LODER 2015

A PROJECT TO COMMEMORATE A BRITISH COMPOSER AND A PROMINENT BATH MUSICAL FAMILY IN THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE DEATH OF EDWARD JAMES LODER
(*b* Bath, 10 July 1809; *d* London, 5 April 1865)



MR. E. J. LODER

THE COMPOSER

Edward James Loder was born into a family of Bath musicians. Though his year of birth has generally being cited as 1813, recent research suggests that it was four years earlier. He gave such early promise of musical talent that his parents sent him to Germany to study under Beethoven's pupil Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838), whom Edward's father had known during Ries's years in London from 1813 to 1824. Back in England, in 1831 he married Eliza Watson, daughter of the choral conductor at Covent Garden Theatre. As Mrs Edward Loder she sang in Bath throughout the 1830s. However, the marriage having soon broken down, she emigrated in 1840 with her siblings to America.

Having moved from Bath to London, Edward gained significant note with the opera *Nourjahad*, which initiated a new phase in English opera when produced at Samuel J. Arnold's English Opera House at London's Lyceum Theatre in July 1834. *The Widow Queen* (October 1834), *The Covenanters* (August 1835) and *The Dice of Death* (August 1835) followed at the same theatre. However, the failure of Arnold's venture, combined with Loder's need to earn a living, increasingly tied him to the

composition of popular songs and ballads. Of these 'The Old Oak Tree' (1835) enjoyed especial currency on both sides of the Atlantic.

The fluctuating fortunes of English opera, and the financial instability of its promoters, meanwhile restricted Loder's operatic work. However, in October 1846 his opera *The Night Dancers*, based on the *Giselle* story, was produced with significant success at the Princess's Theatre, London, where Loder was by then musical director. Productions in New York and Sydney followed during 1847, and during Loder's lifetime this opera continued to be considered the high-point of his output. However, it was followed at the Princess's Theatre only by works of lesser pretension such as *The Young Guard* and *Robin Goodfellow* (both 1848). Altogether, what G. A. Macfarren described as Loder's "foible of unpunctuality" appears to have hindered his ability to make the most of his talents.

The opera that finally achieved production as *Raymond and Agnes* in 1855 at Manchester's Theatre Royal (where Loder was by then musical director) had been announced for the Princess's Theatre as early as 1848. Its success in 1855 was limited, and in 1856 illness forced Loder to withdraw from further public engagements. A London production of *Raymond and Agnes* in 1859 had no more success, so that a revival of *The Night Dancers* by the Pyne-Harrison company at Covent Garden Theatre in 1860 confirmed the latter as the high-point of Loder's success during his lifetime. After several years of illness, including four years of paralysis, he died in London in April 1865 aged 55.

RAYMOND AND AGNES

Loder's most ambitious opera has a libretto by Edward Fitzball that was one of several adaptations of *Raymond and Agnes, or The Bleeding Nun of the Castle of Lindenberg*, part of Matthew Gregory Lewis's Gothic novel *The Monk* (1796), the source also of Gounod's *La Nonne Sanglante* (1854). During Loder's lifetime the opera achieved scant recognition for various reasons, including its provincial première and substandard London production, an unsatisfactory libretto by Fitzball, and perhaps not least its disinclination to satisfy the British taste for extractable ballads for drawing-room performance. More recently, this last feature has been seen more as a virtue, and the work's more ambitious writing has made it stand out from other English operas of its time. Its virtues were recognised in a production at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, in May 1966 and have been renewed by BBC broadcasts of excerpts in 1966 and again in 1995. A CD of the 1995 broadcast is available from Oriel Music Trust, 79 Ffordd Glyder, Port Dinorwic, Gwynedd, LL56 4QX (tel. 01248 670797; e-mail opera@orielmusic.org) for £6 plus postage (profits to the Musicians' Benevolent Fund).

All twentieth-century performances were in a revised version devised by Nicholas Temperley and Max Miradin for the 1966 Cambridge production, using Loder's autograph score in the Library of Congress (of which the Pendlebury Library of Cambridge University Faculty of Music has a copy). Orchestral parts for this version exist with the BBC. A major motivation for the 1966 revision was belief that the original libretto was lost. However, copies are now known to exist in the Library of Congress and the Australian National Library. Steps are thus being taken to prepare a new edition of the score to facilitate a first modern revival of Loder's masterpiece in its original form.

Daily News, 13 June 1859

"The scenes of concerted music are especially admirable, skilfully constructed, animated, full of melodic phrases, and enhanced in effect by rich and picturesque orchestral accompaniment."

Daily Telegraph, 13 June 1859

"It is evident … that the composer has aimed at producing a complete dramatic work; thus he nowhere sacrifices to the prevalent mania for music-shop ballads."

Nicholas Temperley, *Musical Times*, April 1966

"Loder's musical and dramatic gifts were far more impressive than those of his contemporaries, Balfe and Wallace…. The music for this opera maintains a high level of inspiration, variety, and continuity almost throughout. Loder reveals quite unexpected resources of harmony, while his orchestration is masterly; and he provides memorable tunes, both plain and ornate, when appropriate."

Nicholas Temperley, *Opera*, April 1966

"To my mind [*Raymond and Agnes*] is the crowning achievement of English Romantic opera…. With inspiration at a high level almost throughout, the total experience of the opera is an unforgettable one."

Peter Heyworth, *The Observer*, 9 May 1966

"In the second act the score develops a sustained dramatic attack that is all too rare in the annals of English opera."

Andrew Porter, *Financial Times*, 19 May 1966

"By comparison [with Bellini and *Il Pirata*] Edward Loder is a genius, his *Raymond and Agnes* a mine of richly inventive music."

Andrew Porter, *Musical Times*, June 1966

"The opera made on me a strong impression—stronger even than I guessed at the time, for some of its music has gone on 'haunting' me; both several of the tunes, and the effect of the sustained, resourceful ensembles…. Loder's ideal was probably Weber; he seems also to have studied almost everything else, but the result never sounds like stale imitation"

Stanley Sadie, *Opera*, July 1966

"Loder's melodies have been echoing through my mind since the performance; I long to hear them again. His orchestration is skilful, often imaginative…. Some of the choral scenes are first-class…, and the chorus when Raymond is arrested has a big, swinging, Verdian melody, richly harmonized. Both the duets for the lovers are strong stuff…. And finest of all are the ensembles, notably the trio in the first finale and the quintet in the second—this last rather like Rossini's *Cenerentola* quintet, beautifully written, catching the sensation of the situation to perfection."

Nigel Burton, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 1992

"Here the sense of drama and depth of musical characterization is close to Verdi, especially in the magnificent confrontation between Raymond and Inigo in Act 2, and in the quintet 'Lost! And in a dream'."

Roderic Dunnett, 'Britannia at the Opera', BBC Radio 3, 13 February 1995

"Of all the operas of early Victorian Britain, there is one—to my mind at least—that stands out. In terms of musical characterisation, orchestral writing and dramatic impact, *Raymond and Agnes* by Edward Loder more than any other breaks the stranglehold of ballad, which smothered British opera for much of the nineteenth century and comes far closer to the great Italian traditions of the day."

Charles Osborne, *Opera*, June 2002

"I had not heard of [Loder] until 1966 when Eric Walter White, my then colleague at the Arts Council of Great Britain … told me that Loder's *Raymond and Agnes* was about to be staged in Cambridge and that, as a Verdi enthusiast, I should not miss it, for Loder was the English equivalent of early Verdi…. I was in the audience at the Cambridge Arts Theatre on that night in May 1966, and I was bowled over by *Raymond and Agnes*. Its intensity, and Loder's gift for melody and musical characterization, were indeed Verdian and marvellously exciting…. I have, in fact, more than once attempted to alert the Royal Opera and English National Opera to the existence of Loder, an English composer who surely deserves to be promoted by English or British companies…. So far my pleas have fallen on deaf ears. But the Loder revival, which will surely come one day, does not have to begin in London."

LODER'S OTHER OPERAS

Of Loder's other operas, *The Night Dancers* (1846), to a libretto by dramatist George Soane (1789-1860), is based on the *Giselle* story. It was the stand-out success of the composer's lifetime—performed at the Princess's Theatre during three consecutive seasons, staged in New York and Sydney in 1847, and revived by the Pyne-Harrison Opera Company at Covent Garden in November 1860. At this last revival *Punch* described the opera as "replete with grace, melody, tenderness, harmony, colour, sparkle, *chic*, *élan*, *ensemble*, and *verve*". The autograph score of *The Night Dancers* is in the Library of Congress, orchestral parts are in the Carl Rosa collection at Liverpool Library, and the original published libretto and vocal score are in the British Library and elsewhere. The overture, recorded by Victorian Opera Northwest and conducted by Richard Bonynge, is available on SOMMCD 0123. Three numbers from the opera are in an album of 21 Loder songs downloadable from the IMSLP/Petrucci Music Library or from http://hdl.handle.net/1802/13548.

Loder's other major opera, *Nourjahad*, to a libretto by Samuel J. Arnold, had an oriental setting. It was hastily composed for Arnold's English Opera House at the Lyceum Theatre, London and was praised but never revived (see http://www.victorianenglishopera.org/operas/Nourjahad.htm). Autograph material is in the British Library (Add MS 33802-33805), and its hit number 'There's a Light in Her Laughing Eye' is in the album of 21 Loder songs downloadable from the IMSLP Music Library or from http://hdl.handle.net/1802/13548. The British Library also has autograph material for *The Dice of Death* (Add MS 33801) and the 1857 one-act drawing-room opera *Never Judge By Appearances* (Add MS 52983 R).

OTHER VOCAL MUSIC

Besides church music, seemingly including an oratorio now lost, Loder composed (in the words of G. A. Macfarren) "an enormous number of single songs". Geoffrey Bush and Nicholas Temperley included five of them in their 'English Songs, 1800-1860', volume 43 of *Musica Britannica* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1979) Among Loder's finest are 'Invocation to the Deep' (words Felicia Hemans) and 'I Heard a Brooklet Gushing' (1850), this latter a setting of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's English version of Wilhelm Müller's 'Wohin?', set by Schubert in *Die schöne Müllerin*. It was broadcast by Gordon Pullin (tenor) and Stephanie Bamford (piano), on BBC Radio 3 in January 1982 and can be heard on CD sung by Peter Allanson (baritone) with Stephen Betteridge (piano) on Symposium 1074.

Loder's songs particularly favoured the lower male voice. The most successful included 'The Brave Old Oak' (words Henry Chorley, 1835), 'The Outlaw' (words H. Carl Schiller, 1840) and 'Philip the Falconer' (words W. H. Bellamy, 1845), plus 'The Old House at Home' (words Thomas Haynes Bayly) from the opera *Francis the First* (1838). 'The Brave Old Oak' achieved especial familiarity on both sides of the Atlantic, being adapted as 'The Brave Old Chief' into a campaign-song for William Henry Harrison for the 1840 American Presidential election.

Of other songs, 'Flow, Rio Verde' (words Felicia Hemans, 1837) can be found on YouTube in a piano arrangement with variations by Erling Jan Sørensen. Loder's most recorded song over the decades has been 'The Diver' (words G. Douglas Thompson, 1848), recorded by the likes of Robert Radford, Norman Allin and Foster Richardson in the 78rpm era, and by Benjamin Luxon accompanied by André Previn on LP in 1975. The BBC also included it, along with Loder's 'Lamentation' (from 'Sacred Songs and Ballads', 1840), in studio performances by Mark Rowlinson (baritone), accompanied by Keith Swallow (piano), in a 1988 programme of early Victorian songs. 'Lamentation' has been recorded commercially, arranged for two harps, on CD (Globe 5204).

As mentioned above, a collection of 21 Loder songs, including numbers from *Nourjahad* and *The Night Dancers*, is downloadable from the IMSLP/Petrucci Music Library or http://hdl.handle.net/1802/13548.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Autograph MSS in the British Library include those of two independent overtures (Add MS 33801). Loder is also known to have composed at least six string quartets, though seemingly only the Scherzo and Trio of no 3 survives in a published arrangement for two pianos (from which a string-quartet version could be reconstructed). In addition, there are an 'Original Theme and Variations for Flute and Piano' published in 1828, and what Nicholas Temperley has described as "a superb flute and piano

sonata", which he edited for publication by Oxford University Press in 1990. Piano compositions include an 'Introduction and Rondo Brillant', published as Loder's opus 17 in Bath in 1829 and included by Nicholas Temperley in volume 16 of *The London Pianoforte School, 1766-1860* (New York: Garland, 1985). Of other piano works, *The Harmonicon* in 1833 described Loder's 'Andante Sentimentale' as "impressive and *recherché*" and his 'Allegretto Scherzando' as "bold and energetic; the modulations … many and fearless, [with] discords for which he has no precedent that immediately occurs to us". All these works are available for anyone wishing to perform them.

THE LODER FAMILY OF BATH

The Loders were the leading family of musicians in late-eighteenth-century Bath, when that city was the major centre for Society gatherings outside London. Edward J. Loder's grandfather John Loder (1757-95) was a violinist, and the latter's son John David Loder (1788-1846), Edward's father, was a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music and one of the leading violinists and orchestral leaders of his day—not only in Bath but also in London and at festivals around the country.

Another son of the first John Loder was George Loder (c1794-1829), a flutist and pianist. By his first marriage this George Loder was the father of Edward's cousin George Loder (1816-68), who was active in both the USA, where he conducted the first performance there of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Australasia, where he died. By his second marriage George Loder senior was also father of Kate Fanny Loder (1825-1904), another first cousin of Edward. She studied at the Royal Academy of Music and was not only a much admired pianist (notable for performances of music by Weber, Mendelssohn and Brahms) but also a composer—most particularly of orchestral and chamber music, including a published set of 12 Studies for the piano (1852).

Many other members of the family were active in Bath, London and elsewhere.

THE AIM OF THIS PROJECT

The aim of this project is to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of a neglected nineteenth-century British composer, and raise awareness of his music as well as of his family and the musical importance of the city of Bath in which they flourished. A prime aim is to achieve modern performances (and, it is hoped, recording) of Loder's operatic masterpiece *Raymond and Agnes*, as also of other works both vocal and instrumental. Written and visual commemorations are also planned. It is envisaged that commemorations would be centred on Bath (where the family's activities were initially based), London (where many of the family were active), and Manchester (where Edward Loder worked and *Raymond and Agnes* was first performed).

This Loder project is supported by:

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