

HISTORY

The Premieres of Hammersmith

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ABSTRACT

English composer Gustav Holst (1874–1934) composed his last military band work, *Hammersmith* in 1930, at the request of the British Broadcasting Corporation Military Band. Although rehearsed, the work was never performed by that band and Holst made an orchestral transcription of the work which was premiered the following year.

In 1932, while guest-lecturing at Harvard University, Holst was contacted about conducting *Hammersmith* at the final concert of the American Bandmasters' Association convention during April of that year. This world premiere performance of the original military band version was played by the United States Marine Band, although Holst was prevented from taking part in the concert because of an ulcer flare-up.

Although mentioned by many sources, *Hammersmith* was not performed again until 1954, when Robert Cantrick performed the work with his band at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh. It has only been since that performance that the work has come to be recognized as a major work in the band's repertoire.

For the past quarter of a century, *Hammersmith*, Gustav Holst's final composition for the British military band, has been acclaimed by musicologists and conductors as a masterpiece of twentieth-century counterpoint and orchestration. Imogen Holst, who is well-respected for her objectivity in writing about her father's music, has declared *Hammersmith* "undoubtedly to be reckoned among his greatest works." A recent study (Olson, 1982) involving nineteen esteemed American university wind-ensemble conductors indicates the work "qualifies for inclusion in a highly selective, core repertoire for the wind ensemble."

In light of *Hammersmith's* current status as a major work of a prestigious composer, it is rather surprising to discover that this very same work lay in relative obscurity for the first twenty-four years following its completion. In order to pursue a full discussion of events concerning the work during this period of neglect, it is necessary to backtrack to the circumstances surrounding the composition of the work itself.

AN IMPORTANT COMMISSION

On December 3, 1927 the following letter was sent from D. Miller Craig of the British Broadcasting Corporation to Gustav Holst, Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls School, and since recognized in his own country as one of its leading composers:

Gustav Holst, Esq.
St. Paul's Girls' School
Brook Green,
HAMMERSMITH

Dear Mr. Holst,

This corporation is anxious in the interests of Military Band music, to do everything possible to procure as wide a field as possible for such activities, believing that in its military band, the B.B.C. possesses as good a combination of that order as exists anywhere. The Corporation is desirous of developing the Band's potentialities to the fullest possible extent, especially in the direction of finding for it as wide a range of material as possible; at present the Band is hampered by the very limited repertoire suitable.

With this view we are asking one or two of the foremost British composers of today to write specially for Military Band, feeling that thus we may make musicians realize how real a future there is for such music.

May we ask you how you would view a request from us to compose for Military Band a piece in one movement, lasting from twelve to fifteen minutes in performance, in the form of a Concert Overture, or Fantasy, or Symphonic Poem?

On hearing from you, as we hope to do, that you view the proposal at this stage with favour, we can go into the question of copyright, terms, etc.

Thanking you in advance,
We are,
Yours faithfully,

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
DWC [D. Millar Craig]¹
Programmes

This really wasn't all that unusual a request from a British military band, as band directors had for some time been interested in bettering the quality of the band repertoire; however, the B.B.C. Band was no ordinary band. It was a unique performing ensemble.

Ever since its inception, the British Broadcasting Corporation had been interested in programming serious music of all types. As early as 1923, the company had a civilian military band stationed at its Manchester facilities.² During the summer of 1927, it was decided that a band be permanently stationed in London. Bertram Walton O'Donnell, bandmaster of the Royal Marines at Deal and one of three brothers who were conductors, was selected to head the new B.B.C. Wireless Military Band. O'Donnell was a solid musician and a noteworthy composer; his *Three Humoresques* received their initial hearing in the same 1922 concert which saw the premiere performance of Holst's *Second Suite in F*. O'Donnell was determined to make his band the standard of wind-band performance. During his ten-year reign (his brother P.S.G. O'Donnell succeeded him) he added two hundred seventy works to the repertoire and broadcast one hundred fifty concerts each year.³

The band included many of London's better players and several college professors.⁴ It concentrated its effort on the performance of the finest available wind band literature including transcriptions of the orchestral works of the masters, suitable original military band works, and works by younger, lesser-known British composers. Medleys, selections and novelty pieces were deemed unacceptable.⁵ As of August 21, 1927, membership in the organization consisted of the following:

Principal flute:	Robert Murchie
2nd flute and piccolo:	Charles Stainer
E Flat clarinet:	R. A. Smith
Oboe:	J. R. Brand
Solo clarinet:	A. Tchaikov
Solo clarinet and leader:	Haydn Draper
Solo clarinet:	G. W. Anderson
Ripieno clarinet:	R. L. Crosoer
Ripieno clarinet:	Louis Booth
2nd clarinet:	R. T. Chilton
2nd clarinet:	A. R. Jitkins
3rd clarinet:	A. Davies
3rd clarinet:	C. Mangen
Alto saxophone:	Walter Lear
Tenor saxophone:	C. S. MacDonald
Bassoon:	P. B. Draper
1st horn:	E. A. Chapman
2nd horn:	W. E. Gill
Solo cornet and leader:	Charles Leggett (Deputy conductor and general supervisor)
1st cornet:	J. Malken
2nd cornet:	A. Amsden
1st trombone:	H. B. Ashby
2nd trombone:	R. O. Williams
Bass trombone:	Percy Jone
Euphonium:	Thomas Thorpe
Principal bass:	Francis Ash
2nd bass:	H. R. Smith
Principal percussion:	F. H. Kennings
2nd percussion:	R. G. Franlin ⁶

During 1929-1930, the forerunner of a national orchestra was being formed with some of the members transferring and being replaced. That winter the size of the B.B.C. Military Band was increased to thirty-seven, with the addition of the following:

2nd oboe:	J. Macarthy
2nd bassoon:	G. Vinter
2nd E Flat clarinet:	A. R. Johnson
3rd horn:	A. Barnes
4th horn:	H. Hamilton
1st trumpet:	H. Wild
2nd trumpet:	H. Haman
2nd bass:	J. W. D. Constable ⁷

The band's first concert was given on September 29, 1927.⁸ For the most part, it was strictly a studio group and did very few public concerts; the band remained substantially intact until it was disbanded on March 18, 1943.⁹ Gilbert Vinter tried to resurrect the group in the 1950's, but could not duplicate the outstanding performance level established by B. Walton O'Donnell.

Thus, when Holst was invited to compose for the band, he must have known of the group's potential from early broadcasts. He responded very quickly to the offer:

St. Paul's Girls' School
Brook Green, Hammersmith, W6
Dec. 5, 1927

Dear Mr. Millar Craig,

I should be delighted to write a piece for military band. I suggest that, if it suits you equally well, we will leave the form of the piece until later as I might wish to write something in more than one movement. Of course, if you have any particular reason for asking for a one-movement piece, I should be delighted to fall in with your wishes. If there is no immediate hurry, I would like to postpone writing this piece and first arrange one of Bach's Organ Fugues for military band. I have had this at the back of my mind for many years. I should be delighted if the B.B.C. would give the first performance of my arrangement—but, again, if that doesn't meet your wishes, I can easily start early in the New Year on an original composition.

I take this opportunity of thanking the Corporation for all the invitations I have received. . . .

Yours sincerely,
Gustav Holst¹⁰

The arrangement of the Bach Organ fugue was finished within six months and published for both military band and orchestra in 1929, under the title of *Bach's Fugue a la Gigue*.¹¹ It was not the only military band work of this era to precede *Hammersmith*: an incomplete military band version of Holst's brass band work, *A Moorside Suite*, dates from about 1928 and his own hand transcription of the "Marching Song" from *Two Songs without Words*, Op. 22, originally composed for small orchestra in 1906, was completed in 1930.

Holst began work on *Hammersmith* in 1929. He took the project very seriously, although he often jovially referred to it as "Emma Smith."¹² Several of the myriad melodic and developmental sketches bear such sobriquets as "Emma's First Beginning" and "End of Emma."¹³ Holst originally subtitled

his work "Prelude and Fugue" but later changed "Fugue" to "Scherzo."¹³

By September, 1930 Holst had gathered most of the ideas used in the preliminary sketches and, as he had done for so many of his major compositions, organized them into a setting for two pianos. Imogen Holst comments:

Owing to his neuritis he had difficulty in playing the preliminary sketches of his orchestral works on the piano, and for this reason he often wrote the short score of a new work on four staves, so that he could ask his amanuenses to play it to him as a duet for two pianos.¹⁴

Holst was not pleased with the piano's lack of sustaining power and scored the "Lento" portion of this short score for the unlikely combination of two organs. Holst gave the rather humorous title of "Ein Kleines Orgelbühlein" to this extract.¹⁵ This was not the first time that Holst had resorted to this combination of instruments in order to hear sustained harmonies of passages that were still in the preliminary stages of a composition. The seventh movement of *The Planets*, Op. 32, "Neptune," shared a similar preparation.¹⁶

REHEARSALS

Holst, although by 1930 a fully competent and masterful composer, often sought the advice of others in the scoring of certain passages of his compositions. In early October of that year, Holst asked the advice of Adrian Boult on "how to bar my new thing now that it is fully sketched."¹⁷ Holst also sought the opinions of B. Walton O'Donnell, who was slated to conduct the premiere performance of the new work, and sent the following piece of correspondence to him:

Oct 30 [1930]

Dear Mr. O'Donnell

My military band piece is now arranged for two pianos and I would much like you to hear it played and to give me some valuable advice on one or two points before I begin to score it.

My two pianists could play it to you here on Sat. 12-1, Monday 12-1 and 5-6 also Tuesday 5-6. The drawback to Monday is that I should not have time to ask you to lunch with us. If it would suit you better, and if you have a studio with two pianos free at that time, we might manage to come to you on Tuesday 5-6.

Y Sincerely
Gustav Holst¹⁸

After seeking and receiving O'Donnell's advice, Holst turned to his long-time friend and fellow composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. These two composers had been in the practice of reviewing and offering criticism about each other's compositions ever since their student days at the Royal College of Music. James Day, in his book *VAUGHAN WILLIAMS*, comments:

They began their celebrated "field days," on which they would together spend a whole day or part of it, at least once a week, studying and criticizing each other's latest work with a frankness that would have caused offence to acquaintances of less mutual sympathy.¹⁹

Thus it was that the two composers gathered together in Holst's sound-proof music room at St. Paul's Girls' School in the London Borough of Hammersmith on December 12, 1930 for the purpose of trying out the new work. As usual, Vaughan Williams had something to say:

The one thing that I can't yet quite get a hold of is *Hammersmith*—but you are (like your daughter) a realist and you are almost unique in that your stuff sounds better when it is played on the instrument it was originally intended for.²⁰

Exactly just how long it took Holst to score *Hammersmith* for military band remains a mystery. In a memo to music critic Edwin Evans dated December, 1930, Holst mentions that he intended to send the work to the B.B.C. "tomorrow,"²¹ but as late as March 27, 1931 a memo was sent to him from the B.B.C. begging "to acknowledge receipt of your score "Hammersmith."²² However long it took, the scoring of the work passed through at least one preliminary sketch of the "Prelude," which was named "Emma's First Beginning" by the composer. With the exception of the time signature (4/4), the fragment is strikingly similar to the finished product.²³

By mid-December 1930, there was talk about the possibility of a public concert being given by the B.B.C. Military Band. This would have been a real rarity, for the band was primarily a studio ensemble. The prospect of a public concert interested Holst and he spoke to Boult about it. Boult passed along the word:

Internal Circulating Memo

From: Music Director
To: Mr. Wright
Subject: Military Band Concert

19th December, 1930

In conversation with the possibility of a Military Band public concert, Holst told me to-day he would very much like the work he has written for O'Donnell to be included—as in first performance.

A.C.B.

Please note the above, as the question of a Military Band concert in public has gone as far as receiving the approval in principal of D.P. and now merely awaits detailed estimates which are being got out by Music Executive.

KAW [K.A. Wright]²⁴

22/12/30

Regardless of whether or not he was finished with the scoring of *Hammersmith*, the composer signed an agreement on December 30, 1930 giving the British broadcasting rights to the original (military band) version of the work to the B.B.C.

During the first few months of 1931 Holst spent much time and energy editing and rescoring parts of *Hammersmith*. By this stage in his career he was an absolute perfectionist and knew exactly what he wanted, even if it meant withdrawing a work several times after submitting it.

In March of that same year, Boult wrote the following to Holst:

You know that it is necessary that we should keep our eyes open for new work here, as well as old things. If "Emma" would be suitable or there is any chance of your giving us some other new work as well as I need hardly say how delighted I should be if I were allowed to take charge of it.²⁵

It is not known whether or not Holst had thought about transcribing *Hammersmith* for orchestra prior to this, but Boult's words certainly inspired him. On March 13 he replied:

I shall send Emma to you first. I'd rather you and the B.B.C. orchestra introduced her than anyone else.

If you'd like my two pianists to come and play her to you as they did to O'Donnell they'd be proud and happy to do so. Or would you like to hear the military band version?²⁶

At this point in time and throughout most of 1931 there were at least three elements which worked against a military band premiere performance of *Hammersmith*: (1) the wait for a public concert by the B.B.C. Military Band, (2) Holst's constant need for perfecting the work, and (3) Boult's offer to perform the work with the B.B.C. Orchestra. Technically speaking, Boult was O'Donnell's boss and he had the authority to decide who should give the work its premiere performance.

Soon after the above exchange between Boult and Holst, the latter sent a revised score to O'Donnell:

Mar. 16, 1931

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

I am sending "Emma" after having revised the score thoroughly. If the parts are already copied, I fear this will give some trouble. Would you like me to come on Friday morning and put in the alterations myself? I have put a pencil ring round all the alterations and additions and a pencil cross in the margin, so that they are easy to spot. They are chiefly matters of phrasing. I shall be away from the 27th until April 13th, and, as I expect you are the more busy than ever just now, I shall hope for the private view to take place either at the end of April or the beginning of May. The orchestral score is now complete. I am sending it to A.C.B. in a few days.

Yours ever,
GH

P.S. I will not come on Friday unless you tell me to (and would rather not as I can ill spare the time).

P.S.2 Yr letter of the 13th has only just arrived. If you settle Emma's private view definitely for the 27th let me know at once and I will delay my departure for France for a day in order to be at Savoy Hill in the morning.²⁷

There was a scheduled try-out of the work set up for March 27th, but, since the band was merely to play the piece in order to check and correct errors in the individual written parts, Holst was advised not to put off his vacation and that

the band would rehearse *Hammersmith* in depth after he returned.²⁸ As it happened, even this run-through was put off until Thursday, April 23rd, at 10:30 a.m. in No. 10 studio.²⁹ Shortly thereafter a private hearing-rehearsal, to which Holst could bring some friends, was set up for May 19th. It was scheduled to last three hours!

Internal Circulating Memo

From: Mr. Herbage
To: Music Director
Mr. K. A. Wright
Mr. Tillet
Mr. Edward Clark
Mr. Hely Hutchinson
Mr. W. W. Thompson
Mr. Lewis
Mr. O'Donnell
Subject: "Hammersmith"—Holst
4th May, 1931

I have just heard from Mr. O'Donnell that he will be trying over the above work at his rehearsal on May 19th from 10.0—1.0 p.m. I am sending round this memo as several members of the Music Programme Committee expressed a wish to hear it.

JH³⁰

Even as this hearing was being projected, Holst was making alterations in the work, as is evidenced in the following letter to O'Donnell:

May 4 [1931]

Dear O'Donnell,

Forgive me for not acknowledging rests of 'Emma' before.

I'd like to bring some friends on May 19 so would you let me know hour and place. I hope Emma won't take up so much time again. If you are able to do it twice may I conduct it one of the times? I fancy it ought to go a little quicker but am not sure.

Y Sincerely

Gustav Holst³¹

How well or how poorly *Hammersmith* fared under Holst's and O'Donnell's direction during that private hearing is not known. It would be the closest thing to a performance of the work that the B.B.C. Military Band would give—at least during the era in which it was composed. If nothing else, this rehearsal at least let the composer hear his own work in its original version.

PREMIERE OF THE ORCHESTRAL VERSION

On September 24, 1931 the two-piano run-through of *Hammersmith* for Adrian Boult finally took place. Boult must have been pleased by the work, because a formal rehearsal for full orchestra was set up for November 16th with Holst in attendance.³²

On November 25, 1931 at Queen's Hall in London, the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Adrian

Boult, gave the premiere performance of the orchestral version of *Hammersmith*.³³ This was not the first Holst premiere for Boult; eleven years earlier he had conducted the first public performance of *The Planets*. Holst provided his own program note for *Hammersmith*:

As far as the work owes anything to outside influences it is the result of living in Hammersmith for thirty-five years on and off and wanting to express my feelings for the place in music; also it is the result of a B.B.C. invitation to write something for their military band; and, just as I was going to start on the work, I read A.P. Herbert's "Water Gypsies."³⁴ There is no programme and no attempt to depict any person or incident. The only two things that I think were in my mind were 1) a district crowded with cockneys which would be overcrowded if it were not for the everlasting good humour of the people concerned, and 2) the background of the river, that was there before the crowd and will be there presumably long after, and which goes on its way largely unnoticed and apparently quite unconcerned.³⁵

Apparently, initial reaction to the work was not very favorable. Imogen Holst comments:

Most of the listeners at the first performance of *Hammersmith* found the river Prelude too slow, too quiet, too monotonous, and—like *Egdon Heath*—too uncomfortable.³⁶

FIRST PREMIERE OF THE MILITARY BAND VERSION

Even after the orchestral premiere of *Hammersmith*, Holst was still not satisfied with the military band version. On the eve of the projected publication of the work (which would not actually materialize for another quarter of a century) Holst was revising the gong entrance.

Almost without exception, 1931 had been a disappointing year for Holst. In addition to the difficulties concerning the performances of *Hammersmith*, he had composed music for a motion picture that was poorly edited and eventually withdrawn, and his *Choral Fantasia*, presently considered by many to be among his better works, was panned by the critics. It is no wonder that when he was offered the position of lecturer in composition at Harvard University for the first six months of 1932, Holst enthusiastically accepted. He also accepted an invitation to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra in a series of three concerts featuring his own works. The American premiere of the orchestral version of *Hammersmith* occurred in one of those January, 1932 concerts.³⁷

Meanwhile, Boosey & Hawkes had decided to publish the military band version of *Hammersmith* and the score and parts were sent to New York. Oddly enough, it was partly because the original version of *Hammersmith* was in the United States the same time Holst was that the composer was contacted by Edwin Franko Goldman about conducting it on April 17, 1932, at the American Bandmasters' Association convention in Washington, D.C. An article in *Musical Progress and Mail* covered the events leading up to the scheduled performance:

This performance was the outcome of a letter from an old English Army bandmaster, Captain R. B. Hayward,

who is at present in Toronto. In a communication to Messrs. Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., he asked if they could recommend new numbers specially written for the military band and as a result of correspondence Mr. Edwin Franko Goldman, that famous American conductor, was successful in arranging matters with Mr. Gustav Holst.³⁸

Holst felt that he should seek permission from the B.B.C. before committing himself and wrote to the corporation. An undated note from Mrs. E. Beckett, Adrian Boult's secretary, to Boult gives B. Walton O'Donnell's views on the matter:

Mr. Boult

Mr. O'Donnell has not done 'Hammersmith' yet. It was at Mr. Holst's special request that he held it up. The idea was to include it in the first public Concert which the Military Band gave. He does not mind Washington doing it first. . . .

E.B.³⁹

Boult then sent the following reply to Holst:

Gustav Holst
Eliot House,
Cambridge
Massachusetts

3rd March, 1932

I was very glad to have your letter of February 10th. Alas the double concerto with Jelly and Adila is not mine to conduct. Leslie Heward is doing it that night, and I am passing on to him the notes you gave me.

About "Hammersmith" and Washington April 17th, please include it if you want to. O'Donnell tells me that he only held it up because he wanted to put it into an important Military Band programme when he gets a public concert, but this is not likely to be yet I am afraid, and now you must go ahead with it in Washington if you wish.

I am so glad you are having such a good time. We are all well here and tremendously busy.

A.C.B.⁴⁰

In an Internal Circulating Memo to Mrs. Beckett, O'Donnell, and Mr. Thompson, K. A. Wright sums up the general feeling present at the B.B.C. at the time:

Confirming my conversation with you last week, we felt there was no point in withholding the first performance of the above *Hammersmith* from the Washington Festival on April 17th. On the contrary it may be of more value to us and so far as our own performance is concerned we cannot hope to do it in public until the public Concerts of our Military Band in the Hall at Broadcasting House are definitely arranged whenever this may be.⁴¹

Two weeks later, Holst wrote the following in a letter to Boult:

I think it is very generous of you and O'Donnell to let me have the first military band performance of "Hammersmith" in America, and I thank you most heartily.⁴²

The concert featuring *Hammersmith* was to be no ordinary affair. Many new compositions by outstanding composers would be featured. Edwin Franko Goldman comments:

For our convention this year Ottorino Respighi, Italy's most famous composer, has written a special number, as has Gustav Holst, one of England's greatest composers. Among other new band compositions are a Tone Poem by Nathaniel Shilkret, and other new band compositions by Peter Buys, George C. Gault, Maurice Arnold, Capt. Charles O'Neill, of Quebec, Lieut. J. J. Gagnier of Montreal, myself, and others. . . .

Formerly, we had to depend solely upon transcriptions and arrangements made from orchestral scores. We are now building a repertoire of our own. In fact, in some instances the tables have been turned. Gustav Holst wrote *Hammersmith* for band—and then transcribed it for orchestra. It was performed by the Boston Symphony recently. Nathaniel Shilkret also wrote his tone poem *Skyward* for band and then arranged it for orchestra. There are ten new numbers, specially composed for band which are having their first hearing at our final concert. We are making progress—and I might say—making band history.⁴³

John Philip Sousa was scheduled to have conducted his suite *Leaves from My Notebook*, but died during March of that year. As a result, there was a pilgrimage to Sousa's grave in the afternoon of April 17, 1932, the final day of the convention. The concert held that evening was set up as a tribute to Sousa and in addition to the regularly scheduled works, featured four of his marches plus Victor Grabel's arrangement of Chopin's *Funeral March*.⁴⁴

As it turned out, at the last minute Holst had to cancel his part on the program. After a lecture given by him at the Haydn Bicentennial celebration at the Library of Congress on March 26, Holst had a severe attack of haemorrhagic gastritis and was rushed back to Boston where he was hospitalized.⁴⁵ He makes reference to his ulcer in a letter to his friend W. G. Whittaker:

It upset some of my plans—I escaped a Conference of Music Supervisors in Cincinnati and was unable to conduct *Hammersmith* at Washington and had to abandon a trip through Canada from Vancouver Island to Quebec. And after leaving the hospital I developed a severe attack of homesickness.⁴⁶

Holst, who had just been made an honorary member of the American Bandmasters' Association, felt disappointed about the situation. The following note sent by the composer to Victor Grabel appeared in the association's 1932 annual:

Dear sir:

Thank you for your letter and for the honor you do me, which I have much pleasure in accepting.

It was a deep disappointment to me that I was unable to come to the Washington concert.

Yours sincerely,
Gustav Holst⁴⁷

The United States Marine Band was the organization chosen to premiere *Hammersmith*. Respighi's *Huntingtower Ballad* and Nathaniel Shilkret's *Skyward* were also performed by the band. According to the *Marine Band Library Log*, Holst's work was rehearsed often. Frank Byrne, current librarian for the Marine Band, comments:

Our belief is that Holst sent the original score and perhaps parts as well here for performance with the Marine Band. The first record I can find of a rehearsal of the work is March 17, 1932. . . . The piece was also rehearsed March 24 and 25. On March 29 a registered package was sent from the band to Holst at Harvard. . . . The contents of the package are unknown. Whether it may have been an extra score, the original score or another piece altogether is unknown. In any case, the band still had a set of parts because the rehearsals continued on March 30, April, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15 and 16. The parts played at the performance are still in our library. It was common practice at that time for the players in the band to copy their own parts when music needed to be reproduced. Our set has parts signed and dated March 20-23 so it is possible the original score may have been in the package.⁴⁸

This investigator is of the opinion that Holst's original score was indeed in the package sent from the Marine Band to Holst on March 29, because in addition to the original parts, the Marine Band Library has a complete two-staff condensed score to *Hammersmith*. This score was copied out by Donald Dixon, then librarian of the band; it is dated 1932. Thus, it is quite possible that this score could have been the one used for the first performance of the military band version of the work.

Although "Conducted by the Composer" is mentioned under the *Hammersmith* entry on the April 17, 1932 program (see footnote 17), the work was actually conducted by Captain Taylor Branson, who had been leader of the Marine Band since 1927 and a member of the Music and Instrumentation Committee of the A.B.A.⁴⁹ The entry made for Sunday, April 17, 1932 by Capt. Branson in the *Marine Band Leader's Log* verifies the performance:

Constitution Hall 8:30 p.m. concert sponsored by District Chapter, The American Red Cross and given by the American Bandmasters' Association. Marine, Navy, and Army bands. Special Full Dress Uniform. Marine Band played following compositions:

"Hammersmith," Holst. Leader conducting.
"Huntington Towers," Respighi. Leader conducting.
Shilkret's "Skyward," Shilkret conducting.
Grabel's arrangement "Chopin's Funeral March," Grabel conducting.

About 50 men played in composite Band. . . . Marine Band was magnificent in every way. Star attraction.⁵⁰

This world premiere performance of the original version of *Hammersmith* may not have been the last performance given the work by the Marine Band in 1932. The entry for Friday, April 22, 1932 in the *Marine Band Library Log* indicates that the work was rehearsed that day. It may have also been included in the band's radio broadcast for that day, al-

though evidence from radio station airchecks and the log itself is inconclusive:

Band Rehearsal	
Prog (today)	
Hammersmith	
Concert band WMAL-WJSV	
Sec. Leader	
Marine Corps Institute	3
Orpheus	9 ¹ / ₂
Canoeing	4 ¹ / ₂
Spring Maid	8
Boot Days—N.T.S. San	
Diego	2 ¹ / ₂
Persian Market	5
Drigo Serenade	3 ¹ / ₂
Caprice Espagnol	4
Rem. Mendelssohn	13 ¹ / ₂
White House ⁵¹	

A package containing *Ballata* (undoubtedly the original name of Respighi's *Huntingtower Ballad*) and *Hammersmith* was then sent from the Marine Band to Edwin Franko Goldman. Subsequent events concerning the package remain a mystery. Two years later, on May 25, 1934, Gustav Holst died, without hearing the original version of *Hammersmith* performed in concert.

SECOND PREMIERE OF THE MILITARY BAND VERSION

It appears that *Hammersmith* was not again performed in its original version for another twenty years. The publication of the work by Boosey & Hawkes, advertised as early as April, 1932, did not materialize as planned.⁵² That the work would be so totally ignored, especially after such an auspicious premiere, is almost incomprehensible. Furthermore, *Hammersmith* was mentioned in at least six publications, among them the score to Percy Grainger's *Lincolnshire Posy*, during the following two decades.⁵³

Perhaps *Hammersmith's* time had not yet arrived. In one respect Holst had composed a mature work for a medium which had not yet matured enough to do it justice. The band

that Holst composed the work for was an exception to the rule. Although many fine college and professional bands in existence at that time were performing the finest literature available to them, there was apparently little interest in what many have felt to have been an obscure, modern (for 1930) manuscript of incomplete instrumentation.

Robert B. Cantrick's "world premiere" of *Hammersmith* on April 14, 1954 with the symphonic section of the Kiltie Band of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is well-documented.⁵⁴ Band directors everywhere owe Cantrick a great deal for his enthusiasm and commitment in bringing Holst's dormant masterpiece to the attention of the field. He cannot be faulted for having claimed his performance to be the world premiere; a letter from David W. Adams, general manager of the New York branch of Boosey & Hawkes, contained the following information:

Have just received a reply from London categorically stating that the performance you intend to give of the military band version will be in actual fact the world premiere.⁵⁵

Cantrick worked on *Hammersmith* from a photostat copy of Holst's original score supplied by Boosey & Hawkes; the manuscript score itself has been lost or misplaced for decades.⁵⁶ For the 1954 performance, Cantrick supplemented Holst's instrumentation with additional parts for lower woodwinds found in American bands but not regularly used by the British. These parts merely doubled others; the conductor did not needlessly "compose" any parts which would have taken away from the effectiveness of Holst's original scoring.⁵⁷

For all practical purposes, the Carnegie Institute performance might as well have been the world premiere, for it was a direct result of this performance and Cantrick's subsequent article, "Hammersmith" and the Two Worlds of Gustav Holst,⁵⁸ that the military band version of the work was finally published in 1956 by Boosey & Hawkes—nearly a quarter of a century after it was first announced. Two years later, Frederick Fennell, who has done a significant amount of research himself on *Hammersmith*, conducted the first commercial recording of the military band version of the work.⁵⁹

Thus it was that *Hammersmith: A Prelude and Scherzo*, op. 52, one of English composer Gustav Holst's finest compositions, would finally make its way into the college band repertoire—only a quarter of a century late.

Notes

¹Letter from D. Millar Craig to Gustav Holst, December 3, 1927. This and all other correspondence between Holst and personnel at the British Broadcasting Corporation are from the B.B.C. Written Archives Centre, Caversham, Reading, England, #910: Gustav Theodore Holst, Files #1 and #2.

²This band was the first to broadcast the *Second Suite in F*, on March 23, 1924.

³*The Sunday Mail* (London), 10 January 1943.

⁴Letter received from Alan Hindmarch, 25 March 1983.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶WAC, B.B.C. Wireless Military Band file. This reflects the minimum instrumentation required for performing *Hammersmith*.

⁷*Ibid.* This additional instrumentation, with the exception of the second bass, listed by Holst as being optional in regard to *Hammersmith*.

⁸Hindmarch, *loc. cit.*

⁹*The Sunday Mail*, 10 January 1943.

¹⁰WAC Letter from Gustav Holst to D. Millar Craig, 5 December 1927.

¹¹"Fugue in G Major" (BWV 577) from "Preludes, Fugues, Fantasies and Other Pieces" in Book III, Part I of the *Organ Works: Bachgesellschaft*, XXXVIII, p. 111.

¹²Letter received from Imogen Holst, 29 April 1980.

¹³Royal College of Music, Parry Room MS 4545.

¹⁴Imogen Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music* (London: Faber Music Ltd., 1974), p. ix.

¹⁵Royal College of Music, Parry Room MS 4754.

¹⁶I. Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue* . . . , p. 121.

¹⁷WAC letter from Gustav Holst to Adrian Boult, 3 October 1930.

¹⁸Letter from Gustav Holst to B. Walton O'Donnell, 30 October [1930].

¹⁹James Day, *Vaughan Williams* 2nd ed., London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1975), p. 13.

²⁰Ursula Vaughan Williams (ed.) and Imogen Holst (ed.), *Heirs and Rebels: Letters to Each Other and Occasional Writings On Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 75.

²¹I. Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue* . . . , p. 181.

²²Letter from O. Mace to Gustav Holst, 27 March 1931, WAC.

²³British Library, Add MS 57904.

²⁴WAC Internal Circulating Memo from Adrian Boult to K. A. Wright, 19 December 1930.

²⁵Letter from Adrian Boult to Gustav Holst, 11 March 1931.

²⁶WAC Letter from Gustav Holst to Adrian Boult, 13 March 1931.

²⁷WAC letter from Gustav Holst to B. Walton O'Donnell, 16 March 1931.

²⁸WAC Letter from O. Mace (for B. Walton O'Donnell) to Gustav Holst, 17 March 1931.

²⁹WAC letter from B. Walton O'Donnell to Gustav Holst, 20 April 1931.

³⁰WAC Internal Circulating Memo from Julian Herbage to Music Programme Committee of the B.B. C., 4 May 1931.

³¹WAC letter from Gustav Holst to B. Walton O'Donnell, 4 May [1931].

³²WAC letter from Gustav Holst to Adrian Boult, 19 October 1931.

³³I. Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue* . . . , p. 182.

³⁴Sir Alan Patrick Herbert, a Barrister-at-law and one-time president of the Inland Waterways Association, had a great interest in the River Thames and the life which surrounded it. *The Water Gypsies* is centered around the lives of the barge workers.

³⁵I. Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue* . . . , p. 182.

³⁶Imogen Holst, *Holst* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974), p. 78.

³⁷Quaintance Eaton, "Gustav Holst, On American Visit, Approves Our Ways," *Musical America*, LII, No. 3 (February 10, 1932), p. 6.

³⁸*Musical Progress and Mail*, April, 1932.

³⁹WAC memo from E. Beckett to Adrian Boult, no date.

⁴⁰WAC letter from Adrian Boult to Gustav Holst, 3 March 1932.

⁴¹WAC Internal Circulating Memo from K.A. Wright to E. Beckett, 7 March 1932.

⁴²WAC letter from Gustav Holst to Adrian Boult, 17 March 1932.

⁴³*American Bandmasters' Association Annual*, 1932, "Address of President," p. 5.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, Program, Constitution Hall, Washington D.C., April 17, 1932, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁵Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography* (2nd ed., rev.; London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 156-157.

⁴⁶Letter from Gustav Holst to W. G. Whittaker, 9 July 1932, quoted in Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: Letters to W. G. Whittaker* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1974), p. 117.

⁴⁷Letter from Gustav Holst to Victor Grabel, quoted in *American Bandmasters' Association Annual*, 1932, p. 12.

⁴⁸Letter received from Frank Byrne, 6 June 1980. Copies of the *Marine Band Library Log*, *Marine Band Leaders' Log*, Donald Dixon's condensed score to Gustav Holst's *Hammersmith*, and postal receipts were included in this mailing.

⁴⁹*American Bandmasters' Association Annual*, 1932, p. 20.

⁵⁰*Marine Band Leaders' Log*, April 17, 1932, Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C.

⁵¹Letter received from Edwin M. Matthias, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, 27 September 1983. Through correspondence from Keith Knight of the B.B.C., 30 September 1983, it was learned that no recording of the work as rehearsed by the B.B.C. Military Band exists either.

⁵²*Musical Progress and Mail*, April, 1932.

⁵³Grainger's notes on his score to *Lincolnshire Posy* are quite extensive. The other five published sources include Imogen Holst: *Gustav Holst: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938) and *The Music of Gustav Holst* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), Richard Franko Goldman: *The Band's Music* (New York: Pitman, 1938) and *The Concert Band* (New York: Rinehart, 1946), and "New Works Produced by the Goldman Band" from a letter from Edwin Franko Goldman to Frederick Fennell, 10 December 1949, and circulated by the Manuscript Music Committee, CBDNA.

⁵⁴All of Cantrick's correspondence with Imogen Holst and Boosey & Hawkes prior to the 1956 publication of the work has been graciously made available on the microfilm containing the original autograph score of the military band version of *Hammersmith*. This microfilm is available through the E. H. Butler Library, State University College at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York.

⁵⁵Letter, David W. Adams to Robert B. Cantrick, 26 March 1954.

⁵⁶Letter received from Robert B. Cantrick, 27 September 1983.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸*Music and Letters*, July 1956, Vol. 37, No. 3, pps. 211-220.

⁵⁹See Frederick Fennell, "Gustav Holst's *Hammersmith*," *The Instrumentalist*, XXXI, No. 10 (May, 1977), pp. 52-59, reprinted in Frederick Fennell, *Basic Band Repertory: British Band Classics from the Conductor's Point of View* (Evanston, IL: The Instrumentalist Co., 1980). Although all material pertaining to the April 17, 1932 premiere of *Hammersmith* by the Marine Band was gained first-hand by this author, credit for the discovery of the event must unquestionably be given to Mr. Fennell.

ANNUAL CONCERT OF AMERICAN BANDMASTERS' ASSOCIATION

Concert Given Under the Auspices of the District of Columbia Chapter
of the American Red Cross

In Tribute to the Memory of John Philip Sousa

CONSTITUTION HALL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sunday Evening, April 17th, 1932, at 8:30

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Fantasie—"Midshipmen" (New)
United States Navy Band
Conducted by the Composer
Bandmaster, Hagerstown, Md., Municipal Band | Peter Buys |
| 2. Bolero
United States Navy Band
Conducted by Lieut. Charles Benter
Bandmaster, United States Navy Band | Maurice Ravel |
| 3. A Chinese Festival (New)
United States Navy Band
Conducted by Austin A. Harding
Director of Bands, University of Illinois | Maurice Arnold |
| 4. Concert Overture in F Minor (New)
United States Army Band
Conducted by the Composer
Bandmaster, The Citadel, Quebec, Canada | Capt. Charles O'Neill |
| 5. Tone Poem—"The Wind in the Leafless Maple" (New)
United States Army Band
Conducted by the Composer
Bandmaster, Grenadier Guards Band, Montreal, Canada | Lieut. J. J. Gagnier |
| 6. Overture—"Spiritual Rivers" (New)
United States Army Band
Conducted by Capt. Wm. J. Stannard
Bandmaster, United States Army Band | George C. Gault |
| 7. Prelude and Scherzo "Hammersmith" (New)
United States Marine Band
Conducted by the Composer <i>Capt. Taylor Branson</i> | Gustav Holst |
| 8. Huntingtower Ballad (New)
United States Marine Band
Conducted by Capt. Taylor Branson
Bandmaster, United States Marine Band | Ottorino Respighi |
| 9. Presentation of the American Bandmasters' Association Medal
Speaker—Honorable William N. Doak, Secretary of Labor | |
| 10. Tone Poem—"Skyward" (New)
United States Marine Band
Conducted by the Composer | Nathaniel Shilkret |

11. Funeral March
 United States Marine Band
 Conducted by Victor J. Grabel
 Bandmaster, Chicago Concert Band
 Frederick Chopin
 Arrangement by Victor Jean Grabel
12. U.S. Field Artillery March
 Massed Bands
 Conducted by Walter M. Smith
 Bandmaster, Smith's Band, Boston, Mass.
 John Philip Sousa
13. Washington Post March
 Massed Bands
 Conducted by Frank Simon
 Bandmaster, Armco Concert Band, Middletown, O.
 John Philip Sousa
14. El Captain March
 Massed Bands
 Conducted by Herbert L. Clarke
 Bandmaster, Long Beach, Calif., Municipal Band
 John Philip Sousa
15. The Stars and Stripes Forever
 Massed Bands
 Conducted by Arthur Pryor
 Bandmaster, Pryor's Band
 John Philip Sousa
16. "Sabbath Evening in Camp" (New)
 Massed Bands
 Conducted by the Composer
 Bandmaster, Toronto Concert Band
 Capt. R. B. Hayward
17. Grand March—"University" (New)
 Massed Bands
 Conducted by the Composer
 Bandmaster, The Goldman Band
 Edwin Franko Goldman