Britten on Film

Coal Face, Night Mail & Other Film Scores

Simon Russell Beale Narrator • Mary Carewe Soprano • Birmingham Contemporary Music Group • City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus • Choir of King Edward's School, Birmingham • Martyn Brabbins Conductor
BRITTEN ON FILM

COAL FACE, NIGHT MAIL & OTHER FILM SCORES

SIMON RUSSELL BEALE NARRATOR • MARY CAREWE SOPRANO • BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY CHORUS • CHOIR OF KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM
MARTYN BRABBINS CONDUCTOR
## BRITTEN ON FILM

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group  
Martyn Brabbins conductor

### NIGHT MAIL

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<th>No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Percussion Sequence</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>End Sequence</td>
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with Simon Russell Beale narrator

### THE TOCHER (ROSSINI SUITE)

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<td>2</td>
<td>II Allegretto</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>III Allegretto</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IV Bolero: Allegro moderato</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>V Allegro con brio</td>
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with the Choir of King Edward’s School, Birmingham

### THE KING’S STAMP

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Lento ma non troppo: ‘Entry to lithograph works’</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Allegro: ‘Stamp factory – Machine starts’</td>
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<td>Part Two: Minuet: Andante lento</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Allegretto: ‘Train sequence’</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Allegretto: ‘Parliament – The Stamp Bill’</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Allegro</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Allegro moderato alla marcia</td>
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Benjamin Britten, c1935  
Photo: Edith Slater
NIGHT MAIL 5’50
Title Music 0’47
Percussion Sequence 0’55
End Sequence 4’08
with Simon Russell Beale narrator

THE TOCHER (ROSSINI SUITE) 9’32
I Allegro Brilliante 1’53
II Allegretto 2’20
III Allegretto 2’01
IV Bolero: Allegro moderato 2’00
V Allegro con brio 1’18
with the Choir of King Edward’s School, Birmingham

THE KING’S STAMP 14’07
Part One: Allegro molto alla marcia 0’38
Allegro: ‘Opening door…’ 2’20
Allegretto: ‘Messenger boy’ 0’40
Lento ma non troppo: ‘Entry to lithograph works’ 1’46
Allegro: ‘Stamp factory – Machine starts’ 2’48
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<td>VI – Andante con molto moto: “Still at their accustomed hour”</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>VII – Allegro rítmico: “Coffee from the Blue Mountains”</td>
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with Mary Carewe soprano • Daniel Auchincloss tenor
Adam Green baritone • City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus

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<td>Moderato: “There is, at this point of the haven”</td>
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<td>Allegro: “The eighteenth century”</td>
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<td>“The line waits”</td>
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<td>Allegro molto – alla marcia</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>TELEGRAMS</td>
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with the Choir of King Edward’s Boys School, Birmingham

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<td>MEN BEHIND THE METERS</td>
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<td>Allegro moderato: 1935 Sequence</td>
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<tr>
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<td>COAL FACE</td>
<td>11'47</td>
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<td>I – Andante: “A sterile landscape”</td>
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<td>III – Andante: “The chief coal-producing centres”</td>
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<td>IV – “Yorkshire and Lancashire”</td>
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<td>VI – Andante: “The seven and a half hour shift”</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>VII – Ad libitum sempre: “One thirty a.m.”</td>
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<td>VIII – Allegro ma non troppo: “In many pits”</td>
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<td>IX – Allegro molto: “The shift is finished”</td>
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<td>X – “Making up coal trains”</td>
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<td>XI – Allegro: “Coal mining is the basic industry”</td>
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<td>XII – Andante: “There are the miners”</td>
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with Simon Russell Beale narrator
Daniel Auchincloss tenor • Adam Green baritone • Mike Flower whistler
City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus

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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>WHEN YOU’RE FEELING LIKE EXPRESSING YOUR AFFECTION</td>
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Mary Carewe soprano • Malcolm Wilson piano

Total timing 78'55
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Compared with most of these, Benjamin Britten’s involvement was early and brief. Apart from the isolated exception of Instruments of the Orchestra (1945) – familiar from its spin-off The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra – his contribution was confined to the years 1935-36, during which he wrote his sole feature film score Love from a Stranger (recorded on NMC D073) and worked for the government-sponsored GPO Film Unit. But, the experience was also to prove crucial to his artistic development. John Grierson, the Film Unit’s director evidently had a knack for spotting and matching promising directors, writers, cameramen and technicians in creative partnerships, and the 21-year old Britten soon found himself paired with the charismatic young WH Auden.

Beyond the fruits of that partnership over the next few years, Britten evidently learnt much about team working that was later to stand him in good stead in getting his own operatic projects up and running. And having to make the best of the most limited instrumental resources surely had a lasting effect on his music; fostering not only the incredibly resourceful scoring of his subsequent chamber operas but his practice of breaking down the full orchestra into contrasting sections and smaller units – his lifelong preference for a slender sound.

Not all the music Britten wrote for Grierson is represented on this disc: brief title and end music was composed for a number of other shorts such as How the Dial Works (September 1935), and much additional material survives that was either not used or intended for films that were not carried through. On the other hand, the intensity of his involvement with documentary at this period is attested by his scores for other companies such as Men Behind the Meters (September 1935) for British Commercial Gas Association and The Way to the Sea (December 1936) for Strand Films. All in all, the picture of an avid and hugely inventive young composer seizing upon every opportunity, however exiguous, to learn and turn it to his artistic advantage, is overwhelming.

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The most celebrated documentary of the 1930s, John Grierson’s *Night Mail* is an essentially romantic account of the overnight Travelling Post Office, the postal special train, as it speeds through the night from London to Scotland collecting, sorting and despatching mail on its journey. Grierson’s involvement in the film was total: he not only wrote the music, but was also responsible for making location sound recordings of trains and assisting the filming of some of the interior shots which were set up in the studio. Despite the film’s length (25 minutes), he composed only three brief musical sequences for the largest ensemble (11 players) the GPO Film Unit ever engaged: the title music; a musique concrète-like section using an array of conventional and unconventional percussion (a technique Britten had experimented with in *Coal Face*) to replicate the sounds of the train and the places through which it passes on its journey north; and the inspired ending to the film for which Auden provided his virtuoso verse commentary, “This is the night mail crossing the border”. The title music and final sequence are linked by their common use of a fanfare announced on the trumpet (a latter day posthorn), and the chromatic patterns used to evoke the train’s movement. The tension created in the title music between the keys of A and C major is played out and ultimately resolved in the end sequence. For much of this Britten employs repetitive one- or two-bar patterns to accompany the commentator’s rhythmic voice (delivered, in the film, on a monotone). But at the point when the postal special steams across the Scottish border at dawn, the music surges in an unclouded A major (Britten’s sunlit tonality; cf. *Young Apollo* or *Peter Grimes*), before a reprise of the fanfare – gradually slowing down as the train itself comes to rest – brings the score to a triumphant C major conclusion.

It was the GPO Film Unit’s resident sound expert, Alberto Cavalcanti (1897-1982), who apparently suggested to Britten the possibility of making arrangements of music by Rossini for a short silhouette film, *The Tocher*, by the distinguished German filmmaker Lotte Reiniger. “Tocher” is the Scots word for a marriage portion or dowry. Like so many GPO documentaries, the film sought to popularize the Post Office Savings Bank, on this occasion by lampooning the thrifty nature of the Scots. In his ‘Rossini Suite’ Britten incorporated music from *William Tell* (movements I and III) and from the song collection *Soirées Musicales* (movements II, IV and V). He scored the suite for a characteristically chamber-sized ensemble, with the addition of wordless boys’ voices, during four days in July 1935. After recording the film soundtrack, he confessed that the result “pleases me a lot”.

So much so, that he decided the following year to re-score for full orchestra three movements from the original suite, adding two new arrangements and publishing the result as *Soirées Musicales*, Op.9, duly dedicated to Cavalcanti. And when the American ballet impresario Lincoln Kirstein asked for a companion Rossini suite in 1941, Britten reworked the third movement from the film music as the opening march of his *Matinées Musicales*, Op 24. Thus from the 1935 score, the fifth movement – a tarantella based on Rossini’s popular song “La danza” – alone failed to find its way into either of the later published sets.

In the event, only the first, second and final movements of the suite were used in Reiniger’s film. All five movements are reinstated for this recording, as are three linking cadenzas (one each for flute, oboe and clarinet) between movements.
The most celebrated documentary of the 1930s, John Grierson’s *Night Mail* is an essentially romantic account of the overnight Travelling Post Office, the postal special train, as it speeds through the night from London to Scotland collecting, sorting and despatching mail on its journey. Britten’s involvement in the film was total: he not only wrote the music, but was also responsible for making location sound recordings of trains and assisting the filming of some of the interior shots which were set up in the studio. Despite the film’s length (25 minutes), he composed only three brief musical sequences for the largest ensemble (11 players) the GPO Film Unit ever engaged: the title music; a musique concrète-like section using an array of conventional and unconventional percussion (a technique Britten had experimented with in *Coal Face*) to replicate the sounds of the train and the places through which it passes on its journey north; and the inspired ending to the film for which Auden provided his virtuoso verse commentary, “This is the night mail crossing the border”. The title music and final sequence are linked by their common use of a fanfare announced on the trumpet (a latter day posthorn), and the chromatic patterns used to evoke the train’s movement. The tension created in the title music between the keys of A and C major is played out and ultimately resolved in the end sequence. For much of this Britten employs repetitive one- or two-bar patterns to accompany the commentator’s rhythmic voice (delivered, in the film, on a monotone). But at the point when the postal special steams across the Scottish border at dawn, the music surges in an unclouded A major (Britten’s sunlit tonality; cf. Young Apollo or Peter Grimes), before a reprise of the fanfare – gradually slowing down as the train itself comes to rest – brings the score to a triumphant C major conclusion.

It was the GPO Film Unit’s resident sound expert, Alberto Cavalcanti (1897-1982), who apparently suggested to Britten the possibility of making arrangements of music by Rossini for a short silhouette film, *The Tocher*, by the distinguished German filmmaker Lotte Reiniger. “Tocher” is the Scots word for a marriage portion or dowry. Like so many GPO documentaries, the film sought to popularize the Post Office Savings Bank, on this occasion by lampooning the thrifty nature of the Scots. In his ‘Rossini Suite’ Britten incorporated music from *William Tell* (movements I and III) and from the song collection *Soirées Musicales* (movements II, IV and V). He scored the suite for a characteristically chamber-sized ensemble, with the addition of wordless boys’ voices, during four days in July 1935. After recording the film soundtrack, he confessed that the result “pleases me a lot”.

So much so, that he decided the following year to re-score for full orchestra three movements from the original suite, adding two new arrangements and publishing the result as *Soirées Musicales*, Op.9, duly dedicated to Cavalcanti. And when the American ballet impresario Lincoln Kirstein asked for a companion Rossini suite in 1941, Britten reworked the third movement from the film music as the opening march of his *Matinées Musicales*, Op 24. Thus from the 1935 score, the fifth movement – a tarantella based on Rossini’s popular song “La danza” – alone failed to find its way into either of the later published sets.

In the event, only the first, second and final movements of the suite were used in Reiniger’s film. All five movements are reinstated for this recording, as are three linking cadenzas (one each for flute, oboe and clarinet) between movements.
The King's Stamp was the GPO Film Unit's contribution to the King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations, and concerns the specially designed commemorative postage stamp by Barnett Friedmann, who appears as himself in the film. Though one of the Unit's less distinguished productions - "slow and not outstanding" is how one film historian describes it - The King's Stamp commands interest as Britten's first film score, as well as for its use of experimental colour photography. Directed by the artist William Coldstream, who had temporarily rejected painting in favour of filmmaking, the documentary divides into halves. The first half depicts the stamp's design and printing; the second develops an historical perspective, focussing on the origins of the postal service and the invention of the postage stamp. The film's conclusion shows the rapid consolidation of the postage stamp and the growth of philately, appropriately turning to the sovereign's own collection with the newly issued stamps in place. In his first score for the screen, Britten already shows a grasp of several cinematic techniques which he would develop over the next two or three years. The first might be termed 'imagistic development', i.e. the direct prompting of musical gestures suggested by, and matched to, visual images. Several examples that can be found in the first part of The King's Stamp: a rising arpeggio figure on a crescendo to represent the opening of a door; a descending, cascading sequential pattern as the designer runs down a staircase; dissonant chords to represent the sound of car horns; or the entire sequence that accompanies the scene in the stamp printing works, where Britten portrays the weight of the lithograph stone, and the different actions of the presses and the perforating machine.

A second technique concerns his ability to present one or two motifs in the opening title music, which are then used to generate much of the subsequent material. And, in addition to the motivic cross-referencing, tonality is deployed as a unifying element. In The King's Stamp the title music's strong C major march returns on three subsequent occasions: at the completion of the stamp's design; when the stamps roll off the press; and on the appearance of the Jubilee stamps in the King's collection. Britten avoids C major elsewhere in the score to enhance its return at these significant moments. In the sequence leading up to the completion of the stamp design, he even manages to suggest the designer's indecision with tonally unstable material; as the design is finalized the tonal instability yields to a decisive C major.
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In the autumn of 1935 Auden joined the GPO Film Unit as a writer and general assistant, and he, Britten and Coldstream conceived an ambitious film, provisionally entitled Negroes, which concerned the slave trade and its abolition in the nineteenth century, and the subsequent development of the Caribbean and the region’s economic reliance on commodities such as sugar and cocoa. The project was shelved in 1935, apparently for financial reasons, though it was revived in a modified form in 1938 and released the following year as God’s Chillun.

The present recording restores Auden’s and Britten’s original concept for the film soundtrack, in which conventional spoken commentary is replaced by sung recitative. In his research for the film, Britten transcribed indigenous West Indian music from gramophone records, and some of these melodies were used to give authentic colour. Also included to telling effect is plainsong (in No. I), the melody of the Nunc Dimittis later used in St Nicolas, and a montage of sea shanties (No. IV), which incorporates fragments of ‘A-rovin’ (already used by Britten as the basis of his early ballet Plymouth Town) and ‘Blow the man down’. The final section, beginning ‘Still at their accustomed hour’, is the most extended and original passage in a project full of innovation, and draws together all the instrumental and vocal forces. The score is also notable for including an early setting by Britten of a text by William Blake: a stanza from ‘The little black boy’ from Songs of Innocence and Experience in No. V.

The final Britten-Auden collaboration in the cinema was The Way to the Sea, made by Strand Films, under the leadership of Paul Rotha, for the Southern Railway to celebrate the recent electrification of the London to Portsmouth railway line, which was, for its time, a significant technological achievement that opened up a commuter corridor between London and the south coast. Strand Films was one of several independent companies that flourished in London in the 1930s, encouraged by the GPO Unit’s success in developing a market for documentaries. These independent companies were engaged by commercial and political groups to promote their products or their views.

Britten and Auden worked on the film during December 1936, and Auden once again provided an extended verse commentary as its climax. But unlike Night Mail, pastiche and satire lie at the heart of The Way to the Sea, the intent of which, one supposes, Southern Railway remained blissfully ignorant. For example, there is an extended historical survey of Portsmouth through the ages, particularly its naval associations, for which Britten provided a sequence of typical character numbers (waltz, military march, etc.) in the mordant vein of his Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, 1936). In The Way to the Sea, these pastiche/parody numbers were used to deflate the visuals, many of which were presented in an unorthodox manner. Under the guise of a promotional film for the railway company, The Way to the Sea proves to be, in fact, a satirical, subversive documentary in which, during the historical sequence, conventional imperial attitudes are attacked. Auden’s verse commentary for the final part of the film, ostensibly extolling the marvellous advance the electrified railway line represented, provided the poet with a golden opportunity to moralize and instruct in his inimitable way.
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Contemporary with The Tocher, and using the same instrumental and vocal forces, is the music for a documentary directed by Donald Taylor, called variously ‘Telegrams’ and ‘Telegram Abstract’ by Britten, but released as ‘6d Telegram’ (‘Sixpenny Telegram’). Though planned and recorded at the same session as The Tocher in July 1935 it was not released until 1939, long after Britten had ceased to be a staff member of the Unit. The original recording seems to have been defective, requiring a re-recording of the score in October followed by a further re-dubbing session in December, but the film subsequently sat on the shelf for several years. The music mimicking the tapping of Morse code at the outset is very similar to the score Britten composed for another GPO documentary of this period, C. T. O.: The Story of the Central Telegraph Office (July 1935). His use of the boys’ voices in 6d Telegram is less conventional than in The Tocher: apart from the sung refrain in which we are exhorted to ‘send a wire’, they speak the text, which is just possibly by Auden (although pre-dating his joining the Film Unit) in notated rhythm throughout.
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**PEACE OF BRITAIN**  
(March 1936)

Made by Strand Films with the support of Freenat Films (a film company under the umbrella of the League of Nations) as well as many prominent private individuals on the left of the political spectrum, the pacifist, anti-rearmament film Peace of Britain remains a compelling document of its time. Though lasting no more than three minutes, its subject matter, arresting visual imagery and skilful editing backed by Britten's crisp score were effective enough for the film censor at first to refuse it classification in 1936, sparking off a short-lived but highly public controversy. Britten's music is appropriately threatening when accompanying visuals of weapons or aerial bombardment or, as at the end of the score, uplifting and positive when ramming home the message of peace.

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**MEN BEHIND THE METERS**  
(September 1935)

Among the several independent documentary projects he took on in addition to working as music director at the GPO Film Unit, Britten wrote music in 1935 for a series of films promoting the gas industry, produced by the British Commercial Gas Association. The first of these was Men Behind the Meters, a film following the training of gas fitters and the testing of domestic gas appliances. As well as the short sequences for the title and end-title credits (the latter – only 4 bars – not included here), Britten wrote two more extended musical numbers for this film, principally to enliven a tired historical account of the gas industry: an arrangement of Balfe’s ‘I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls’ for a Victorian sequence; and a 1935 sequence for when the narrative reaches the present day.

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**COAL FACE**  
(May-June 1935)

Following The King’s Stamp, Britten was immediately contracted to write music for further GPO Film Unit projects, beginning with Coal Face, an impressionistic study of the world of miners and the mining industry in the UK. Since there was no obvious connection between the mining industry and the work of the GPO, it would appear that Grierson and his team conceived the film as an experimental production outside their normal sphere of activity, allowing them covertly to address socio-political concerns of the period. As such, Coal Face parallels other works of political protest of the period seeking to bring the plight of the miners to the public’s attention, including Montagu Slater’s play Stay Down, Miner (1936), also with music by Britten.

The visuals of Coal Face were patched together from pre-existing footage and it remained for the soundtrack, under Cavalcanti’s supervision, to provide much of the film’s impact and structure. Before starting work on the music, Britten was a member of the small team involved in researching and writing the script - others included Coldstream (see photo overleaf) and possibly Montagu Slater; he also viewed several earlier experimental sound films made under Cavalcanti’s supervision to gain an understanding of the possibilities of the new project.

Scored for an ensemble of commentator, mixed chorus, percussion and piano, the music was written in less than two weeks in June 1935. For a sequence concerning the distribution and costs of produce and transport (No. X), Britten provides an experimental passage for commentator and expanded percussion ensemble, the latter replacing conventional post-synchronized natural sound. Each visual image is represented by an imaginative percussion effect to recreate the appropriate sounds. It was also during this sequence that on the original soundtrack Britten employed the reversed recording of a cymbal struck with a hard beater to create the effect of a train.

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ended and they are returning to the surface to be reunited with their wives and families. Britten moves from the lowest to the highest tessitura of the piano as the miners reach the surface, at which point the lyrical female voices emerge to sing Auden’s madrigal, ‘O lurcher-loving collier’. The latter marks the first collaboration between poet and composer and the beginning of a friendship – at first close, later less so – that was to endure for many years.

The origins of this little song, which extols the virtues of the public telephone service, are uncertain. Hedli Anderson, the singer for whom Britten and Auden composed their Cabaret Songs (1937-9), recalled in a 1980 interview her first meeting with Britten: ‘As far as I can remember, I think it was to do with a film, Auden, GPO, I think. I was asked to sing a song that Benjamin Britten had written for them and that’s how I met him. It was something very small I had to do and films were very strange to me’. It seems likely that this is the piece that Anderson remembered. Certainly one can imagine the song’s inclusion in a GPO promotional film; in 1936 Coldstream and composer Walter Leigh produced The Fairy of the Phone in which a chorus of female telephone operators sing at their switchboards, ‘Just telephone, and we will put you through’. While the author of the witty text is unidentified on Britten’s manuscript, Edward Mendelson, the leading Auden authority, believes him to be the probable author; and Bayan Northcott points out a detail that strengthens the case: the unlikely rhyme of ‘Moscow’ with ‘kiosk O’

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North with a hundred tons of new letters to sort, the Postal
Special picks up and distributes the mails of Industrial
England, the steel works of Warrington, the mines of Wigan,
and the machine shops of Preston.

This is the Night Mail crossing the Border,
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,
Letters for the rich, letters for the poor.
The shop at the corner and the girl next door.
Pulling up Beastock, a steady climb:
The gradient’s against her, but she’s on time.
Theo’s sparse counties she rampages,
Her driver’s eye upon her gauges.
Painting up past lonely farms,
Fed by the fireman’s restless arms.
Striding forward along the rails,
Theo’s Southern Uplands with Northern mails.
Winding up the valley to the watershed,
Theo’s heather and the weather and the dawn overhead.
Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,
Snoozing noisily as she passes.
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.
Birds turn their heads as she approaches,
Store from the bushes at her blank-faced coaches.
Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;
They slumber on with paws across.
In the farm she passes no one wakes.

But a jug in the bedroom gently shakes.
Dawn freshens. The climb is done.
Down towards Glasgow she descends:
Towards the steam tugs yelping down the glade of cranes,
Towards the fields of apparatus, the furnaces.
Set on the dark plain like gigantic chessmen.
All Scotland waits for her.
In the dark glens, beside the pale-green sea lochs
Men long for news.
Letters of thanks, letters from banks,
Letters of joy from the girl and the boy,
Receipted bills and invitations
To inspect new stock or visit relations,
And applications for situations
And timid lovers’ declarations.
And gossip, gossip from all the nations,
News circumstantial, news financial.
Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,
Letters with faces scrawled in the margin,
Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,
Letters to Scotland from South of France,
Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands.
Notes from overseas to the Hebrides.
Written on paper of every hue,
The pink, the violet, the white and the blue,
The chatty, the catty, the boring, adoring.
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The chatty, the catty, the boring, adoring,
The cold and official or the heart's outpouring,
Clever, stupid, short and long,
The typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong.

Thousands are still asleep
Dreaming of terrifying monsters,
Or of friendly tea beside the band at Cranston's or Crawford's:
Asleep in Glasgow, asleep in well-set Edinburgh,
Asleep in granite Aberdeen,
They continue their dreams,
And shall wake soon and long for letters,
And none will hear the postman's knock
Without a quickening of the heart,
For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?
The cold and official or the heart's outpouring,
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Thousands are still asleep
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In the middle ages there was no contact between Europe and Africa. But before 1500, the Portuguese were beginning to voyage in every direction, in search of adventures, of ivory and gold. Simultaneously with the Portuguese, the Spaniards discovered America and were followed by the Dutch, the French and the English.

Of your charity pray for the soul of Diez who rounded Cape Verde; Alvara Fernandez who reached Sierra Leone; of Cademosto who explored the reaches of Senegal and the Congo; on whose souls as on all Christian souls may God have mercy.

A sailor called Anton Gonsalves exchanged some Negroes from the moors, and took them to Portugal. This excited the cupidity of his countrymen.

He received ten black slaves and a quantity of gold dust.

Ten black slaves and a quantity of gold dust.

Ten black slaves.

Slave traders paid native chiefs to capture negroes.

They raised forts on the coast where they could collect them together for shipment.

Then the Portuguese and Spaniards discovered America and were followed by the Dutch, the French, and the English.

They forced the American Indians to work for them. These Indians died out.

They made war on peaceable tribes.

They burn’d down their villages;

They even sold their own tribe.

The chief traded the slaves for rum and firearms.

They made war on peaceable tribes.

Sanago and Ogavee saw them no more; they disappeared from Kom.

They see’d them no more.

They stirr’d up the spirit of revolt.

They saw them no more.

Sanago and Ogavee.

In the basin of Congo, there were sounds of shooting.

The advantages which we receive from slaves and tame animals…

They used to hide in remote parts of the Islands. They stirr’d up the spirit of revolt.

…arise from their bodily strength administering to our necessities.
I TENOR SOLO (COMMENTATOR)
In the middle ages there was no contact between Europe and Africa. But before 1500

[Simultaneously with chorus]

the Portuguese were beginning to voyage in every direction, in search of adventures, of ivory and gold.

CHORUS
Of your charity pray for the soul of Diez who rounded Cape Verde;
Alvara Fernandez who reached Sierra Leone;
of Cademosto who explored the reaches of Senegal and the Congo;
on whose souls as on all Christian souls may God have mercy.

TENOR SOLO (COMMENTATOR)
A sailor called Anton Gonsalves exchanged some Negroes for moors, and took them to Portugal. This excited the cupidity of his countrymen.

SOLO TENOR I
He received ten black slaves and a quantity of gold dust

SOLO TENOR II
Ten black slaves and a quantity of gold dust

SOLO BASS I
Ten black slaves

SOLO BASS II
Gold dust

TENOR SOLO
They sailed down the west coast of Africa.

II TENOR SOLO
Then the Portuguese and Spaniards discovered America and were followed by the Dutch, the French, and the English.

CHORUS
It is the intention of Nations to make the bodies of free men and slaves different.

TENOR SOLO
They forced the American Indians to work for them. These Indians died out.

CHORUS
The one erect for civil life
The others robust for their necessary purposes.

TENOR SOLO
Tenor solo

CHORUS
They made war on peaceable tribes.

TENOR SOLO
Needing slaves to work their sugar plantations, they imported them from Africa, built ships to carry them and raised forts on the coast where they could collect them together for shipment.

III CHORUS
At the mouth of the Senegal, the Nune, and the Sassandra, the Komoe and the White Bandama

TENOR SOLO
Slave traders paid native chiefs to capture negroes.

CHORUS
On the Tano and the Volta they were ambushed.

TENOR SOLO
The chiefs traded the slaves for rum and firearms.

CHORUS
Beside the long Niger they lost their freedom.

TENOR SOLO
They made war on peaceable tribes.

CHORUS
Sanago and Ogawe saw them no more; they disappeared from Kom.

TENOR SOLO
They burn’d down their villages;

CHORUS
Blood flared in Mwibu and Chiloango.

TENOR SOLO
They even sold their own tribe.

CHORUS
In the basin of Congo, there were sounds of shooting.

IV TENOR SOLO
To sail from Africa to Jamaica the fastest ships took seven weeks. If winds were against them the voyage took up to three months.

CHORUS
Ah la la la la (etc)

SOPRANO SOLO
Space allowed for each man: six feet by one foot six; for each woman: five foot by one foot four; for each boy: five foot by one foot two; for each girl: four foot six by one foot.

TENOR SOLO
When supplies of food ran short, the slaves were often thrown overboard.

SOPRANO SOLO
Twelve die during voyage. Four die before being sold. Thirty-four die while being acclimatized.

TENOR SOLO
The slaves were the absolute property of their masters.

CHORUS
The advantages which we receive from slaves and tame animals...

TENOR SOLO
Runaway slaves used to hide in remote parts of the Islands. They stir’d up the spirit of revolt.

CHORUS
...arise from their bodily strength administering to our necessities.
And in 1791 the slaves of San Domingo killed two thousand
whites, and burned one hundred and eighty sugar
plantations. The rising was put down, and its leaders killed.

The more advanced thinkers in Europe began to condemn
the slave trade.

And we are put on earth a little space
That we may learn to bear the beams of love
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud and like a shady grove.

In 1807 British ships were forbidden to carry slaves.

Blessings of civilisation.
Brotherhood of men.
Great objects of humanity!
Freedom! Equality!
Cannot tolerate!
Our Christian duty!
Emancipation! Freedom!
Equality! Freedom! Emancipation!

And finally the British Parliament passed a law to free all
slaves.

Still at their accustomed hour, the cities and oceans swing
westward into the segment of eternal shadow, their
revolutions unaltered since first to this chain of islands,
motionless in the Caribbean Sea like a resting scorpion, the
Captains came, eager from Europe, white to the West.

Today, nearly all manual work in the West Indies is done by
Negroes. Attempts to form settlements of European labourers
have been unsuccessful. Physical necessities are few: few
clothes, fuel only for cooking and food at hand to be picked.
Labour therefore is cheap.

And still they come, new from those nations to which the
study of that which can be weighed and measured is a
consuming love.

The principal industries are: bananas, sugar, cocoa and
coffee; principal consumers: America and Great Britain.

We show these pictures as evidence of their knowledge; its
nature and its power. Power to employ the waters and the
winds to their human and peculiar purposes; power to
convert the lives of others to their kind of willing. Such are
these, in the circuit of whose bodies runs the blood of Africa.

Heavy labour such as the loading of the bananas on to the
ships, which is done by hand, is men’s work. But in the
coffee industry, women are largely employed. During the
cutting of the sugar cane the Negro can live by eating the
cane, and so save money.

Consider their works, their weeks, their contact with those who
can design instruments of precision; and what compels both
races into one enterprise – the wish for life; their concern in
these places for the production of foods and beverages.

Acts of injustice done
Between the setting and the rising of the sun
In history lie like bones, each one.
Memory seized them down there,
Paces alive beside his fear,
That’s slow to die, and still here.
The future hard to mark
Of a world turning in the dark
Where ghosts are walking and dogs bark.

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That’s slow to die, and still here.
27

winds to their human and peculiar purposes; power to
convert the lives of others to their kind of willing. Such are these, in the circuit of whose bodies runs the blood of Africa.

SOPRANO SOLO (SPOKEN)
Heavy labour such as the loading of the bananas on to the ships, which is done by hand, is men’s work. But in the coffee industry, women are largely employed. During the cutting of the sugar cane the Negro can live by eating the cane, and so save money.

VIII CHORUS
Coffee from the Blue Mountains; and cocoa from Trinidad; bananas from Clarendon and Trelawney; and sugar from a thousand ... sugar; to be grown, to be crushed, to be dried, to be shipped from harbour, to be eaten and drunk at the ends of the earth.

NOT RECORDED:
(No music exists for these texts.)

SOPRANO SOLO (SPOKEN)
Consider their works, their weeks, their contact with those who can design instruments of precision; and what compels both races into one enterprise – the wish for life: their concern in these places for the production of foods and beverages.

BASS ATTACCA (SPOKEN)
Acts of injustice done
Between the setting and the rising of the sun
In history lie like bones, each one.
Memory seized them down there,
Paces alive beside his fear,
That’s slow to die, and still here.
The future hard to mark
Of a world turning in the dark
Where ghosts are walking and dogs bark.
But between the day and night
The choice is free to all: and light
Falls equally on black and white.

TENOR SOLO
And in 1791 the slaves of San Domingo killed two thousand whites, and burned one hundred and eighty sugar plantations. The rising was put down, and its leaders killed.

V TENOR SOLO
The more advanced thinkers in Europe began to condemn the slave trade.

SOPRANO SOLO
And we are put on earth a little space
That we may learn to bear the beams of love
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud and like a shady grove.

TENOR SOLO
In 1807 British ships were forbidden to carry slaves.

SOPRANO SOLO
Ah! (etc)

CHORUS
Blessings of civilisation.
Brotherhood of men.
Great objects of humanity!
Freedom! Equality!
Cannot tolerate!
Our Christian duty!
Emancipation! Freedom!
Equality! Freedom! Emancipation!

TENOR SOLO
And finally the British Parliament passed a law to free all slaves.

VI BASS SOLO
Still at their accustomed hour, the cities and oceans swing westward into the segment of eternal shadow, their revolutions unaltered since first to this chain of islands, motionless in the Caribbean Sea like a resting scorpion, the Captains came, eager from Europe, white to the West.

SOPRANO SOLO (SPOKEN)
Today, nearly all manual work in the West Indies is done by Negroes. Attempts to form settlements of European labourers have been unsuccessful. Physical necessities are few: few clothes, fuel only for cooking and food at hand to be picked. Labour therefore is cheap.

BASS SOLO
And still they come, new from those nations to which the study of that which can be weighed and measured is a consuming love.

SOPRANO SOLO (SPOKEN)
The principal industries are: bananas, sugar, cocoa and coffee; principal consumers: America and Great Britain.

BASS SOLO
We show these pictures as evidence of their knowledge; its nature and its power. Power to employ the waters and the
Title Music

Rome sends her legions out into the furthest corners of the discovered world, and her ships are crowding English waters. Some of them are pushing up into a lonely creek, on the south coast of Britain, in Hampshire. In this natural harbour, a fort is built. But the power of Rome fades, her ships sail away, the fort is deserted.

The Danes. Foes they are, fierce beyond other foes. The sea is their school of war, and the storm their friend.

Alfred the Great.

He gave orders for building long-ships, swifter and steadier than those of the Danes. These met the enemy off the Isle of Wight. A great battle was fought, and the Danes were defeated, all their ships being either taken or sunk. This is the beginning of the British Navy.

Alfred the Great has laid the foundation upon which others shall build. Through the coming centuries the Navy will be forged into a great weapon, and, as it grows, there will grow with it, and for it, the town of Portsmouth.

There is, at this point of the haven, Portsmouth Town, and a great round tower, whence runs for the length of a furlong a mud wall, armed with timber.

King Henry VIII has come to see his new fortress at Southsea.

Inland, along the seventy odd miles between London and Portsmouth runs the old road: the way to the sea. A royal road, down which for seven hundred years the king and queens of England have passed, along which huge lumbering wagons carry men to the ships.

The eighteenth century: a glorious age in the history of the Navy, whereon, under the good providence of God, the wealth, safety and strength of the kingdom chiefly depends. . . an age in which the men of Portsmouth can call their town the glory and bulwark of our kingdom. A royal dockyard. . . A great harbour. . . An anchorage for the Fleet.

Alfred the Great has laid the foundation upon which others shall build. Through the coming centuries the Navy will be forged into a great weapon, and, as it grows, there will grow with it, and for it, the town of Portsmouth.

Those are the Danes, fierce beyond other foes. The sea is their school of war, and the storm their friend.

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He gave orders for building long-ships, swifter and steadier than those of the Danes. These met the enemy off the Isle of Wight. A great battle was fought, and the Danes were defeated, all their ships being either taken or sunk. This is the beginning of the British Navy.

At two o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday September the 14th, 1805, Lord Nelson, wishing to avoid the crowds who awaited him, embarked from Southsea beach rather than from the sally port, and set sail on his last voyage, which ended at Trafalgar.

Nelson has gone. . . but there are still fine ships sailing in and out of Portsmouth harbour, and still the mail comes down by coach. But a new age is dawning: an age of steam. . . of industry. . . of railways.

As the years pass travel becomes ever faster. More and more trains are put into service and the time between London and Portsmouth is cut down to ninety minutes.

One hundred and sixty-nine steam trains a week. . . fortyfour thousand passengers on one Saturday and three million passengers in a year along the steam and steel road to Portsmouth and the crowds get larger every year. To meet this problem one thing only can be done: electrify, so the trains can travel faster than at present and run more regularly.

The line waits. . .
The trains wait. . .
The drivers are waiting. . . Waiting for power

And at the terminus now every kind of person is converging, each with his own idea of freedom.

People who work,
People who read adventure stories or understand algebra,
People who would like to be rich, or brilliant at tennis,
People like you and me, liable to catch cold and fond of their food,
are brought all together by a common wish: a desire for the sea.

They gather. They fight for the corner seat facing the engine.

Red turns to green.
They're off!
A signal box.
A power station. We pass the area of greatest congestion, the homes of those who have least power of choice.

We approach the first trees, the lawns and the fresh paint. District of the bypass and the season ticket. The power that helps us to escape is also helping those who cannot get away just now, helping them to keep respectable, helping them to impress the critical eye of a neighbour, helping them to entertain their friends, helping them to feed their husbands, swept swiftly home each evening as the human tide recedes from London. But we more fortunate pass on.

Inland, the seventy odd miles between London and Portsmouth runs the old road: the way to the sea. A royal road, down which for seven hundred years the king and queens of England have passed, along which huge lumbering wagons carry men to the ships.

The eighteenth century: a glorious age in the history of the Navy, whereon, under the good providence of God, the wealth, safety and strength of the kingdom chiefly depends. . . an age in which the men of Portsmouth can call their town the glory and bulwark of our kingdom. A royal dockyard. . . A great harbour. . . An anchorage for the Fleet.

Looking forward out into the country, passing the wild and the disciplined lives, the sun has not lost its importance, the growth of the living is, as ever, incalculable. But for all the new power can do to cleanse and to illuminate, to lessen fatigue, and to move peak cutters, milkers and separators, it is already available.

But still we seek the sea.
As the years pass travel becomes ever faster. More and more trains are put into service and the time between London and Portsmouth is cut down to ninety minutes.

One hundred and sixty-nine steam trains a week… forty thousand passengers on one Saturday and three million passengers in a year along the steam and steel road to Portsmouth. The solution to this problem one thing only can be done: electrify, so the trains can travel faster than at present and run more regularly.

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People who would like to be rich, or brilliant at tennis,
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Along the way to the sea, new and better roads are made, and Portsmouth is brought into closer touch with London by the stage-coach.

In 1784 his Majesty’s mails are first carried by coach to Portsmouth.

At two o’clock in the afternoon on Saturday September the 14th, 1805, Lord Nelson, wishing to avoid the crowds who awaited him, embarked from Southsea beach rather than from the sally port, and set sail on his last voyage, which ended at Trafalgar.

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They gather:
they fight for the corner seat facing the engine.

Red turns to green.
They’re off!
A signal box.
A power station. We pass the area of greatest congestion, the homes of those who have least power of choice.

We approach the first trees, the lawns and the fresh paint.

District of the bypass and the season ticket. The power that helps us to escape is also helping those who cannot get away just now, helping them to keep respectable, helping them to impress the critical eye of a neighbour, helping them to entertain their friends, helping them to feed their husbands, swept swiftly home each evening as the human tide recedes from London. But we more fortunate pass on.

We seek the sea.

White factories stand rigid in the smokeless air. The pylon drives through this sootless field with power to create and to re-fashion. Power to perform on materials the most delicate and the most drastic operations.

Looking forward out into the country, passing the wild and the disciplined lives, the sun has not lost its importance, the growth of the living is, as ever, incalculable. But for all the new power can do to cleanse and to illuminate, to lessen fatigue, and to move peak cutters, milkers and separators, it is already available.

But still we seek the sea.
The telegraph strides all England over
From sooty Newcastle to chalky Dover
From Holyhead to Wickham Fen
A perch for a sparrow and the Jenny Wren.

Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire!

Greetings
Thanks
Wires mean no more pencil chewing
Do what everybody’s doing
Send a wire!

Weddings
Anniversaries
Newcomers to nurseries
Wire your love to Auntie Anna
Why not wire your dear old mamma
Nine words for a nimble tanner
Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire!

We seek a spectacle. All kinds of people, each with their private vision of England, or a street in the rain.

We seek a spectacle. We are all invited to inspect the defences of our dreams. To review the tactual aggressive devices. Let the day commemorate the successful accomplishment of our past, let it praise the skill of designers and the anonymous devotion of mechanics. Let it celebrate the artless charm of the far-travelled sailor. Let the fun be furious. Let the intricate ferocious machinery be only amusing. Let the nature of glory be a matter for friendly debate among all these people, both the just and the unjust. People like you and me — wanting to live.

Greetings
Thanks
Wires mean no more pencil chewing
Do what everybody’s doing
Send a wire!

WEDDINGS
ANNIVERSARIES
NEWCOMERS TO NURSERIES
Wire your love to Auntie Anna
Why not wire your dear old mamma
Nine words for a nimble tanner
Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire!

Here is a harbour, a dodgyard, equipment for the construction of fleets. We seek an island. A scene of pilgrimage to the student of history and the curious stranger. All kinds of people: the married who have begun to get on each other’s nerves; the lonely, daring to look for an amazing romance; the consciously beautiful, certain of easy conquests; the careworn, the unrequited; the child-like. They embark for the pleasant island, each with his special hope: to build sand-castles and dream-castles, to get out of doors, to hold hands in the shadow of a fort, to exchange confidences with strangers, to read, to relax, or just to be, and not think at all.

Here are all the varieties of pleasure, permission, and condolence. For the body, favourable weather, the caress of sunlight and the gradual doze. For the athletic and beautiful, the fullest opportunities to be active and to be admired. For the sedentary, the leisure for reminiscence and revenge. For the children, the happiness of the immediate present, the romping hours. For all, the pleasure of the air, the waters, and the places. Do what you will. Be extravagant, be lucky, be clairvoyant, be amazing. Be a sport or an angel. Imagine yourself as a courtier or as queen. Accept your freedom.

There is the mine. There are the miners.

Coal mining is the basic industry of Britain. The coal mines of the country employ seven hundred and fifty thousand men. Head-stocks, winding gear, conveyor belts, washing sprays, shunting yards, slag heaps, this is the surface plant of ev’ry mine. Slag is the waste product of the pit. It must be separated from the coal. Overhead transporters deposit the slag on these heaps. At the pit-head the coal is washed and graded. The principal by-products of coal are: gas, coke, tar, dyes, oil, benzol.

The chief coal-producing centres are in South Wales, Central Scotland, Durham and Northumberland, Yorkshire and Lancashire, and the Midlands. South Wales: 140,000 men, 37 million tons a year. Central Scotland: 86,000 men, 31 million tons. Durham and Northumberland: 146,000 men, 46 million tons.

CHORUS:
A sterile landscape covers the ore.
There is the mine.
There are the miners.

I CHORUS:
A sterile landscape covers the ore.
There is the mine.
There are the miners.

II COMMENTATOR:
Coal mining is the basic industry of Britain. The coal mines of the country employ seven hundred and fifty thousand men. Head-stocks, winding gear, conveyor belts, washing sprays, shunting yards, slag heaps, this is the surface plant of every mine. Slag is the waste product of the pit. It must be separated from the coal. Overhead transporters deposit the slag on these heaps. At the pit-head the coal is washed and graded. The principal by-products of coal are: gas, coke, tar, dyes, oil, benzol.

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CHORUS:
A sterile landscape covers the ore.
There is the mine.
There are the miners.
Up Hazlemere Bank, a trial of strength in the years of steam
but today of small account. Over the hoop of the hill and
down — fifty, sixty, seventy miles per hour. To the last
straight run to the rolling plain of ships and the path of the
gull, we seek the sea.

Here is a harbour, a dockyard, equipment for the construction
of fleets. We seek an island. A scene of pilgrimage to the
student of history and the curious stranger. All kinds of
people: the married who have begun to get on each other’s
nerves, the lonely, daring to look for an amazing romance;
the consciously beautiful, certain of easy conquests; the
careworn, the unrewarded, the childlike. They embark for the
pleasant island, each with his special hope: to build sand-
castles and dream-castles, to get out of doors, to hold hands
in the shadow of a fort, to exchange confidences with
strangers, to read, to relax, or just to be, and not think at all.

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condolence. For the body, favourable weather, the caress of
sunlight and the gradual doze. For the athletic and beautiful,
the fullest opportunities to be active and to be adored. For
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We seek a spectacle. We are all invited to inspect the
defenses of our dreams. To review the taciturn aggressive
devices. Let the day commemorate the successful
accomplishment of our past, let it praise the skill of
designers and the anonymous devotion of mechanics. Let it
celebrate the artless charm of the far-travelled sailor. Let the
fun be furious. Let the intricate ferocious machinery be only
amusing. Let the nature of glory be a matter for friendly
debate among all these people, both the just and the unjust.
People like you and me — wanting to live.

Night. The spectacle fades. The tidy lives depart with their
human loves. Only the stars, the ocean and the machines
remain: the dark and the involuntary powers.

The telegraph strides all England over
From sooty Newcastle to chalky Dover
From Holyhead to Wickham Fen
A perch for a sparrow and the Jenny Wren.

Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire!
Greetings
Thanks
Wires mean no more pencil chewing
Do what everybody’s doing
Send a wire!

Weddings
Anniversaries
Newcomers to nurseries
Wire your love to Auntie Anna
Why not wire your dear old mamma
Nine words for a nimble tanner
Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire
Send a wire!
IV COMMENTATOR:  
Yorkshire and Lancashire: 200,000 men, 56 million tons.  
The Midlands: 160,000, 46 million tons.  
The night shift.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):  
Craneman, flat-lad, master-shifter, fireman, driver, greaser.

COMMENTATOR:  
The coal face is a mile from the shaft.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):  
Master-wasteman, headsman, hewer, Pee dee,  
rolley-wayman, trapper  
Fitter, shipper, running fitter, wasteman, on-setter, overman,  
Helper-up, inspector, foal  
Banksman, barrowman, caster, changer, checkweigher, coupler,  
Driver, fireman.

V COMMENTATOR:  
The temp'rature often reaches eighty degrees. The Davy safety lamp: the flame is enclosed against gas. In this Scottish pit there is no gas. The miner can work with an naked flame.

VI The seven and a half hour shift begins. The miner works in a cramped position. Often he has scarcely room to swing his pick. He works along the seam hewing out the coal. His average output is twenty-five hundred-weights per shift.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):  
By coal is comprehended all the fossil fuels contained in the earth's crust.  
Anthracite, cannel, parrot, bituminous. Brown or lignite,  
coke, splint or hard, cherry or soft. Being an amorphous substance of variable composition. Coal!

VII COMMENTATOR:  
One thirty AM: the miner stops for lunch.

VIII In many pits machinery supplements hand labour. An electric coal cutter: it moves along the seam, undercutting the coal. The machine team shovel it into trucks. Ev'ry working day five miners are killed and over four hundred and fifty injured and maimed.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):  
By coal is comprehended all the fossil fuels contained in the earth's crust.  
Anthracite, cannel, parrot, bituminous. Brown or lignite,  
coke, splint or hard, cherry or soft. Being an amorphous substance of variable composition. Coal!

IX COMMENTATOR:  
One thirty AM: the miner stops for lunch.

CHORUS – TENOR/BASS (SPOKEN):  
How much did we hew?  
How much fined for dirt?  
How much do we get?  
Never mind that,  
We're going up!

CHORUS – SOPRANO/ALTO:  
Bill! Ned! Sam! Geordie, Geordie, Tom, Ginger.  
Dave, George, Mike!

CHORUS – TENOR/BASS (SPOKEN):  
But Dixie's shot was late.  
If all you soccer fans had by mistake any gumption  
You'd play Northern Union like sensible buggers.  
We're going up! Going up!  
His pigeon clock was slow, his whippet won the cup.  
Do any of you know there's anything else to talk about  
but sport?

COMMENTATOR:  
The miner's life is bound up with the pit  
The miner's house is often own'd by the pit  
The life of the village depends on the pit.

CHORUS – SOPRANO/ALTO:  
O lurcher-loving collier, black as night,  
Follow your love across the smokeless hill;  
Your lamp is out, and all the cages still;  
Course for your heart and do not miss,  
For Sunday soon is past and, Kate, fly not so fast,  
For Monday comes when none may kiss.  
Be marble to his soot, and to his black be white.

COMMENTATOR:  
Transport and distribution double the price of coal.

X Making up coal trains:  
In this yard three thousand wagons are shunted ev'ry day.  
The points are moved electrically.  
Forty million tons of coal are sold ev'ry year for household use.  
Ten million tons for the production of electricity.  
Twelve million tons for locomotives.  
Fifteen million tons for shipping.  
Fifty four million tons are exported.  
Eighty five million tons for industry.

XI Coal mining is the basic industry of Britain.

XII CHORUS:  
There are the miners,  
There is the mine!
IV COMMENTATOR:
Yorkshire and Lancashire: 200,000 men, 56 million tons.
The Midlands: 160,000, 46 million tons.
The night shift.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):
Craneman, flat-lad, master-shifter, fireman, driver, greaser,

COMMENTATOR:
The coal face is a mile from the shaft.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):
Master-wasteman, headsman, hewer, Pee dee,
rolley-wayman, trapper
Fitter, shipper, running fitter, wasteman, on-setter, overman,
Helper-up, inspector, foal
Banksman, barrowman, caster, changer, checkweigher, coupler,
Driver, fireman.

V COMMENTATOR:
The temperature often reaches eighty degrees. The Davy safety lamp: the flame is enclosed against gas. In this Scottish pit there is no gas. The miner can work with an naked flame.

VI The seven and a half hour shift begins. The miner works in a cramped position. Often he has scarcely room to swing his pick. He works along the seam hewing out the coal. His average output is twenty-five hundred-weights per shift.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):
By coal is comprehended all the fossil fuels contained in the earth’s crust.
Anthracite, cannel, parrot, bituminous. Brown or lignite,
cooking, split or hard, cherry or soft.
Being an amorphous substance of variable composition.
Coal!

VII COMMENTATOR:
One thirty AM: the miner stops for lunch.

VIII In many pits machinery supplements hand labour.
An electric coal cutter: it moves along the seam, undercutting the coal. The machine team shovel it into trucks. Ev’ry working day five miners are killed and over four hundred and fifty injured and maimed.

CHORUS (SPOKEN):
Round coal obtained
Cost undercutting reduced
Output per man per shift increased
Length of face lessened.
Five followed explosion
Five hundred men trapped
Half mile underground
Two miles from pit-eye.

COMMENTATOR:
Ev’ry year in Great Britain, one in ev’ry five miners is injured.

IX COMMENTATOR:
The shift is finished.

CHORUS – TENOR/BASS (SPOKEN):
How much did we hew?
How much fined for dirt?
How much do we get?
Never mind that,
We’re going up!

CHORUS – SOPRANO/ALTO:
Bill! Ned! Sam! Geordie, Geordie, Tom, Ginger.
Dave, George, Mike!

CHORUS – TENOR/BASS (SPOKEN):
But Dixie’s shot was late.
If all you soccer fans had by mistake any gumption
You’d play Northern Union like sensible buggers.
We’re going up! Going up!
His pigeon clock was slow, his whippet won the cup.
Do any of you know there’s anything else to talk about
but sport?
Course there is, we’re going up!

COMMENTATOR:
The miner’s life is bound up with the pit
The miner’s house is often own’d by the pit
The life of the village depends on the pit.

CHORUS – SOPRANO/ALTO:
A lurcher-loving collier, black as night,
Follow your love across the smokeless hill;
Your lamp is out, and all the cages still;
Course for your heart and do not miss,
For Sunday soon is past and, Kate, fly not so fast,
For Monday comes when none may kiss:
Be marble to his soot, and to his black be white.

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Eighty five million tons for industry.

XI Coal mining is the basic industry of Britain.

XII CHORUS:
There are the miners,
There is the mine!
When you’re feeling like expressing your affection
For someone night and day,
Take up the ‘phone and ask for your connection,
We’ll give it right away.
Eve or Adam, anyone you ask for
We’ll find somehow.

Sir or Madam, if you get a taste for
Paris, Berlin, Moscow,
Enter any telephone kiosk O,
Have your say,
Press Button A,
Here’s your number now.

WHEN YOU’RE FEELING LIKE EXPRESSING YOUR AFFECTION
Attr. WH Auden

As a first step towards placing NMC Recordings on a sustainable long-term financial footing, we have launched NMC Friends. We very much hope that you will want to join us, and take this opportunity to support our continuing and central role in the future of British contemporary music.

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**MARY CAREWE**

SOPRANO

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Equally at home in the opera house, he has conducted productions at the Kirov, English National, Opera North, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Montpellier and at the Netherlands Opera. Brabbins has made over 60 recordings, including numerous discs for NMC.

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Clare Findlater Flute, piccolo
Melinda Maxwell Oboe, cor anglais
Chris Richards Clarinet
Kyle Horsch Alto sax
Andrew Barnett Bassoon
Mark Phillips Horn
Jonathan Holland Trumpet
Philip Harrison Trombone
Julian Warburton Horn
Ed Cervenka Percussion
Mark Limbrick Percussion
Robert Johnston Harp
Judith Templeman Violin
Malcolm Wilson Violin
Alexandra Wood Violin
Christopher Yates Viola
Ulrich Heinen Cello
John Tattersall Double bass
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY CHOIR

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Soprano 1
Katherine Lawson
Cathy Panting
Diane Todd
Val Matthews
Rabyn Jennings
Sheila Davies
Linda Ward

Soprano 2
Gill Austin
Pru Hawthorne
Heledd Bennett Joyson
Di Charles
Naomi Goldsworthy
Tanya Cuts
Sarah Tambling

Alto 1
Christina Warner
Lorna Morris
Margaret Wilson
Helen Chamberlain
Deborah Dakin
Dina Cole
Kath Campbell

Alto 2
Tracy Bowden
Sarah Ennis
Catherine Duke
Christine Giles
Sylvia Fox
Christine Trehovnan
Hazel Hughes

Tenor 1
Paul Sheldon
Hugh Thomson
Ron Powell
Richard Cook
Mike Delany
Charles Barwell

Tenor 2
Mike Ennis
Alan Winwood
Matthew Robinson
Bill Nealon
Michael Foster
Dave Barber
David Young

Bass 1
Stu Mitchell
Richard Fullbrook
Mark Checkettis
David Ennis
Andrew Parker
Richard Horley
Phil Rawle
Gordon Thorrett
Andrew Parker

Bass 2
Steve Ash
Hugh Houghton
Paul Chambers
Peter Leppard
Phil Beynon
Tom Henderson
Mike Smith

CHOIR OF KING EDWARD’S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM

Martin Monk, choirmaster
Julian Wilkins, vocal coach and repetiteur

Maximillian Alman
Thomas Anderson
James Claggett
Edward Davis
Thomas Edwards
Nicholas Gateley
Peter Hodkinson
Roland Keye
Alan Kent
Christopher Lawrence
Thomas Lilburn
Sam Mabley
Ryan Millar
Jack Moreton
George Muharib
Jim Olowale
Sebastian Ostrowicz
Bhavik Parekh
Edward Ratcliffe
Matthew Rayner
Alexander Roberts
Amar Sodha
Jacob Willis

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David Ennis
Andrew Parker
Richard Horley
Phil Rawle
Gordon Thorrett
Andrew Parker

Bass 2
Steve Ash
Hugh Houghton
Paul Chambers
Peter Leppard
Phil Beynon
Tom Henderson
Mike Smith

The Chorus is conducted by Simon Halsey, assistant conductor Simon Williamson and assistant choirmaster Max Monk. The Chorus is also associated with the University of Birmingham School of Music and Performing Arts. It has made numerous recordings for commercial and educational labels, including NMC Recordings and the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra’s own label, BSO Classics. The Chorus has also performed in concert and on television with internationally renowned artists such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Andrew Davis, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir David Willcocks and Sir Mark Elder.

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The music on this disc was recorded at the CBSO Centre, Birmingham, on 11-12 March 2006. The narrations were recorded at The Sound Company, London on 10 July and 26 September 2006.

Engineer  MIKE CLEMENTS
Producer  COLIN MATTHEWS
Sound design on Coal Face and Night Mail  IAN DEARDEN for Sound Intermedia
Editing and post-production  EMMA PAFFLEY for K&A Productions
Images on front and back covers and pages 10 and 23 © Royal Mail Film Archive
Graphic design  FRANCOIS HALL

Night Mail is published by Chester Music; The Tocher (Rossini Suite) is published by Boosey & Hawkes Ltd; When you’re feeling like expressing your affection is published by Faber Music.

The scores for Coal Face, The Way to The Sea, Negroes, Peace of Britain, Telegrams, The King’s Stamp and Men Behind the Meters were transcribed and edited by Colin Matthews, Paul Kildea, Joseph Phibbs and Lloyd Moore.

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Heledd Bennett Joyson
Di Charles
Naomi Goldsworthy
Tonya Curtis
Sarah Tambling

Alto 1
Christina Warner
Lorna Morris
Margaret Wilson
Helen Chamberlain
Deborah Dakin
Dina Cole
Kath Campbell

Alto 2
Tracy Bowden
Sarah Ennis
Catherine Duke
Christine Giles
Sylvia Fox
Christine Trethowan
Hazel Hughes

Tenor 1
Paul Sheldon
Hugh Thompson
Ron Powell
Richard Cook
Mike Delany
Charles Barwell

Tenor 2
Mike Ennis
Alan Winwood
Matthew Robinson
Bill Nield
Michael Foster
Dave Barber
David Young

Bass 1
Stu Mitchell
Richard Fullbrook
Mark Checketts
David Ennis
Andrew Packer
Richard Horley
Phil Rawle
Gordon Thorne
Andrew Parker

Bass 2
Steve Ash
Hugh Houghton
Paul Chambers
Peter Leppard
Phil Bynard
Tom Henderson
Mike Smith

CHOIR OF KING EDWARD’S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM

Martin Monk, choirmaster
Julian Wilkins, vocal coach and repetiteur

Maximillian Alman
Thomas Anderson
James Claghtoon
Edward Davis
Thomas Edwards
Nicholas Gateley
Peter Hodkinson
Roland Kaye
Alan Kent
Christopher Lawrence
Thomas Lilburn
Sam Mabey
Ryan Millar
Jack Moreton
George Muharib
Jimi Oluwole
Sebastian Ostrowicz
Bhovik. Parmik
Edward Ratcliffe
Matthew Rayner
Alexander Roberts
Amar Sohla
Jacob Willis

The music on this disc was recorded at the CBSO Centre, Birmingham, on 11-12 March 2006. The narrations were recorded at The Sound Company, London on 10 July and 26 September 2006.

Engineer MIKE CLEMENTS
Producer COLIN MATTHEWS
Sound design on Coal Face and Night Mail IAN DEARDEN for Sound Intermedia
Editing and post-production EMMA PAFFLEY for K&A Productions
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Night Mail is published by Chester Music; The Tocher (Rossini Suite) is published by Boosey & Hawkes Ltd; When you’re feeling like expressing your affection is published by Faber Music.

The scores for Coal Face, The Way to The Sea, Negroes, Peace of Britain, Telegrams, The King’s Stamp and Men Behind the Meters were transcribed and edited by Colin Matthews, Paul Kildea, Joseph Phibbs and Lloyd Moore.

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NMC is very grateful to The Britten Estate Ltd for financial assistance in making this recording.

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HANNAH VLC˘EK Label Manager
ANNE RUSHTON Business & Development

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Catalogue number: NMC D112
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CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY CHORUS • CHOIR OF KING EDWARD’S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM
MARTYN BRABBINS CONDUCTOR

1 - 3 Night Mail 5'50
4 - 8 The Tocher (Rossini Suite) 9'32
9 - 18 The King’s Stamp 14'07
19 - 26 Negros 13'03
27 - 37 The Way to the Sea 15'29
38  Telegrams 2'30
39  Peace of Britain 1’30
40 - 42 Men Behind the Meters 3’11
43 - 54 Coal Face 11’47
55  When You’re Feeling Like Expressing Your Affection 0’53

Total timing 78’55

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