporting himself, but there were changes in the genre of music he wrote and published. As the robust economic conditions in Vienna declined during the later 1770s so did the fad for orchestral soirees. Wanhal's last symphonies were published in Berlin ca. 1780, and soon thereafter a reviewer in Hamburg expressed hope that Wanhal would continue to compose symphonies. But the market for symphonies in Vienna was rapidly diminishing, and the practical Wanhal composed no more of them.

The beginning of the fifth and final period of Wanhal's life is less clearly definable, but by 1785 he was ensconced on the Viennese scene. By this time the Viennese publishers had seized the initiative from the French publishers who had for many years provided them with prints, even of their own composers, including Wanhal. Publishers such as Artaria, Hoffmeister, and Sauer were fiercely competing in response to the demands of a new musical public whose tastes had changed, away from symphonies to small groups, Harmoniemusik, solo and instructional-pieces for keyboard, and programmatic pieces.

A few reports from 1784 and 1787 place Wanhal in Viennese society, but in general he seems to have been gradually retreating from active public life. By 1795, however, when Dlabacz visited him in Vienna, Wanhal was prospering, as may be seen in an oil painting in the possession of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna (See the frontispiece of my book). He apparently lived in comfortable circumstances for the remainder of his life. His death records show that he was living in an apartment close to St Stephan's Cathedral in Vienna, incidentally close to his most active publishers, and that his modest possessions were willed to the wife (widow?) of a Viennese bookseller.

In retrospect, a special legacy from him also deserves recognition. Through his strength of will and character he broke free of his bondage and consciously shunned the support of a patron. Thus, when he refused to accept Baron Riesch's position in 1770 he became one of the first active participants in the new social order. He created his own peaceful Viennese version of the French Revolution.

## ***Jacobus Gallus Carniolus (Jacob Handl)***

(1550 - July 18, 1591) Slovenian composer.

Jacobus Gallus was born as Jakob Petelin in 1550 in Ribnica, Slovenia. He is best known for his sacred music. A Cistercian monk, Gallus travelled in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, and went to Melk Abbey, Lower Austria. He was a member of the Viennese court chapel in 1574, and was choirmaster to the bishop of Olomouc, Moravia in 1579-1585.

He used the Latin form of his name, to which he often added the adjective Carniolus, thus giving credit to his home land, Carniola. His most notable work is the six part Opus musicum, 1577, a collection of motets that would eventually cover the liturgical needs of the entire ecclesiastical year. The motet O magnum mysterium comes from the first volume (printed in 1586) which covers the period from the first Sunday of Advent to the Septuagesima. This motet for 8 voices gives evidence of Venetian influence in its use of the coro spezzato technique (= polychorality).

His wide-ranging, eclectic style blended archaism and modernity. He rarely used the cantus firmus technique, preferring the then-new Venetian polychoral manner, yet he was equally conversant with earlier imitative techniques. Some of his chromatic transitions foreshadowed the breakup of modality; his five-voice motet Mirabile mysterium contains chromaticism worthy of Don Carlo Gesualdo. He enjoyed word painting in the style of the madrigal, yet he could write the simple Ecce quomodo moritur justus later used by Georg Friedrich Händel in his funeral anthem The Ways of Zion Do Mourn. Jacobus Gallus died on 18 July 1591 in Prague

## ***William Croft***

William Croft was born into a wealthy and ancient family at the Manor House, Nether Ettington in Warwickshire and was baptised on 30th December, 1678. He was educated as a 'Child of the Chapel Royal' where he was taught, by direction and example, by the composer John Blow (1649-1708). He remained at the Chapel as a 'Child' until he was twenty years old - something that only happened to the most talented of pupils. By the age of 19 he showed his obvious interest in composition by copying many extracts from cantatas by Scarlatti, Carissimi and others into his own manuscript book.

Croft died on 14th August, 1727 in the town of Bath where he had gone to take the waters - presumably to try to remedy a deterioration in health. He was buried in the north aisle of Westminster Abbey close to Purcell and Blow. A monument was built there in his honour.

## ***Giles Farnaby (c.1565-1640)***

Giles Farnaby came of a musical family and graduated at Oxford in 1592, though he probably lived in London. He wrote psalms--contributing to Ravenscroft's Psalms--and motets and published some canzonets, but is most notable for his virginal music, 52 pieces of his being included in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. There are fantasias, dances and variations and a number of 'genrepieces'--a type Farnaby seemed to make his own, heading them with fanciful titles like His Humour and Farnaby's Dreame. The first of these gives a whimsical picture of his character, mixing playful melody with chromaticism and jibing at earnest contrapuntal elaboration.

Like his/her father, Thomas, and one of his/her cousins, Nicholas, Giles was factor of instruments in London ("Citizen and Joyner of London"). His/her mother, Jane, which perhaps went down from a family of huguenots, was buried in Waltham St Lawrence in 1605. Giles Farnaby married Katharine Roane on May 28, 1587. Five years later, July 7, 1592, it was named doctor in music at the university of Oxford. About 1600, the Farnaby family lived a few years in the countryside, in the village of Aisthorpe, with six miles of Lincoln.

Giles Farnaby had several children: a first girl, Philadelphia (born in 1591 and died before 1602), a second, also fore-mentioned Philadelphia (1602) and three wire, Richard, Joy and Edward. The two elder ones were musicians like their father. It would seem that Giles Farnaby was the only Master of the English keyboard never not to have occupied of post of organist. Its music of keyboard besides, as its writing and its character prove it, probably is intended for the string instruments pinches (virginal, harpsichord).

## ***Hans Leo Hassler (1564 - 1612)***

German composer, one of the greatest German masters at the high tide of renaissance music. He was born 1564 in Nürnberg as son of the organist Isaac Hassler, who originally came from Joachimsthal. In Nürnberg Hans Leo grew up during the decade of Lechner's activity in that town and probably was a pupil of the latter. In 1584 he left to receive instruction in Italian music at its source from Andrea Gabrieli in Venice in 1584-5. From 1686 the organist Hassler entered the service of Count Fugger at Augsburg, to whom he dedicated his first collection of Italian canzonettas in 1590. In 1595 Hassler, together with his brothers Jacob and Gaspard was raised to the nobility by the Emperor Rudolph II. In Augsburg he worked for a time at the church of S. Moritz, and (in 1600) being head of the town band. He returned to his native town in 1601, and at the beginning of the following year was appointed kaiserlicher Hofdiener von Haus aus (Imperial servant of the first order), and commissioned to undertake some commercial journeys on behalf of the Emperor, which apparently left him sufficient time to have an eye to his own interests. 1604 he changed his residence to Ulm and there married the daughter of a local merchant (1605). In 1608 he moved to Dresden, where he was appointed court organist by the Elector of Saxony and given charge of the latter's library of music. His remaining years were also marred by illness; he died of consumption on June 8th 1612 at Frankfurt-am-Main, whence he had accompanied the Elector for the coronation of the new Emperor.

His rich creative work comprises masses, Latin and German motets, chorales and songs as well as instrumental music in the form of intradas and canzonas on the Venetian pattern as well as pieces for the organ. In his church music he was influenced by Lassus, whereas his Italian secular music shows his thorough familiarity with the up-to-date style of Vecchi and Marenzio. The specifically Venetian influence is felt most in his double-choir madrigals and Lieder. His best Lieder collection is the 1601 Lustgarten, with its dance songs and instrumental intradas for consort. His Lieder show some advancement on Lechner's. Whilst the latter used a style which seems austere and restrained by comparison, and shows strong traces of the strict contrapuntal treatment characteristic of the Netherlands tradition, Hassler definitely prefers the easy-swaying dance-song and often chooses Italian madrigals which he had himself translated into German for his lyrical texts. His Ich brinn und bin entz,ndt gen diris a German version, accurately conforming in contents and form, of a famous madrigal by Battista Guarini Ardo si, ma non t'amo, which has repeatedly been set to music. Stylistically he bases his music on the foreign model to an even greater extent than Lechner did, but imbues his choral works with an equal amount of sincere and warm feeling, as is shown sufficiently by his madrigal Mein Gem,t ist mir verwirret, the melody of which, in conjunction with a new text by Paul Gerhardt--O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden--has become one of the most stirring German chorales.

## ***FRIEDRICH WILHELM KALKBRENNER*** ***(1784-1849)***

German pianist and composer, son of Christian Kalkbrenner (1755-1806), a Jewish musician of Cassel, was educated at the Paris Conservatoire, and soon began to play in public.

From 1814 to 1823 he was well known as a brilliant performer and a successful teacher in London, and then settled in Paris, dying at Enghien, near there, in 1849.

He became a partner in the Paris piano-manufacturing firm of Pleyei & Co., and made a fortune by his business and his art combined.

His numerous compositions are less remembered now than his instruction-book, with studies, which have had considerable vogue among pianists.

### ***Johns Notes:***

Over the past three years it has been my pleasure recreate numerous, unknown or little known composers, you may know of some of the works I have undertaken. I have truly enjoyed working on FRIEDRICH WILHELM as I think his work is outstanding, he was a successful businessman, in the same way Borodin was a great surgeon and Cie a Naval Architec.

## ***Morley, Thomas (1557 or 1558 - 1602)***

Morley contributed significantly to the development of the English madrigal, imitated from Italian models. He was probably a pupil of William Byrd, to whom he dedicated his popular book *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, published in 1597. Morley was employed at St. Paul's in London and became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1592, publishing his first set of part-songs in 1593. He was later concerned in printing and publishing music, for which he was granted a share in the monopoly in 1598.

### **Church Music**

Morley wrote music for the liturgy of the Church of England, service settings, psalm settings and a number of Latin motets, under the influence of Byrd and a possible indication of his own religious sympathies at the time. Of particular interest is the setting of the *De profundis*, *Out of the deep*, in a second setting as a verse anthem, a peculiarly English form derived from the consort song of the period, involving the contrast of solo voices with the choir, with instrumental accompaniment from the organ or other groups of instruments.

### **Madrigals**

It is as a composer of madrigals that Morley is widely known. The *Canzonets or Little Short Songs to Three Voyces*, published in 1593 were followed by a collection of four-part Madrigals in 1594 and a series of other publications during the decade, some of them adaptations and arrangements of Italian madrigals. In 1601 Morley published the collaborative *Triumphs of Oriana*, a tribute to Queen Elizabeth for which he collected madrigals by 23 composers as an offering to the aging Arcadian Queen of the Shepherds. Well known madrigals by Morley include *Aprill is in my mistris face*, *My bonny lasse shee smyleth*, *Now is the month of maying*, *O sleep, fond fancy*, *Sing wee and chaunt it*, *Sweet nymphe, come to thy lover* and *Though Philomela lost hir love*. Solo songs by Morley include *It was a lover and his lasse*, a song that appears in Shakespeare's pastoral comedy *As You Like It*.

### **Keyboard Music**

Morley added to the contemporary repertoire for virginals, the general term for the harpsichord of the period. Keyboard music of this kind includes paired pavans and galliards, song variations, including a set of variations on the popular song *Go from my window*, and a *Passymeasures pavan*, a title that recalls the words of Sir Toby Belch in Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night*.

### **Instrumental Music**

Following the custom of the time Morley also wrote for lute and for various groups of instruments, including arrangements of music by other composers.

## ***Dmitry Stepanovich Bortnyansky***

(born: Glukhov, 1751; died: St Petersburg, 10 Oct 1825).

Ukrainian composer. He studied in Italy from 1769; his first operas were given there, 1776-8. Returning to Russia in 1779, he became Kapellmeister at the St Petersburg court and in 1796 director.

His many Russian sacred pieces (later edited by Tchaikovsky) are notable for their Italianate lyricism and skilful counterpoint. He also wrote operas, cantatas and instrumental pieces, notably a Sinfonia concertante (1790).

## ***Cernohorsky Bohuslav Matej (1684-1742)***

B.M.Cernohorský was an excellent organist and composer, representing the culmination of the Baroque movement in Bohemia and preparing the way for early Classicism. At the age of 19, after receiving his Bachelor of Philosophy degree in Prague at Charles University, he entered Friars Minor, the Franciscan Convent of St. Jakub in Prague and then, between 1704-1710 continued his studies in philosophy, theology and music, being ordained to the priesthood in 1708.

A decisive compositional characteristic of his is in the treatment of the Marian antiphon, Regina Coeli for 8 voices in double choir, organ and continuo, which was composed for Easter 1712 in Assisi, Italy, where Cernohorsky was sent to complete his theological studies.

Among Cernohorsky pupils were f.e. G.Tartini, to whom he taught counterpoint between 1711-1714 in Assisi, and later on in Prague he taught Gluck, and organ to the young Josef Seger.

His last 5 years of live Cernohorsky spent in Padua as first organist till August of 1741 when he departed for Bohemia. However, illness forced him to stop at Graz in Styria, where he died at the age of 58, in July 1742.

## ***Dame Ethel Mary Smyth***

Dame Ethel Mary Smyth(1858-1944)overcame the constraints of her middle-class English background by open rebellion. Taught piano and theory as ladylike accomplishments, she became so concentrated in her studies that her family deemed them unsuitably intense, and stopped her lessons. The teenaged Ethel went on a protracted and progressively more severe strike, finally confining herself to her room and refusing to attend meals, church, or social functions unless her father would send her to Leipzig to study composition.

After two years the embattled Mr. Smyth gave in, and Ethel went to Leipzig, where her larger-than-life personality found an aesthetic outlet in the development of a Brahmsian idiom. She gained some recognition in England with the performance of

her Mass in D for chorus and orchestra in 1893, and struggled to get her operas performed.

A woman of boisterous vitality who fell prey to inconvenient passions for persons of both sexes, Smyth was affectionately caricatured in E.F. Benson's Dodo novels and mocked by Virginia Woolf. In 1910, Smyth met Emmaline Pankhurst, the founder of the British women's suffrage movement and head of the militant and extremely well organized Women's Social and Political Union. Struck by Mrs. Pankhurst's mesmerizing public speeches, Smyth pledged to give up music for two years and devote herself to the cause of votes for women.

Laggard Dawn and The March of the Women were written in 1911 and premiered by a chorus of Suffragettes at a fundraising rally at the Albert Hall in London on March 23, 1911. The latter tune became the battle cry of the suffrage movement, and was published in arrangements for mixed voices and unison singing.

Its most famous, though least public performance occurred in Holloway prison in London in 1912: over 100 suffragists, including Mrs. Pankhurst and Ethel Smyth, who had smashed windows of suffrage opponents' homes in well-coordinated simultaneous incidents all over London, were arrested, tried, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. Ethel Smyth found her time in prison an exalting experience of communal determination and sacrifice by women of all ages and classes. One day, while the prisoners were taking their outdoor exercise, Ethel Smyth appeared at a window overlooking the prison yard, and conducted their singing of the suffrage battle anthem by waving her toothbrush.

## *Ferdinando Carulli*

Ferdinando Maria Meinrado Francesco Pascale Rosario Carulli was one of the most famous composers for classical guitar and the author of the first complete classical guitar method, which continues to be used today.

Carulli was born in Naples, Italy on February 9th, 1770. His father, Michele, was a distinguished literator, secretary to the delegate of the Neapolitan Jurisdiction. Like many of his contemporaries, he was taught musical theory by a priest, who was also an amateur musician. Carulli's first instrument was the cello, but when he was twenty he discovered the guitar and devoted his life to the study and advancement of the guitar. As there were no professional guitar teachers in Naples at the time, Carulli developed his own style of playing.

Carulli was a gifted performer. His concerts in Naples were so popular that he soon began touring Europe. Around 1801 Carulli married a French woman, Marie-Josephine Boyer, and had a son with her. A few years later Carulli started to compose in Milan, where he contributed to local publications. After a highly successful Paris tour, Carulli moved there. At the time the city was known as the 'music-capital' of the world, and he stayed there for the rest of his life.

In Paris Carulli became a very successful musician and teacher. He fulfilled his intention of making the guitar popular and fashionable among the upper classes and

Paris musicians. It was also in Paris that he published most of his works, eventually becoming a publisher himself and printing the works of other prominent guitarists.

In the 1830's, many European guitarists followed Carulli to Paris, apparently 'attracted by his personality'. With so many other guitarists in Paris, Carulli worked harder at his teaching, and soon had counted members of the Parisian nobility among his students.

Many of the pieces now regarded as Carulli's greatest were initially turned down by the publishers as being too hard for the average player, and it is likely that many masterpieces were lost this way. Undeterred, Carulli started publishing his pieces himself. However, the great majority of Carulli's surviving works are those that were considered 'safe' enough to be accepted by other publishers, mainly for the teaching of certain techniques or for beginners. Although he had many students and supporters, Carulli began to believe he didn't deserve his impressive reputation because most of the great works he had composed were never published.

Confined to mainly simple pieces, Carulli wrote his world-famous method of classical guitar, "Harmony Applied to the Guitar", a collection of pieces that are still used today in tuition. At the time of publishing, the method was very popular and had many editions published.

Later in life, Carulli began to experiment with changes in guitar construction. With Lacote, a French guitar maker, he made some significant changes for improving the sound of the guitar.

Carulli died in Paris on February 17th, 1841, at the age of 71 years.

### **Music/Style**

Carulli was among the most prolific composers of his time. He wrote more than four hundred works for the guitar, and countless others for various instrumental combinations, always including the guitar. His most influential work of all was his "Method, op. 27" published 1810, and still used widely today in training students of the classical guitar. Carulli also composed some pieces for guitar and piano with his son Gustavo. He wrote works for chamber orchestra and other ensembles.

### **Contributions to Music**

Aside from his immensely influential Method, published in the early 1800's and still used widely today as a means of teaching students of the classical guitar and helping experts to perfect certain techniques, he changed and improved many aspects of the early instrument to create the modern classical guitar used today.

By the early nineteenth century the guitar had evolved from a lute-like instrument with five pairs of strings to an instrument similar to the guitar we know today, with a flat body, long neck and circular sound hole in the middle. But there were some differences. Carulli's first guitar may have had five rather than six strings, which may have been in pairs. The pairing of strings produces a rich, resonant sound when the guitar is strummed but is not so effective for the picking action used in classical

guitar. Also, the body of the instrument would have been smaller, producing a less resonant sound more like that of a violin or ukelele. Finally, the tuning pegs of the guitar were not mechanical but frictional, like those of today's violas. However mechanical tuning pegs were only introduced about a hundred years ago, well after Carulli's time.

In the later part of his life, Carulli, along with French instrument makers and guitarists Antonio de Torres Jurado and Lacote, helped to change the guitar into the larger, more resonant instrument we know today. They accomplished this by making the bulges or bouts in the side more pronounced, to produce a greater volume and surface area which made the sound better. Later Jurado also helped to make the modern form of the flamenco guitar which is lighter and smaller with a more brilliant sound than the classical.

## ***JACQUET DE LA GUERRE***

(1665-1729) French harpsichordist and composer. Most prolific and accomplished female composer of the French Baroque.

When Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre was only thirteen, she was described by one critic as "the marvel of our century." Less than a year earlier, her incredible abilities as a performer, composer and improviser had been reported, noting that "for four years she has been appearing with these extraordinary qualities." Her talent was rewarded by the patronage of King Louis XIV, who saw to her financial needs and encouraged her work.

After the death of her husband in 1704, she put her energies into a series of concerts held in her home. These were, by all accounts, eagerly anticipated and well received. A contemporary noted that it was her ability to improvise that most astonished her listeners. She retired from public performance in 1717.

Jacquet de la Guerre composed in all the standard genres of the time. Most notable are her two larger works, an opera-ballet, *Les jeux à l'honneur de la victoire* (1685, now lost), and her five-act opera, *Cephale et Procris* (performed at the Académie Royale de Musique in 1694).

Also of note are her two books of pieces for solo keyboard (1687 and 1707, the first to be published by a woman) and her 1707 collection of sonatas for harpsichord with an optional violin part.

The music of Jacquet de la Guerre is typical of the French style of the time. Particularly appealing is the music of her first book of keyboard pieces, especially the free, unmeasured preludes, which reflect the influence of an earlier generation of composers, led by Louis Couperin (c.1626-1661).

Her second book is in the more modern style of François Couperin (1668-1733). With the growing interest in female composers of the past.

## ***Teresa Carreño (1853-1917)***

Teresa Carreño was born in Caracas, Venezuela on December 22, 1853. She was the granddaughter of the Venezuelan composer Jose Cayetano Carreño. Her father, Manuel Antonio Carreño, was also a musician and composer. He was largely responsible for Teresa Carreño's early musical education and the documentation of the early years of her musical career.

When she was eight years old she was taken to New York where she studied with Gottschalk. Later, she also studied in Paris with Mathias and Anton Rubinstein. Her career was particularly successful in Germany where she lived and taught for over thirty years.

Throughout her life Carreño was recognized as a pianist, composer, conductor, and singer. She wrote many compositions for piano and one String Quartet in B minor. She also spent two years in Venezuela organizing and conducting an opera company in which she also sang.

Carreño died in New York on June 12, 1917.

## ***Charles Tomlinson Griffes***

One of the first truly distinctive voices in American music, Charles Tomlinson Griffes was hailed as a major force in American classical music by the likes of Stokowski, Monteux, and Prokofiev at the time of his premature death in 1920.

Born in Elmira, NY, on September 17, 1884, Griffes displayed an early interest in painting and drama. Recuperating from typhoid fever at age eleven, he grew fascinated with his sister Katharine's practicing the European classics on the piano, and he set himself about to master the instrument. At thirteen he began his studies with Mary Selena Broughton, who remained his mentor and friend throughout his life. It was Miss Broughton who financed Griffes' 1903 voyage to Berlin, where he studied for four years, the last two of them with Humperdinck. As it had for MacDowell and other Americans abroad, the German experience plunged Griffes into the Romantic ethos; it permitted him to become fluent in the language, and to encounter such prominent artists such as Richard Strauss, Ferruccio Busoni, Isadora Duncan, and Enrico Caruso. Moreover, he formed a close personal attachment to a fellow student and German nationalist-composer, Konrad Wölcke, who helped Griffes through the financially troubled times which followed his father's death in 1905 and who encouraged his compositional gifts.

Burdened with support for his widowed mother and family, Griffes returned to America in 1907 to take a post as music instructor at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY. What he hoped would prove a temporary situation lasted until his death, and Griffes was frequently unhappy in his life as a schoolmaster. Not only did his abilities far exceed his duties and his small salary, but he must have felt increasingly isolated emotionally and artistically. Neither his genius as a composer nor his self-avowed homosexuality could ever be publically expressed at Hackley, and

with the advent of World War I's anti-German feelings, Griffes felt himself cut adrift from his European friends and ties. This sense of isolation and lack of appreciation undoubtedly led Griffes to work all the harder to find recognition for his work in the professional world. He initially succeeded in getting G. Schirmer to publish his early German settings, though as his music became less conventional, his compositions were rejected by the music publishing establishment.

### **Recognition as a Composer**

Championed by Farwell and Busoni, he finally saw an upswing in his artistic fortunes beginning in 1914, just as his personal life acquired some stability in an on-going liaison with a New York policeman. In the remaining six years of his life, he produced his most important compositions, among them THE PLEASURE DOME OF KUBLA KHAN, a 1917 orchestral work inspired by Coleridge's poem which revealed the composer's orientalizing inclinations; his 1918 PIANO SONATA; his 1919 POEM FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA; and the unfinished FIVE PIECES FOR PIANO. He increased his recitals, expanded his contacts with prominent musicians of the day, and drew ever more appreciative notices from critics, culminating in the rapturous reception his POEM received on November 16, 1919, by the New York Symphony under the baton of Walter Damrosch and by the November 28th triumph of KUBLA KHAN with Pierre Monteux and the Boston Symphony.

These unconditional successes were soon to turn bittersweet. The victim of lung and heart problems as well as overwork and emotional strain, he collapsed at Hackley in December 1919. Neither a sanitarium stay nor surgery could cure him, and Griffes died at New York Hospital on April 8, 1920.

In addition to his legacy of instrumental works, Griffes left a considerable body of song which ranged in style from the early German Romantic settings to those informed by his interest in French Impressionism and Asian art. Frequently dubbed "ultra modern" by the critics of the day, his mature songs such as the Oscar Wilde settings or the FIVE POEMS OF ANCIENT CHINA & JAPAN demonstrate Griffes' sensitivity to the voice--this gained from his friendships with singers like Eva Gauthier and Laura Moore Elliot--and his pianistic gifts, as well as considerable complexity and sophistication of melody, texture, and harmonics.