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Introduction

Biographical Sketch

At the age of seventy-eight, Ethel Mary Smyth (22 April 1858–8 May 1944) published this bit of literary self-portraiture, which conveys not only a few interesting facts about her life but also a palpable sense of her personality:

Ah! it's a queer business! Because I have conducted my own operas and love sheepdogs; because I generally dress in tweeds, and sometimes, at winter afternoon concerts, have even conducted in them; because I was a militant suffragette and seized a chance of beating time to "The March of the Women" from the window of my cell in Holloway Prison with a tooth-brush; because I have written books, spoken speeches, broadcast, and don't always make sure that my hat is on straight; for these and other equally pertinent reasons, in a certain sense I am well known.¹

Smyth was indeed well known in her time, and for many reasons. Her life, merely summarized here, is extensively documented.² Born in London into an upper-middle-class family, Smyth was educated at home and at a boarding school. Her education included music (piano and harmony), and, at age nineteen, though her

father objected to her career choice, she went to Leipzig, where she studied composition at the conservatory under Carl Reinecke, Salomon Jadassohn, and Louis Maas. Dissatisfied with the quality of instruction, Smyth left the conservatory after a year, but she continued her studies in harmony and counterpoint in Leipzig, privately, with Heinrich von Herzogenberg. The continent was her base for a full decade, during which time some of her early compositions gained public performances, and she came into acquaintance with several musical luminaries, including Clara Schumann, Brahms, Joseph Joachim, and Tchaikovsky. She visited her family in England regularly and resettled there prior to her English debut on 26 April 1890. Her career was divided among various pursuits: composition, of course, and conducting; the women's suffrage movement; the right of women to participate in professional musical activities such as orchestral playing; and various literary endeavors, notably several volumes of memoirs. Her compositional activities were hampered after the First World War by advancing deafness. Her oeuvre ranges from songs and chamber music to orchestral music, operas, and a mass for choir and orchestra.

During her life, Smyth was awarded honorary doctorates by Durham University (1910) and Oxford University (1926); Durham University now holds an important archive of her papers and manuscripts. She was made DBE (Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, the female equivalent of knighthood) in 1922.³ At her death both *The Musical Times* and *Music and Letters* published obituaries.⁴ Among other tributes on the centennial of her birth was a broadcast memoir by Thomas Beecham.⁵

A feature of Smyth's life that has commanded some attention, in her memoirs as well as in biographies and studies by others, is her many intense relationships, sometimes connected with specific compositions. Most of these relationships were with other women—she was fairly open about this—but she also maintained a long-term affair with Harry Brewster, who acted variously as muse, lover, and librettist. Indeed, the subject of

1. Ethel Smyth, *As Time Went On . . .* (London: Longmans, 1936), 288. This passage is widely quoted, perhaps most strikingly at the opening of Rachel Lewis, "Ethel Smyth and the Emergence of the Lesbian Composer," in *Sapphists and Sexologists: Histories of Sexualities*, vol. 2, ed. Sonja Tiernan and Mary McAuliffe (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 208–26.

2. Biographies and studies include Louise Collis, *Impetuous Heart: The Story of Ethel Smyth* (London: W. Kimber, 1984); Ronald Crichton, ed., *The Memoirs of Ethel Smyth*, abridged and introduced by Ronald Crichton with a list of works by Jory Bennett (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1987); *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Smyth, Dame Ethel (Mary)" (pp. 591–94), by Sophie Fuller; Yves Knockaert, "Ethel Smyth, poging tot een onbevooroordeeld portret," *Vlaanderen* 49 (2006): 315–19; Sulamith Sparre, "Man sagt, ich sei ein Egoist. Ich bin eine Kämpferin": Dame Ethel Mary Smyth (1858–1944): *Komponistin, Dirigentin, Schrifstellerin, Suffragette* (Lich: Verlag Edition AV, 2010); Christopher St John, *Ethel Smyth: A Biography* (London: Longmans, 1959); Julien Vermeulen and Gerda Vanfleteren, "Drie Britse Dames: Ethel Smyth, Virginia Woolf en Barbara Hepworth," *Vlaanderen* 49 (2006): 305. Smyth's six volumes of memoirs are, chronologically, *Impressions That Remained: Memoirs*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, 1919); *Streaks of Life* (London: Longmans, 1921; enlarged 2nd ed., 1922); *A Final Burning of Boats, Etc.* (London: Longmans, 1928); *Female Pipings in Eden* (Edinburgh: P. Davies, 1933; rev. 2nd ed., 1934); *As Time Went On . . .* (London: Longmans, 1936); *What Happened Next* (London: Longmans, 1940).

3. This order had been created by King George V only five years previously.

4. *Music and Letters* 25 (1944): 191–94 (by Kathleen Dale); *The Musical Times* 85 (1944): 207–12 (by William McNaught).

5. Thomas Beecham, "Dame Ethel Smyth (1858–1944)," broadcast on the BBC home service on 20 April 1958; transcript (Beecham delivered the address "extempore, without any kind of script") published in *The Musical Times* 99 (1958): 363–65.

I

Allegro non troppo

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet 1, 2
in A/B \flat

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn 1, 2
in F

Trumpet 1, 2
in D

Timpani

Allegro non troppo

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

II

§

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet 1, 2
in A

Bassoon 1, 2

Horn 1, 2
in G

Timpani
in G-D

Violin 1

Violin 2
p

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

Vn. 1
p

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

III

Allegretto grazioso

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet 1, 2 in B \flat

Bassoon 1, 2

Allegretto grazioso

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

Fl. 1, 2

Cl. 1, 2 in B \flat

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

IV

Finale: Allegro con brio

Flute 1
ff

Flute 2 (Piccolo)
ff

Oboe 1, 2
ff
in A

Clarinet 1, 2
in A/B \flat
ff

Bassoon 1, 2
ff

Horn 1, 2
in F
ff

Horn 3
in F
ff

Trumpet 1, 2
in D/C
ff

Timpani
in D-A
ff

Violin 1
ff

Violin 2
ff

Viola
ff

Violoncello
ff

Contrabass
ff

Critical Report

Sources

Source A. The autograph full score is now known only from a photocopy made at Universal Edition, London, in August 1993, and now at the Royal College of Music, London; it had not been assigned a shelfmark as of August 2019. Elizabeth Wood, apparently the last scholar to examine the original autograph score at first hand (at Universal Edition, London, on 6 July 1989), very kindly gave me a copy of her notes, which have been invaluable in resolving some of the uncertainties of the photocopy.¹ The score comprises a Universal Edition cover page followed by the original title page and music, all in oblong format with sixteen staves per page. The paper bears no publisher's mark; in the absence of the original, nothing can be said about the size of the paper, nor can it be examined for watermarks. The movements are gathered and, apparently, bound separately, paginated in the top outside corner (apparently by Smyth), with each movement beginning with "1"; the original title page and its verso are unnumbered. References, when needed, will use the comprehensive pagination added to the facsimile edition.

Source FC. The fair copy of the full score is in the hand of a copyist and signed on the title page by Smyth. It is held by London, The British Library, under shelfmark Mus. MS 242. The score comprises seventy-two folios in oblong format, 270 × 354 mm, with fourteen staves per page.² Folios 1–52 are on paper of unknown origin; folios 53–60 and 69–71 are on paper with the imprint "C. A. KLEMM. E. N^o. 4."; and folios 61–68 and 72 are on paper of unknown origin. The entire manuscript is foliated in pencil; each movement is paginated separately, mostly in pencil but with a few pages at the beginning of movement 1 in ink.

Source ST. Autograph score of the string trio in D major held by Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections, Dame Ethel Smyth Music Manuscripts, reference code GB-003-SMY (contained in a single box that also includes autograph scores and parts for the piano trio in D minor and the string quartet

in C minor). This work has been published: Ethel Smyth, *Streichtrio op. 6 für Violine, Viola und Violoncello*, ed. Bettina Marquardt (Kassel: Furore, 2009); there is also a facsimile edition of the composer's autograph score: Ethel Smyth, *String Trio in D op. 6: Faksimile der Handschrift Smyth MSS 1 Durham University Library*, ed. Bettina Marquardt (Kassel: Furore, 2010).

Comments on Sources

The primary source for this edition is source A. Source FC has the authenticity of the composer's signature, but, as a copy made from the autograph, it has little to offer; nonetheless, it is cited a few times in the critical notes where the copyist succeeded in correcting errors or otherwise helped to resolve issues in the original.

The parts used for the premiere performance are now completely untraceable; their value would depend largely on whether they were prepared from source A or from source FC, and whether they contain contemporaneous corrections or emendations entered by the performers, and neither of those factors is now knowable.

Movements 3 and 4 of the serenade are reworkings of movements 2 and 4 of the string trio. Given the differences in scoring and the extensive recomposition and expansion of many passages, the trio is of limited value for present purposes; when cited, it is specifically identified. It does, however, shed helpful light on tempo relationships within the movements involved.

Finally, there is also a score of the serenade, with parts, prepared by Odaline de la Martínez.³ This is not a critical edition and is not taken into account here, except in cases of problematic readings of annotations entered into the score by Smyth and August Manns, who conducted the premiere.

Editorial Methods

In source A (to which these methods refer unless otherwise noted), Smyth identified the first movement as "Nr I" (on the title page, added in pencil); for the second and third movements, she probably was the one to write "Nr 2" and "Nr 3," respectively (in colored pencil or crayon); and she wrote "Finale" at the start of the fourth

1. Private correspondence, 11 November 2019 and 18–19 February 2020.

2. The measurements are as given by the British Library; my measurements are 267 × 345 mm.

3. This material is available at <http://www.lorelt.co.uk/sheetmusic>. The website provides no bibliographic information.