

# RAILWAYS IN MUSIC

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Music is a social and artistic activity of the first importance. Railways, in the modern sense, have been with us for some 170 years and for maybe half that time they were THE major form of long-haul transportation by land. They have now perhaps lost their primacy in that respect but they remain important. It is hardly surprising that railways and music should have been associated for practically all of that 170-odd years.

One or two families have had connection with both. Sir Alexander Butterworth, of the North Eastern Railway, was the father of the composer George Butterworth killed on the Western Front in 1916 aged 31 and still remembered as a minor master of the "English folk song" school. Sir Ralph Wedgwood of the LNER was related to Ralph Vaughan Williams. The father of the tenor Peter Pears was a railwayman. And there are doubtless other examples.

Dozens, indeed hundreds (I mention well over 600) of musical compositions have featured the railway and this is basically what this paper is about. But as a kind of overture it may be worth recalling that railwaymen have themselves made music, in the same way that throughout most of recorded history working men in all industries have done so.

If I focus my observations in this direction on my home town of Doncaster, this is not to imply that similar activities did not take place on railways other than the Great Northern and later on the LNER, especially at Crewe and Swindon (respectively LNWR (LMS) and GWR. Doncaster's GNR "Plant" works opened in 1853, it is generally understood, though my researches suggest that parts of it were operational by the last two months of 1852. At Christmas 1852 a Doncaster Loco Band played hymns around the town; this had been formed in June that year and £50 spent on instruments. It celebrated its anniversary on 28 June 1853 with a supper at which 66 persons were present. On 5 June 1854 it accompanied the Plant schoolchildren on an excursion to Askern Spa on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Plant Schools. This band soon faded out; its organisation was informal and there was no regular bandmaster or musical director. However in 1856 a fresh start was made with a Doncaster Plant Works Band, again a brass ensemble, that was conducted by George Birkinshaw (father of a similarly named leading cornet player with the world famous Black Dyke Mills Band and celebrated in William Rimmer's march *Viva Birkinshaw!*). This band won many prizes in competitions between 1859 and 1861, some of them held in Doncaster. The Band played concerts, too, in Doncaster, in and out of doors, not infrequently featuring compositions, mainly marches and dances, and arrangements by Birkinshaw himself.

When the Plant Works formed its own Volunteer Company in 1859 following a war scare with France, its band became a "military band" in one sense, as it was re-styled Doncaster Volunteer Band, although in musical formation it remained a brass band. Birkinshaw left Doncaster in 1865 but the Volunteer Band subsequently flourished under bandmasters J. Redfern and S. Wilson and a Mr Salmon until the volunteers were absorbed into the 5th KOYLI under the Haldane reforms in 1908.

By 1860 there existed a GNR Glee and Madrigal Society based at King's Cross, and active in charity and other concerts. Mexborough, near Doncaster, had a railway works (Manchester-Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, later Great Central) also called the Plant and this, too, had a band, or bands, there was one in the 1860s, re-founded in the 1880s and still extant in the nineties. The Great Northern Railway locomotive engineer between 1895 and 1911, H V Ivatt had two daughters who were musical and who appeared in amateur concerts in Doncaster.

Over the past century and half, if not for longer, brass bands have been one of the three ways in which working men have traditionally made music. The other two were hand-bell ringing and male voice choirs. Doncaster's railwaymen have indulged in both this century. The choir and ringers - called "The Clangers" (they did not drop many!) - both existed until quite recently, but the choir's great days were during the LNER era between the wars, when at times it combined with other LNER choirs in a major concert, sometimes held at Doncaster Corn Exchange, when it was THE concert of the town's musical calendar, at other times in London. Occasionally Leslie Woodgate, Director of Music to the LNER and a big figure in broadcast music, conducted them. Woodgate composed music for the LNER, as did St Paul's Cathedral organist, Stanley Marchant (1883-1949), Chudley Candish, himself a railwayman and the composer of the popular choral number *The Song of the Jolly Roger*, and Dr. Coleman of the Peterborough LNER Society. (In much the same way Sebastian Meyer, Assistant General Manager of the Hull & Barnsley wrote *A Holiday Reminiscence* for that Railway's Choral Association in 1887 and, perhaps, rather more notably, the cantata for men's voices *Men on the Line* was composed for the Great Eastern Railway by Hubert Bath, later to earn fame with his *Cornish Rhapsody*).

The Doncaster LNER Musical Society's conductors during the period 1925-40 were H.A. Bennett (1925-30) and Percy Saunders (1930-40), both of them successively organists of Doncaster Parish Church and both later to become cathedral organists. It was Bennett who insisted that the Doncaster Society alone among the LNER's provincial societies, formed an orchestra in addition to a male voice choir. This was to become the town's leading orchestral ensemble during the 1930s. Under Saunders, who also composed, though not for Doncaster's

railwaymen, the LNER Society diversified into amateur operatics, basically Gilbert & Sullivan.

The Doncaster Railway Society revived only briefly after the Second War, in around 1950, under one John Craven. Since around 1910 Doncaster has had no specifically railway brass band except for a Doncaster NUR Band active around 1928 and still existing there years later as it was engaged to play in Doncaster's Elmfield Park on 16 August 1931 when its conductor was stated to be one J.W. Ellis. but notable bands with railway connections elsewhere in England have included Leeds Railway Foundry, which flourished in the 1850s, Horwich Railwaymen's Institute, winners of the British Open Championship in 1915 and 1916, and York Railway Institute which I remember hearing in the early 1970s and which is still active and winning prizes in 2001 (a York Golden Rail Band, originally a "junior" band to YRI, is now a separtae organization to all intents and purposes).

Bands, whether specifically railway ones or not, were prominent in the early days of railways. One was usually present, often to play Handel's *See the Conquering Hero*, when a line was opened and one often accompanied early railway excursions, including Thomas Cook's famous outing in 1840 from Loughborough to Leicester and even Sunday School "days out".

But now to the music inspired by the railway. Initially, and indeed at most periods since, this has been mostly popular in character, Broadside ballads, like *Newcastle and Carlisle Railway* (ca. 1835) and *Battle on the Shields Railway* (1839) were sung to folk tunes. Possibly the earliest title I have unearthed so far is the rather similar ballad *Johnny Green's Trip to 'Owdam to see the Liverpool Railway* which is, of course, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway opened in 1830. In addition the navvies who built the railways sang their own songs, as had the canal navvies (a few of the latter's songs survive).

In 1831 Doncaster's Theatre Royal staged a pantomime with music entitled *The Rail-Road* (composer unknown). A *Characteristic Rondo* for piano solo, also c.1830, conveys the characteristic rhythm of the steam blast; the sheet music cover carries a picture of the Sankey Viaduct on the Liverpool & Manchester Railway and the music apparently represents a journey on that line. By contrast William Wilkes' *Quadrille* of around 1840 has no especial railway colour in the music despite the cover picture, of Wolverton Viaduct on the London & Birmingham Railway (later LNWR).

One very early title, a song performed at the Vauxhall Gardens in circa 1830, is *Railways Now Are All the Go With Steam, Steam, Steam*. Rather later is a *Railway Gallop* (sic), by an unspecified composer, which enlivened a concert at Ellis's Music Hall, Worksop on 24 February 1847 and which, according to the

Doncaster Gazette of 5 March 1847, was "a highly amusing piece played in a masterly style by the orchestra which elicited considerable applause". On 31 May that same year the New Orleans Ethiopian Serenaders came to Doncaster's Theatre Royal, concluding their show with "the celebrated Railroad Overture". (Railroad to us usually implies a Transatlantic piece, but, as we have seen, this was not always the case and as late as 1890 Doncaster heard sung in concert *A Rival Railroad Ride*, composed by one King, forename unknown. This may possibly have been an American song but the artists this time were British.)

James Briton's *Railway Mania*, a music-hall type song, appeared appropriately in 1846, at the height of the Mania of the 1840s.

Since 1830, then, an enormous number of railway pieces have flowed from composers' pens on both sides of the Atlantic, both songs and - mainly light or popular - instrumental or orchestral pieces.

First, here are a few (there were surely many more) instrumental movements from America: *The Rail Road* and *The Carrolton March*, both dedicated to the Baltimore and Ohio RR; Gustave A. Scott, *Pacific Railroad Polka* (1862), Frank Dibble, *Peninsular Railway [not Railroad?] March* (1871), E. Mack, *Pullman Car (Sunbeams)* (1872), Charles J. Richter, *Railroad Galop* (1872), the anonymous *Snowed-in Galop* (1872), C. Drumheller, *Iron Mountain Railroad* (1873), Simon A. Hassler, *Railroad Galop* (1874), J.N. Goodman, *CB&Q [Chicago, Burlington & Quincy] Railroad* (1876), M.B. Clark, *Lightning Pleasure Train* (1877), Clara Hickman, *The Junction Railway* (1877), John Joseph, *New York Elevated Railroad Galop* (1879), E. Eberhard, *Franklin Avenue Railroad Galop* (1883), Clarence J. Sargent, *Central Vermont Railroad Grand March* (1883), *The 2.19 Blues* (early 1900s), J. Hoyt Toler, *Up Broadway* (1900), Harry J. Lincoln's march two-step *Sunset Limited* (1910), *Watching the Trains Go Out* (1912) and the medley one-step (or turkey trot) *Pullman Porters on Parade* (1914).

The early American railroad-flavoured songs are nowadays largely forgotten, but here is a group of titles: *The Shuffling Chant*, *Tie Tamping Chant* and *Steel Laying Holler*, all of them with a railway construction flavour; F.L. Martyn, *Standing on the Platform* (1870); Henry C. Work [best known for his *Grandfather's Clock*], *Continental Railroad Chorus*, *Crossing the Grand Sierras*, for soloists, chorus and piano duet (1870); George D. Chester, *The Railroad Accident at Richmond Switch, Rhode Island* (1873); T. Stephenson, *The Gospel Railroad* (1873); a chorus by one Diethelm, *The Patent Railway Punch* (1874); Sam Devere's *Riding on the Elevated Railroad* (1878) and T.B. Kelly's similarly titled song of 1879; W.S. Mullaly, *The Railroad Conductors* (1881); Gussie Davis's *In the Baggage-coach Ahead* (1895); Max Drefu, *At the Sound of the Signal Bell* (1898); Lucy Schief, *Does This Railroad Lead to Heaven?* (1902);

Charlie Tillman, *The Railroad Song* (1906); Ed Bimbert, *The Railroad Rag* (1911); Bess Rudisill *The Eight O'Clock Rush*; Leo Edwards, *There's Lots of Stations on my Railroad Track* (1912), Clay Smith, *Ragtime Engineer*(1912) and, last but not least, Irving Berlin's *San Francisco Bound*.

Moving on a little, we may now list a number of American song titles, many of which come from generally later periods, some of these were later incorporated into films and not a few became known in instrumental versions (there were frequently several different versions by different bands) or were conceived for instruments from the start. There are the very popular *She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain* and the possibly even more famous and often revived *Casey Jones* which may date from 1909. This was often parodied, most notably as *Casey Jones - Union Scab*, revived quite recently by Pete Seeger. To these we may add *On the 5.15* (1914), *On the 5.45*, *I've Been Working on a Railroad*, *I'm Leaving on the Blue River Train*, *Alabamy Bound* associated with Al Jolson but later revived, *Zach*, *The Mormon Engineer*; *Railroad Bill*; *Railroad Cars are Coming*, W.C. Hardy's *The Yellow Dog Rag*, and *Trains Are Comin'*; Billy Ternant's *I Like Riding on a Choo-Choo*, the rather satirical 2.15 by none other than the "March King" John Philip Sousa, *The Train is a-coming*, Blind Lemon Jefferson's *Sunshine Special* (1927); Henry Marshall's *Oh Mr Railroad Man, Won't You Take Me back to Alabama?* (1914), *The Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe* (1945), *Canadian Pacific*; *Union Train*, *Last Train to San Fernando* (1957) associated with Johnny Duncan, *Shuffle Off to Buffalo*, *Flag That Train to Alabam'*; *Drill Ye Tanners Drill*, *Timber Line* (1931), *Down by the Railroad*, Wallace Chambers' *Hold Dat Train!* (1919), *The Runaway Train* (1932), *Two Tickets to Georgia* (1933) , George Gershwin's *Waiting for the Train* and another Al Jolson, *Toot Toot Tootsie*.

Of the instrumental pieces with train titles perhaps the leader is Glenn Miller with *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, *Tuxedo Junction*, *Sleepy Town Train* and *Slow Freight*, all of them well known, especially the first two, in big band orchestrations, though other musicians tried them out before Miller worked his magic on them and one or two have appeared in other versions, even one for recorder consort, appropriately so because massed recorders do sound a bit like an American train whistle!

Moving on from Glenn Miller, other titles are *Choo-Choo Serenade* by B.P. Godinho from 1951, *Little Rootie Tootie* and *Locomotive* (1954), both associated with the jazz pianist Thelonious Monk, Trixie Smith's *Railroad Blues*, *freight Train Blues* (1938), Bessie Smith's *Chicago Band Blues* (1923) and *TN&O Blues* and many other blues numbers (see below). *The Children Met the Train* by Alec Wilder (1907-80), *Choo Choo Choo Boogie*, *Silver Streak* by Henry Mancini, *Beaver Junction*, *Super-Chef*, the Count Basie number *Rails* and *9.20 Special*, the very popular Duke Ellington standards *Choo Choo* (1924) Fats Waller and Frankie Trumbauer composed quite different *Choo-Choos* and in addition

there were *Choo Choo Blues* (1922) and Eric Winstone's *Choo Choo Special*), *Daybreak Express*, *Across the Track Blues* (1940), *Build the Railroad* (1950), *Honky Tonky Train Blues*, originally dating from 1927, by Meade Lux Lewis (and also revived by Joe Loss in 1940), *Happy Go Lucky Local Train* (1953) and *Track 360 (Trains)* (1958), Stan Kenton's *Lonesome Train*, Oscar Petersen's *Night Train*, *Steel Rail Blues* and *Take the A Train*, Louis Armstrong's *Hobo You Can't Ride This Train*, Burt Bacharach's *Trains and Boats and Planes* (used as music for BBC TV's 'Model World') from the 1960s and *Six Five Special* (Bob Cort).

Jazz and blues seem well suited to railway music, although, as we shall see, other idioms seem to lie naturally in a railway situation. Blues titles not so far mentioned include *Black Train Blues*, *Narrow Gauge Blues*, *Railroad Police Blues*, associated with Sleepy John Estes, *Railroad Station Blues* (T Bone Walker), *The Brakeman's Blues*, a Jimmy Rogers title, *Train Time Blues* (1947), *11.29 Blues*, *Express Train Blues* (1947), *Panama Limited Blues* (1925), *Mail Train Blues* (1926), *I Hate That Train Called the M&O* (1934), *Mr Brakeman Let me Ride You* (1927), *He Caught the B&O* (1939), and *Cannon Ball* (1942). There are many more!

Other titles in the jazz idioms are Budd Powell's *Un Poco Loco* from 1951, Elton Dean's *Trains for Tooting* (1995), Wynton Marsalis's recent jazz suite in twelve movements *Big Train* and - an equally recent British title - *Ribblehead Rattle* by the bassist and bandleader Ben Crosland, who lives in the Yorkshire Dales, which was inspired by the Ribbleshead Viaduct on the Settle & Carlisle line.

Many American railroad tunes were revived in the 1950s by Lonnie Donegan as skiffle was likewise suited to railway rhythms: examples are *Rock Island Line* originally from 1934, *Midnight Special* (1926), *Railroad Bill*, *Wabash Cannonball*, Nancy Whiskey's *Freight Train* and *Wreck of the Old '97*. Another favourite skiffle number was *California Zephyr* from around 1956. Pop has also jumped on the railway (or "railroad") bandwagon with numbers like the seminal *Mystery Train* (Elvis Presley, 1957), *The Man Who Waved at Trains* (The Soft Machine, 1975), *Last Train to Clarksville* from the Monkees and *Last Train to London* from the Electric Light Orchestra. Many modern pop titles include the word 'train' or 'express' in them. In the 1980s the Englishman Robert Fripp brought out pieces like *Train* (1984) and *Intergalactic Boogie Express*, presumably a very updated train.

Other British jazz/swing/dance band and pop numbers we may mention are *The Blue Train* aired by many British bands in 1927 among them Debroy Somers, Ronnie Munro and the Kit Band, the Henry Hall number *Santa Claus Express*, Joe Loss's *When Your Train Has Gone* and *Night Train*, *This is the Way the Puff-Puff Goes* (1928), *there's a Body on the Line* (Jack Payne, 1935), *The 7.15 to Dreamland Morning Train* (1944), *Takin' the Train Out* (1945), recorded for Regal

Zonophone but apparently not issued, played by Teddy Foster and his band with vocals by Betty Kent, Jack Hylton's *Choo-Choo* based on Trumbauer's (see above), Ted Heath's *Night Train to Scotland*, *Streamline Street* from the Six Swingers, the 1960s hit *Doing the Loco-Motion* and the well-remembered Beatles' hit *Ticket to Ride* which I also know in a brass band version by Alan Fernie. The Pasadenas' *Riding On A Train* reached the Top Twenty in September 1988. Doubtless there will be more to come in pop's future years.

We pass now to consider railway "folk" music, using the term in its widest sense. The recently deceased (1999) "Boxcar Willie" (Lecil Travis Morton) revived the great days of the American steam railways with many songs of which we can exemplify *Daddy was a Railroad Man* and *I Love the Sound of a Whistle*. From Woody Guthrie (1912-67) comes *This Train is Bound for Glory*, *End of the Line*, *The Little Black Train* and *Walking Down That Railroad*. *Night Train to Memphis* (1946) was a Country and Western number; possibly *Wheels a'Rolling* was also, but all I know of it is that it was the official song of 1948 Chicago Railroad Fair. Other titles we may mention included *Waiting for a Train* (John Denver), *Midnight Train*, *Ghost Train*, *Big Black Train*, *The Golden Rocket*, *Desperados*, *Waiting for a Train*, *Georgia on a Fast Train* (Johnny Cash), *The Great Nashville Railroad Disaster* and *Orange Blossom Special* (also a Johnny Cash title).

Occasionally a classical composer took up a traditional railway title. *Casey Jones* was set again by the American serious composer Roy Harris in his *Railroad Men's Ballad* for male voice chorus and orchestra (Harris's orchestral piece *Accelerations* dating from about the same period may also have had a railway inspiration.)

Then there are negro spirituals, several of which contain railway imagery such as *Give Me a Ticket to Heaven* (by Denham Harrison), *Movin'*, *The Gospel Train*, *Zion Train*, *Hear My Train A'Coming*, *Funeral Train a'Comin'*, *Black Diamond Express to Hell*, *Death's Black Train is Coming* and, rather less celebrated, *This Train*, apparently a blues number from about 1939, which was given a new lease of life a few years ago when it was atmospherically arranged for the South Yorkshire Police Choir by its then conductor the late Peter Sumner (1929-2000).

"Railroad" at one time meant a figurative escape route for fleeing slaves, as in George Allen's *The Underground Rail Car* (1854) and *Underground Railroad Moved* (1853).

Moody and Sankey's hymn tunes included at least one railway one, *The Ninety and Nine*. Britain, too, has its "railway folk" songs but Dave Goulder's *Green All the Way* is more conveniently discussed later.

Now for examples of railway interest from American musical comedy: *Honeymoon Express*, perhaps the earliest train musical, from 1913, *When The Midnight Choo-Choo leaves For Alabam'*, was incorporated by Irving Berlin in *Easter Parade*; *O, the Train is at the Station* comes from George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*; the opening scene of *The Music Man* by Meredith Wilson, which takes place in a railway carriage; *Whizzin' Away Along the Track* from *Carmen Jones*, the 1950 version of Bizet's *Carmen* and sung by Dorothy Dandridge and *Sitting Pretty* (1924) with music by Jerome Kern and words by P.G. Wodehouse and actually first produced on the London stage, whose overture, entitled *Journey Southward*, represents a New York-Florida train journey complete with train noises and rhythms and, at one point, a representation of a Transatlantic train whistle.

The title song of the Doris Day film musical *Lullaby of Broadway* (1951) alludes to a (presumably New York) "subway train" and we may also include here the song hit *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, as that was used in the 1930 Hollywood film *Monte Carlo* in which it was sung in a railway compartment with train effects added in the orchestra. Scenes in several American musical comedies are set at railway stations; we shall return to these shortly, after listing railway allusions in British and other non-American musical comedies.

On these it is a question where to start. Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas have several fascinating railway mentions, but as Sullivan was a classical composer we will leave them for the moment and begin our survey mainly in the 20th Century. However there are some early Spanish *zarzuelas* which are railway flavoured; *El Tren de Escala* (1854), the one act *Un Viajo al Vapor* (1856) and, also one act, *Via Libre* (1893) plus *Los Sobrinos del Capitán Grant* (1887) by Manuel Francis Caballero which includes a train crash. And Jimmy Glover's curtain-raiser of 1882 *Ten Minutes for Refreshment* had a colonel loitering in a railway waiting-room disguised as a porter just to see how his actress former sweetheart is faring. In 1925 Henri Christiné, the French operetta composer, brought out a tuneful operetta *P-L-M* (standing for the Paris, Lyon and Méditerranée railway), and in 1929, also French, Maurice Yvain's *Kadubec* included a song *Si J'Étais Chef de la Gare* (*If I Were Stationmaster*). Robert Stolz wrote the music for *The Blue Train*, a musical produced in England in 1927. Ivor Novello's spectacular effort *The Crest of the Wave* (1937) features a train smash in its story line; Leo Fall's even earlier *The Girl in the Train*, originally entitled *The Divorcee*, from 1908, turns on an incident in a Paris-Nice express. Going back further still, the operetta *Prisoner at the Bar* (1878) with music by Fred Musgrave is again set in a railway refreshment room and is jocularly described as an "opera buffet"!

From more recent times there is *Skimblehanks the Railway Cat* from Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1981 musical *Cats*, based on T.S. Eliot's 'Practical Cats' and Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express* (1984) with roller-skaters representing trains is also a

candidate for this paragraph (though not Sir Edward Elgar's much earlier (1915) musical play of the same title as the "express" there is a train of thought). Peter Greenwell's 1955 musical *Twenty Minutes South* is enclosed by the choruses *Eight Twenty-Seven* and *Five Twenty-Seven*, references to commuter trains in opposite directions. Lionel Bart's *Blitz* (1962) includes scenes set in a representation of Bank Underground which was pressed into service as an air-raid shelter. Intriguingly there is the solo with chorus *Train to Johannesburg*, from a musical *Lost in the Stars*, set in post Second World War South Africa, a number underlining the differing aspirations and thoughts of segregated whites and blacks travelling by the same train.

Underground railways are not forgotten. *Merry Merry*, a musical comedy of 1929 with music by the then popular writing and composing duo Jack Waller and Joseph Tunbridge, included an opening scene in a London Tube station. *The Subway Express*, a song written by Jerome Kern for Kerker's musical *Fascinating Flora* (1907) was retitled *Bakerloo* (The Subway Express) when printed in London, to cash in on the then recent opening of the Bakerloo underground line. And other "railway musicals" included: *Meet Me Victoria* (1944, music by Noel Gay) whose hero is a railway porter and which includes a song entitled *You're a Nice Little Baggage* (its substantial London run was interrupted by the V1s); *Swing Along* which had a good run in 1936-37 with music by Martin Broones and including a scene in the Blue Train; *Happy Holiday* based on Arnold Ridley's celebrated play 'The Ghost Train' (1954, music by George Posford); *The Station Master's Daughter* (1968, music by the Australian-born Charles Zwar); *Bakerloo to Paradise* (1969, music by Geoffrey Martino); *Listen for the Trains, Love* (1970, but set in the 1940s, with music by Alex Glasgow and book by Stan Barstow) which earned a modest success at the Sheffield Playhouse; *Brief Encounter on the Penistone Line* (1998) which had its genesis on Sheffield-Huddersfield trains and *Joan of Kent: The British Railway Musical* (1990) focusing on protest against a Channel Tunnel link, both with music by Henry Lewis and *The Railway Children* (1981, music by David Burn and Peter Durrent) which aimed, not very successfully in the event, to cash in on the success of the outstanding feature film we discuss a little later.

Several scenes in musicals British, American and other, have been set at railway stations. Examples are *Merry Merry* (above), *Oklahoma* (film version, 1956), *The Student Prince* (film version 1954), *Oh What a Lovely War* (1969), *The Good Companions* (1933 version, based on J. B. Priestley's novel of 1929 with music by George Posford), *Robert and Elizabeth* (1964, music by Ron Grainer), *Shipyard Sally* (film version, 1939), Cole Porter's *You'll Never Get Rich* (film version, 1961) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964, music by Jerry Bock), but there are, I dare say, others.

British examples of popular railway songs cover a remarkably broad field. Perhaps the most popular of them was George LeBrunn's music-hall ditty *Oh Mr Porter!* from around 1890 and long associated with Marie Lloyd (who also sang the even more suggestive *She'd Never Had Her Ticket Punched Before*) and given fresh life in recent years with a fresh lyric, as the title music of the BBC TV sitcom *Oh Dr Beeching!* (fragmentary incidental music for some of the episode was derived from the same tune with Ray Moore given the credit for this). Also by LeBrunn was another song very popular in Victorian times entitled *The Railway Guard* (at least two other similarly styled songs were also published, notably Alfred Plumpton's *The Railway Guard*, or *The Mail Train to the North*, dedicated to the Chairman and Directors of the LNWR and having an especially amusing lyric); also popular during the later years of the 19th, or the early years of the 20th, Centuries were R. Cobby's *The Railway Porter*, *Railway Porter Dan*, by one Fox, forename unknown, *The Wheeltapper's Song* (1923, by Charles Wolseley, composer of many music-hall songs), a little ditty called *The Level Crossing* and others entitled *Watching the Trains Go Out* (W.H. Hargreaves), *In the Luggage Van*, *I've Never Lost My Last Train Yet*, *There Goes the Train*, *Riding Down From Bangor* (composers unknown), *The Signalman Waiting for the Train* (F. Albert), *On the Railway*, *Daddy's on the Engine*, *Get Upon a Puff Puff*, *Don't Forget the Porter*, *Joe the Railway Porter* (again composers unknown), *Pull Down the Blind*, whose music is credited to one C. MacCarthy, *The Tuppenny Tube* (1900, by H. Pether, referring to what is now the Central Line), *A Trip to Blackpool* by Felix Godard also from c.1900, *A Kiss in the Railway Train* by Warwick Williams, *Jessie the Belle at the Bar* (the bar is the station buffet), *Waiting For The Signal* (G.W. Hunt), *Johnny the Engine Driver* (also by G.W. Hunt and dated c.1867), *O Blow the Scenery on the Railway* (1910, F.W. Leigh and G. Arthur), *The Midnight Train* (1895, B. Scott and A.J. Mills), *The Young Man on the Railway* (W.H. Brinkworth), Harry Clifton's *The Royal Belle and Railway Guard* of 1923 and William S. Robinson's *The 11.69 Express* described as a monologue (rather than a song) when performed in Doncaster in 1907. Most of these would be music-hall, rather than drawing-room songs. *The Great Semaphore Song: There's Danger on the Line* by G.P. Norman refers, so some have said, to the Great Northern Railway's adoption of "somersault" signals following the Abbotts Ripton disaster of 1876, although the song has been dated two decades before that.

As we have seen already, railway songs in the British Isles were at times based on traditional or popular tunes, examples being *Paddy on the Railroad*, from Ireland, and *The Ballad of John Axon*. The latter, in memory of a train driver who died in the course of duty, dates from as recently as 1957 and we have jumped ahead chronologically. Reverting to 'composed' popular songs, we mention, from the inter-war period and after *Sunny South Sam*, the tune being a foxtrot by Will Haines and Leo Bliss, the lyric derived from a figure well-known from Southern Railway posters of the time, *He Missed His Train Again*, *My Cutie's Due at Two-*

to-*Two Today, Piccadilly Circus*, the Alma Cogan hit *The Middle of the House* and *Ain't it a Shame*, a success for The Commuters. The popular Cockney song *Underneath the Arches* clearly relates to a railway viaduct as it includes the words "I hear the trains rattling above". Mervyn, Lord Horder is normally associated with more classical compositions but his song *British Rail* is of the music-hall type, written long after the music-hall had become history.

Many will remember *Finchley Central* from 1969 and the lament *Dear Old Stalybridge Station* from the 1970s, nostalgic songs both. The Beeching closures of the sixties and seventies provided more nostalgic material, for example the majority of the set of twelve very enjoyable folk-style songs sung and recorded by Brett Stevens, himself a one-time railway employee, and composed by Dave Goulder, which were collectively titled *Green All the Way*; a few of them are amusing, notably *Pinwherry Dip*, but most are tinged with sadness. But surely the most famous song associated with railway closures is *The Slow Train*, lyrics by Michael Flanders, music by Donald Swann:-

*No more will I go to Blandford Forum and Mortenhoe  
On the slow train from Midsomer Norton and Munby Road  
No churns, no porter, no cat on a seat  
At Chorlton-cum-Hardy or Chester-le-Street  
We won't be meeting you  
On the slow train ...*

The list of railway songs seems never ending. There is at least one celebrating the Great Train Robbery in 1963. We have not yet mentioned those numbers associated with Ken Colyer in the mid 1950s, *Down Bound Train* and *Streamline Train*. Nor George Formby's *Wigan Boat Express*. Nor *Harbur's Return*, a hit for the Harbur Brimstone Band in 1957, *Down Home Special* (Bo Diddley), *Box Car Blues* (from the 1950s), *Ride That Train* (Leon Jarvis), *Midnight Train Georgia* (Gladys Knight, 1970) and Junior Parker and Sam Phillips' 1953 hit and only a passing *Mystery Train*, made famous by Elvis Presley slightly later as we have mentioned previously. Many of these titles are American but most earned popularity on this side of the Atlantic. Bob Dylan is worth a special mention for his many railway songs, among them *Train a' Travelling*, *Freight Train Blues*, the very popular *Slow Train* (not of course the same song as Flanders and Swann's), *It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry* and *Walking Down the Line. I'm a Train*, from 1968, by Albert Hammond and Mike Hazlewood, was much later arranged for the King's Singers. Bob Woods, himself a railroad fireman, has written many songs including *The Night We Stole the Last Steam Engine*.

Of many French railway songs we may quote Victor Toutal's *Le CAE du PLM* (1910), Lucien Boyer's *Vive l'Express de Normandie* (1911) and the anonymous *Il est content le chef de gare* dating from 1912. From Ireland there is

Percy French's lyric *Are Ye Right There Michael?* Inspired by the West Clare Railway, set to music by one W.H. Collisson and published by Pigott. Mexico can boast a wealth of railway songs. In early days songs were inspired by specific railway events. We have quoted a few, here is another, from 1852, celebrating a temperance excursion from Camborne to Hayle, in Cornwall, which rejoiced in this rather corny refrain:

*Happy Camborne, happy Camborne  
Where the railway is so near  
And the engine shows how water  
Can accomplish more than beer.*

We must hope that the tune outshone the words. Nowadays railway songs are more backward-looking; during the 1960s a musical documentary about North Staffordshire Railway, which ceased to exist in 1923, entitled (what else?) *The Knotty* was produced in Stoke-on-Trent.

The once-popular form of the monologue, with piano accompaniment, throws up apart from the *1169 Express* previously mentioned, at least two titles for us: *How I Drove the Special*, with music by the ballad composer Cuthbert Clarke and *Signalman Sam*, music by Harry Weston.

We will return to songs in connection with art, rather than popular songs, but for the time being let us look again at instrumental railway imaginations. Among those composed by British 19th Century writers we see, from as early as the 1840s, *The Express Train Galop* (which may possibly be the one of that title by the Austrian composer Kalkbrenner, but I would not rule out there being more than one galop with that title which was certainly a popular one in British ballrooms of the 1860s) and *The Excursion Train Galop* (composer unknown, but it could be Fred Musgrave, of whom more in a moment), the cover of which shows the excursionists packed like sardines into open trucks belonging to the South Eastern Railway with the wind blowing the smoke from the locomotive around them and plucking off at least one passenger's hat!

Rather later, during the 1860s, came two galops by Charles Coote senior, a prolific purveyor of Victorian dance music, *The Mail Train Galop* and, called after Charles Dickens' short story of 1866, *Mugby Junction*, both of them popular in the ballrooms of the day, as were Charles d'Albert's *Express Galop*, *The Railway Whistle Galop* (G. Richardson), *The Railway Quadrilles* by one Hallwood, *The Signal Polka* composed by George Lee and published in Sheffield where Lee held a position as a church organist, the galop *Paris in 10 1/2 Hours* (by H.W. Hall) and the *Cook's Excursion Galop* by Fred Musgrave, whose sheet music cover depicts Cook's tourists enthusiastically climbing Mount Vesuvius heedless of the volcano erupting just above. (Incidentally, the popular song *Funiculi, Funicula* celebrates

the opening of the funicular railway up Vesuvius and I have come across a mention in 1881 of a song entitled *Cook's Excursionists* by one J. Hillier). Musgrave, incidentally, ran a travelling theatre company which visited Doncaster in 1879 and composed music for its productions.

A Doncaster Mansion House Ball programme of 1856 included an *Express Galop*, probably Charles d'Albert's, then very new and featuring the rhythm of the steam blast and having an evocative cover showing a train crossing a viaduct, and also a *Dover Express Galop*, whose composer was also not stated and is otherwise not known to me. From a list of dances played at a later Doncaster Mansion House Ball in 1865 I noticed a polka entitled *Great Eastern*, again by the prolific d'Albert, but it is not quite clear whether this title alludes to the railway company, formed by amalgamation in 1862, or to Brunel's great ship which was then still very much afloat: probably the latter, as the laying of the Transatlantic telegraph cable by that ship had caught the public's imagination at that time. And we still have not exhausted the Victorian railway dances: there were *Express Train*, by the Sheffield Military Band, choral and orchestral conductor Samuel Suckley junior and, dating from the 1870s, *The Electric Telegraph Polka*, which was popular in a brass band arrangement by Henry Round, and possibly even Coote's galop *No Thoroughfare*. The two latter were both from the 1860s as were *Railway Galop* and *Railroad* (sic) *Quadrilles* the composers of which remain unknown to me, but several titles were probably used several times over, as we have seen happening with songs such as *The Railway Guard* and *The Railway Porter*.

To my knowledge none of these gems are, or ever were, recorded, though they could be, as piano copies, at least, survive of many of these mid-Victorian dances; but a number of similar dance movements from other countries at that period have fared much better in that respect. The earliest of them may well be the *Arrival Waltz* (1829) by the Viennese composer Josef Lanner. Most famous are the various contributions by the Viennese Strausses. Johann Strauss the father, who died in 1849, wrote the *Eisenbahn Lust Walzer* ("*Railway Delight Waltz*") in 1836, before any railway was ever open in Austria. His later *Carnival Quadrille* of 1847 was composed for a ball organised by the Kaiser Ferdinand Nordbahn (an early Austrian railway company). The next generation of the family were able to use the new railways increasingly to travel on for their concert tours and unsurprisingly all paid tribute to them. Johann Strauss the younger, who had a curiously morbid dislike of train travel but whose first major engagement was by a railway company in Russia, composed *Vergnugungszug* ("*Excursion Train Polka*") for a ball of the Association of Industrial Societies in Vienna's Redoutensaal Ballroom: his waltz *Reise Abenteuer* ("*Travel Adventures*") is probably based on an eventful railway journey in Russia; his *Spirals*, another waltz was composed for a ball of the Vienna Railway Engineers in 1858; and the popular *Accelerations* waltz was surely inspired by a locomotive gathering speed. His brother Josef Strauss's polka française *Greetings to Munich* commemorated the opening of the Vienna-Munich

railway in 1860. Eduard Strauss, the youngest brother of that generation, seemed to be particularly keen on railways as he produced the polkas *Bahn Frei!* ("Line Clear"), *Mit Dampf* ("With Steam") and *Tour und Retour* ("Return Ticket") and the waltzes *Glockensignal* ("Bell Signals") and *Lustfahrten* ("Pleasure Journey"), the latter having a locomotive on the front cover of the sheet music copy. Other Viennese light music composers besides Lanner and the Strausses wrote railway dance music: Joseph Labitzky, who produced *Three Railway Polkas* and *Prague and Vienna Railway Polkas* in 1844 plus a tribute to the Thames Tunnel in 1843; Josef Gung'l, whose *Locomotive Galopp* appeared in 1838 and his *Railway Steam Galop*, expressing the steam blast rhythm, in 1849 (this enjoyed considerable popularity in Britain); Philipp Fahrbach and, later in the 19th Century, Michael Ziehrer, whose polka *Night Swallows* was originally called *Ready in the Rear* after the guard's "Right Away" signal and who also brought out a polka *schnell Vergnugungszugler* ("Excursion Tour").

Continental railway music was not, of course, confined to Austria. I would love to hear of Italian railway music of this or any period. It may well be that all western European countries contributed something. Scandinavian musicians in particular made much of their railways. Two Marco Polo CDs of the 1990s include examples from Sweden (*Jernvags Galopp* ["Railway Galop"] by Jean Mayer, which marked the completion of the Stockholm-Gothenburg line, and *Greetings from Sweden to Norway*, a waltz by the German-born Carl Gottfried Grahl, celebrating the opening of the Oslo-Stockholm railway); Finland (*Jernban Galop* ["Railway Galop"] by Frans Hoyer, which hailed Finland's first railway in 1862) and Denmark (the very popular *Copenhagen Steam Railway Galop* of 1847 by Hans Christian Lumbye, 1810-74, the Danish answer to the Strausses - indeed all these Scandinavian dances owe something to Viennese example - and who by this dance marked the opening of the first railway in Denmark and Niels Gade's *Zugvogel*, a piano piece of 1857. Jules Deneufue's Cantata for the Opening of Mons Station (Belgium); in Holland J B van Bree wrote a *Waltz of the Haarlem Railway* about the same time. In Spain Hipolito Godois published a whole book of dances, galops and polkas marking a journey *De Madrid a Aranjuez*. From Mexico there were the Schottische, *El Ferrocarril* by S. Contla and a piano piece *La Locomotiva* by one M Morales.

Important classical composers also found inspiration from the railway, although their music is fairly often still quite light-hearted, probably because characteristic railway rhythms suggest a dance or at least rhythmic music and light in touch. One of the earliest, if not quite THE earliest of these was Hector Berlioz, whose *Chant des Chemins de Fer* ("Song of the Railways") was composed for the opening of the French Chemins de Fer du Nord in 1846. The poetry he set seems pretty dire, in translation at least:-

*"Brightly dawns the day of feasting, the day of joy and laurel crowns. The laurels are ready for you workers, the laurels are ready for you. You soldiers of peace, now you have your triumph, now you have your glory for all your fine work."*

It might sound less banal in the original French, but Berlioz's music for this hardly challenges in quality the *Grande Messe des Morts* or *Les Troyens*. Another early French railway piece, *Le Chemin de Fer* (1844) is a piano solo of fiendish difficulty by Charles Alkan. Of British classical exponents, George Macfarren, later Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, composed in 1865 a partsong, or "glee", entitled *Song of the Railroads* (yes, railroads). Arthur Sullivan fancied himself as a "serious" composer, but he is best remembered for his operettas to the words of W.S. Gilbert, some of which contain railway references. *The Lord Chancellor's Nightmare Song* in *Iolanthe* (1882) alludes to Sloane Square and South Kensington stations on the Metropolitan District Railway. *The Mikado's* diatribe (1885) which prescribes punishments to fit the crime announces that:

*"The idiot who in railway carriages scribbles on window panes,  
We only suffer to ride on a buffer in Parliamentary trains."*

And *Thespis*, the first G. & S. (1871), whose music is, sadly, almost entirely lost, has the title character sing a cautionary song about an egalitarian railway chairman:

*"Each Christmas Day he gave each stoker  
A silver shovel and a golden poker,  
He'd button-hole flowers for the ticket sorters  
And rich bath-buns for the outside porters,  
He'd mount the clerks on his first-class hunters,  
And he built little villas for the roadside shunters,  
And if any were fond of pigeon shooting,  
He'd ask them down to his place at Tooting..."*

This song was apparently accompanied by a railway bell, a whistle and an instrument imitating a train in motion (probably two wooden blocks covered in sandpaper). It has been said that the chairman in question was a skit on the Duke of Sutherland. George Grossmith created the comic roles in most of the Gilbert & Sullivan operettas and he also wrote and composed many humorous songs; one of them, *The Muddle Puddle Porter* has been recorded quite recently.

Rossini, an operatic composer in his early adult years, produced little in his later period except songs and short piano pieces. The latter included a suite entitled *Un Petit Train de Plaisir Comico-Imitatif* which we may translate as "A Little Excursion Train" and whose climax is a graphic movement entitled *Dreadful Collision!* As one might gather from that, Rossini, like Johann Strauss the

Younger, had a dislike of trains; but several other well-known composers (and executants like the conductor Georg Solti and the violinist Sarasate) have loved them. Dvorák most of all, of course and apparently Bela Bartók. Paul Hindemith (1899-1963), the prolific German composer, was a keen model railway enthusiast.

Two British composer-conductors, Eugene Goossens and Constant Lambert, were knowledgeable about railways. Edmund Rubbra worked on the railway. Watching goods shunting apparently inspired Herbert Howells to write his carol *A Spotless Rose* (I have been unable to detect a connection between the two). Peter Warlock, one of the finest English song composers of the 20th century, contributed an article to *The Locomotive Magazine* in 1912, when he was 18, under his real name Philip Heseltine. Glancing recently through a book about 20th century British cathedral organists I discovered that no fewer than ten of them then active actually owned up to an interest in railways; Sir Walter Alcock, not among the ten, had an extensive model railway layout when he was Organist of Salisbury Cathedral 1916-47. Sir Edward Elgar, Britain's premier composer, has had his name conferred first on a GWR "Castle" loco, then on a diesel engine and finally on an electric freight locomotive. Elgar lived for much of his life in Great Western territory, in Worcester, Malvern and Hereford and greatly enjoyed train travel, not least when visiting Dr Charles Buck, his friend in Settle (Yorks, West Riding). The popular operatic soprano Lesley Garrett is very proud to have a Channel Tunnel shuttle train named after her (her father was once a signalman).

The American jazz composer and saxophonist Gerry Mulligan (1927-96) formed in 1972 a big band called *The Age of Steam* which reflected his passion for locomotives (an album similarly called had, as its first track, *K4 Pacific* after the LNER loco class \*see footnote amendment 2) and in 1988 he even composed a piece for the Glasgow Festival called *Flying Scotsman*: not a unique musical title, as we shall see.

The Australian-born Percy Grainger (1882-1961) was another who was fascinated by trains and two of his compositions reflect this. *Arrival Platform Humlet*, the first movement of a suite for piano (later orchestrated) entitled *In a Nutshell* is, to quote the composer, "the sort of tune you hum excitedly to yourself while awaiting a loved one's arrival at a railway station". *Train Music*, dating from 1900, is a fragment, thirty-five seconds long on the CD I have (other versions take slightly longer) of a projected quite extended movement that Grainger barely began and suggested by the irregular rhythm of a rickety train travelling between Genoa and San Remo in Northern Italy on which he once travelled.

Grainger was a superb pianist; not less so in his own field was Billy Mayerl, who was classically trained and only 57 when he died in 1959 but whose syncopated (and other) genre movements for piano have always enjoyed a certain popularity and are now making a strong comeback. One example of Mayerl's syncopated

pieces is *Railroad Rhythm*, dating from 1938. Another light piano piece, but in march rhythm, is *Crash Collision* dating from 1896, by Scott Joplin, a kind of American counterpart of Mayerl, if earlier in time, which described a staged railway smash which went wrong when the boiler exploded. Also from America, Charles Ives' *From Hanover Square North*, part of his *Orchestral Set No. 2*, is a musical impression of an incident in 1915 at a New York Elevated station. Kurt Weill's *Railroads on Parade* appeared in 1939 as a pageant for the Chicago World fair and is based on American railroad songs. Harry Partch's US Highball is a lengthy (20 mins), highly experimental piece using voices and instruments.

We have now moved well into the 20th Century in this survey of railway "classical" composers and one of the century's most famous railway pieces was *Pacific 231* ("231" is the French way of expressing what we would call the 4-6-2 Pacific locomotive wheel arrangement) by the Swiss-born French composer Arthur Honegger. When *Pacific 231* appeared in 1923 Honegger was reported in a Swiss magazine as saying:

*"I have always had a passionate liking for locomotives; for me they are living things and I love them as others love women or horses. What I have endeavoured to describe in Pacific 231 is not an imitation of the sounds of the locomotive, but the translation into musical terms of the visual impression and the physical sensation of it. It shows the objective contemplation, the tranquil breathing of the machine in repose, the effort to start [and] the progressive gathering of speed ... of a train of 300 tons hurling itself through the night at 120 miles an hour"*

[This is a slight exaggeration for 1923, as it was not until 1938 that "Mallard" touched 126 m.p.h., the all-time record for steam traction].

To portray all that in music, some dissonance is, I suppose, necessary and *Pacific 231* is certainly dissonant. Honegger was clearly quite fascinated by railways, because more than a decade later he penned for the Paris Exhibition of 1937 a piano piece entitled *Scenic Railway*.

A colleague of Honegger's among "Les Six", the prolific Darius Milhaud, composed a ballet for Serge Diaghilev in 1924 entitled *Le Train Bleu* (as we shall see, and indeed have seen, others have been inspired by that Riviera-bound express). A few years later, in 1932, still another French composer, Jacques Ibert, included "*Le Métro*" [the Paris underground] in his *Paris Suite*. A train totally different from *Pacific 231*, musically and in fact, is *The Little Train of the Caipira* which forms part of the suite *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 2* (1930) by the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos who died in 1959. Here we have the same blowing-off of steam and the same slow start and gradual acceleration as in the Honegger piece (and indeed in several others that I allude to in this study), but the cheeky tune is quite different, reminding this listener of an Emmet cartoon,

perhaps. Yet such a train was, if less charismatic than a Pacific-hauled express, essential to the economy of up-country Brazil with its isolated villages and coffee and timber plantations.

The Swedish composer Hilding Rosenberg's orchestral *Voyage to America* earns a place at this point in our survey as it includes a "*Railway Fugue*". Nor should we forget Serge Prokofiev's *Age of Steel* ballet of 1927 because its opening scene represents a bustling railway platform; also by Prokofiev the exuberant "*Departure*" movement of the *Winter Bonfire* suite depicts the setting-out, by train, of a party of boy scouts. Carlos Chavez's roughly contemporary ballet *Caballos de Vapor* ("*Steam Horses*") also claims a mention here (Chavez, 1899-1976, was Mexican). The first movement of the United States composer Samuel Barber's four movement suite for piano solo *Excursions* (1945) represents another Transatlantic railway train. The German Ernst Krenek's *Santa Fe Timetable* (1945), *Ballad of the Railroads* (1944), both orchestral, and (for piano solo) *Streamliner* are all tough listening, even more so than *Pacific 231*. Krenek's opera *Johnny Spielt Auf* (1926) portrays a railway station in grand opera for perhaps the first time and not the last as Hans Werner Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* did so in 1952; another railway flavoured opera in Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* (1976). Russian composers have produced a number a railway titles. Vladimir Mikhailovich Deshevov composed *Rails* for piano solo, again in 1926. Maximilian Steinberg's Fourth Symphony *Turk-Sib* was composed to celebrate the opening of the Turkmenistan Siberia Railway in 1933 and more recently (1974) Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov composed a cantata entitled *Song-Ballad of the BAM Railway Builders*.

The Russian guitarist Nikita Koshkin, still active, has composed much for his instrument, including *Three Railway Stations on One Road*. A French successor to the railway piano solos of Alkan and Honegger is Pierre Schaeffer's *Etudes aux Chemins de Fer* dating from 1948.

Even more recently than any of these is Stephen Oliver's comic mini-opera *Commuting*, set in a London tube train, which contrives to be "modern" in idiom and melodious at the same time; perhaps even the American composer John Adams' orchestral *A Short Ride in a Fast Machine* might be applied to a railway journey. So might the once-popular xylophone solo *On the Track* which sounds, both from its title and from its musical content, like a railway outing, though the music is similar to practically all xylophone solos of a generation or two, however titled. And Wilfred Josephs' *Rail*, from 1967, and described as "a symphonic picture", can also earn a mention. Jim Parker's Concerto for clarinet and strings, composed in around 1994, sports titles for each of its movements; that of the finale is "*A Ticket to the Next Station*". There is even at least one railway flavoured British opera, *Isambard Kingston Brunel*, by Durham-born Will Todd, performed in Bristol (appropriately so and not just because Todd was a Bristol University student) in 1993; an orchestral suite has been extracted from it.

Railway songs are not just popular ones, though even railway "art" songs can be light in character. There is some fine railway poetry and some of it has been set to music by "serious" composers. Edward Thomas' celebrated poem 'Adlestrop' was musically treated by the composer/poet Ivor Gurney. Both Thomas and Gurney were victims of the Great War and both of them passionately loved Gloucestershire, in which county the now-closed Adlestrop station was situated. As a song Gurney's *Adlestrop* is rarely encountered in live performance probably because it appears for the moment to be still unpublished (more recently the poem has been set, again as a solo song though perhaps less ingratiatingly than by Gurney, by Gordon Jacob and by Anthony Payne and by the Preston-based Philip Pacey as a choral song). Incidentally the accompaniment to Payne's setting of *Adlestrop* which was done in two versions one for piano solo plus string quartet most evocatively suggests train sounds. Nor is Frances Cornford's poem *To a Lady Seen from a Train*, set to music by Stanley Wilson. The Irish-born composer Charles Villiers Stanford composed a choral song simply entitled *The Train*. For children James Gallatly wrote *Trains*, no. 5 in a set of *Playtime Songs*; neither this nor the Stanford is, I believe, the same song as *The Train* (composer unspecified) sung by Doncaster children in concert in 1891. Also suited to children were Harold Noble's *Train Ride* which sets popular words by Robert Louis Stevenson ("Faster than fairies, faster than witches..."), Alec Rowley's unison song *From a Railway Station*, Reginald Hunt's unison song of 1977 entitled *The Torbay Puffer* and, from the United States, Ivor Martin's school song for unison voices, dating from 1963, *Steam Train* (by 1963 steam trains had largely disappeared from the States) and Eugène Rocherolle's unison or two/three part song *Little Train* (1969).

Madeleine Dring's John Betjeman setting *Business Girls* alludes to railways in London's Camden Town and John Jefferies's *Ambulance Train*, to words by W.W. Gibson, has particular atmosphere and we may also mention C.W. Orr's *Bahnhofstrasse* (Station Road) to a lyric by James Joyce, but two of the finest examples of railway songs are *Midnight on the Great Western* and *At the Railway Station, Upway* (sic: should be Upwey), which are respectively Nos. 2 and 7 of Benjamin Britten's song sequence to lyrics by Thomas Hardy entitled *Winter Words* (1953). These match to perfection the starkness of Hardy's poetry. *Midnight on the Great Western*, sometimes called *The Journeying Boy* has its piano accompaniment imitate the whistle of the train and, on several occasions, the rattle of the points. In more popular style *Calypso* (1939), one of several cabaret-type songs composed by Britten to words by W.H. Auden, is an amusing piece of "train music", complete with whistle sounds, representing a journey to Grand Central Station, New York.

Britten was involved with railways in films, too. His incidental music for *Night Mail* (1935), a documentary about the GPO, again with words by W.H. Auden, was a landmark in his early development as a composer and in film music generally:

*"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 Beattock, a steady climb  
The gradient's against her but she's on time".*

Britten's music for the slightly later *The Way To The Sea*, again a film to an Auden text, this time about Portsmouth, which celebrated the Waterloo-Portsmouth electrification of the late 1930s, included a waltz with a prominent saxophone part and ended with appropriate "seasidey" jubilation.

There is, of course, plenty of other railway film music. In "silent" days mood music was written to accompany films in general. Two pieces suitable for portraying railways on film were Christopher O'Hare's *Comic Hurry* (1918) and Otto Langey *Galop Hurry* from 1920. Doubtless there were other such movements but the first railway film with its own soundtrack was the British one *The Flying Scotsman* (1929) its music being credited to Idris Lewis and John Reynders, two obscure musical figures if there were any. Apart from that, one of the earliest examples is *Oh Mr Porter!* (1937), credited to Louis Levy, though much of the score was probably written by Jack Beaver. (John Cook was responsible for the music for the TV version on 1990.) Levy also composed - or was credited with - the music for the 1941 screening of *The Ghost Train* and Jack Beaver's film scores, over a hundred of them, included *The Gold Express* (a documentary about "*The Golden Arrow*") in 1955. *Kate Plus Ten* (1935), a Jack Hulbert film, has music by the Polish-born, English-domiciled Allan Gray. Richard Rodney Bennett composed, in 1974, the music for the screen version of Agatha Christie's detective novel *Murder on the Orient Express*: a brilliant score, from which the catchy, frequently recurring, waltz tune has had considerable success in a concert version.

Ron Goodwin did the honours for an earlier Agatha Christie railway film *Murder She Said*, based on her Miss Marple title *4.50 From Paddington* (the point of which is a murder in a train seen from another train travelling parallel to the first one) and indeed for all four of Margaret Rutherford's Miss Marple films. Agatha Christie has also, of course, been adapted for the small screen. The 1920s style theme, by Christopher Gunning for the David Suchet Poirot adaptations, which have included *The ABC Murders* as another railway case and the striking title theme, by Ken Howard and Alan Blaikley for all the Joan Hickson Miss Marple adaptations, which have of course included *4.50 From Paddington*, are among the most memorable of television themes of the last decade and more. Returning to the large screen, Malcolm Arnold did the music for *The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery* in 1966 (the earlier *Belles of St Trinians*, also with music by Arnold, included a train music sequence *Train to Trinians*), as he had done more famously for *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* (Arnold is also credited with a *Railway*

*Fanfare* but this is not, as far as I know, from a film.) Johnny Douglas composed some charming incidental music for that delightful film *The Railway Children* (1970 version); Nesbit's story was made into a musical comedy, staged in Basingstoke in 1981, with music by David Burn and Peter Durrent, as we have seen, and a ballet in 1983 with a score provided by the Welsh composer Alun Hoddinott. A remake of the film for ITV (April 2000) had music by Simon Lacey which seemed low-key and was for a small instrumental group including a piano but it was nevertheless attractive - and he did have an hard act to follow in Johnny Douglas.

John Lanchbery is credited with a modern score for the 1920s American "silent" film *The Iron Horse*. Similarly Carl Davis quite recently wrote music for the classic Buster Keaton "silent" *The General* (a factual version of the basically similar story entitled *The Great Locomotive Chase* (1956) had music by Paul Smith). *Bhowani Junction* (1956) and the earlier (1937) *Knight Without Armour* both had music from the Hollywood music mogul Miklos Rózsa. *Lawrence of Arabia* was, it will be remembered, a great wrecker of trains; the celebrated Peter O'Toole *Lawrence of Arabia* release of 1962 was enhanced by a score from Maurice Jarre, who also earned praise for his music for *The Train* (1964), an American film set in 1944. By contrast *Brief Encounter* (1945), whose action takes place at a railway junction (filmed at Carnforth) and which is still one of the finest of all British films, did not rely on original music but drew on bits of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto for its musical soundtrack; Muir Mathieson (1911-75) a very experienced film conductor and composer, was the musical director. The two versions of *The Lady Vanishes* (1938 and 1979), a thriller set on what we may assume in general terms to be the Orient Express, had music by Louis Levy and Richard Hartley respectively. *Terminus*, a quasi-documentary film of 1961, portraying a day in the life at Waterloo Station, had a score by Ron Grainer (there was no spoken commentary). For *Train of Events*, a 1949 film built around a train crash, Leslie Bridgewater provided the music.

To return to thriller films, Charles Williams, better remembered as the composer of *The Dream of Olwen* (composed for the non-railway film *While I Live*), wrote the music for *Night Train to Munich* (1940), sometimes called simply *Night Train* or *SS Gestapo*, although, as so often at that period, Louis Levy was credited with it. Benjamin Frankel did the honours for *Sleeping Car to Trieste* (1948) and for *The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By* (1953). The first two makes of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1935 and 1959), which like Buchan's novel, featured trains prominently (though not the most recent one), had a (1935) score which is generally supposed to be by Hubert Bath, though Jack Beaver and Charles Williams may have contributed the lion's share of the score and, in 1959, music by Clifton Parker. That classic Alec Guinness railway comedy-thriller *The Ladykillers* (1955) had a score by Tristram Cary who has extracted a suite from it

especially for a Silva Screen CD, but it is remembered most for its use of Boccherini's celebrated *Minuet*.

Moving for the moment to Russia, *Dr Zhivago* (1965), whose music is again by Maurice Jarre, has scenes of railway interest. Constant Lambert's music for *Anna Karenina* (1949) had as its finale a movement whose atmospheric opening depicts Anna's journey by night to St Petersburg. Herbert Stothart wrote the music for the earlier (1935) American film version of *Anna Karenina*. (Anna was made into a ballet in 1972 with music by the Russian Rodion Shchedrin and the train scenes were retained.) Ironically that hilarious Ealing comedy *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1952), archotypically English though its branch-line setting is, had music (and marvellously fluid and rhythmic music it was too) by Georges Auric, a Frenchman, and one of the composers described as "Les Six". One hastens to add that the music, which has been reissued on CD twice recently, is thoroughly idiomatic in context and that Auric wrote music for several other Ealing comedies. *Grand National* (1953), a celebrated thriller depending on railway timetables, incorporated music by John Greenwood.

And so it goes on. We can enumerate many more titles without holding out a hope of completeness. There are, for example, *Broadway Limited* (1941, with music by Charles Previn, great-uncle of Andre); *Union Pacific* (1939, Leopold and Korngold); *Hatter's Castle* (1944, Horace Shepherd); *Great Central Murder* (1942, David Snell); *Under the Clock* (1945, George Bessman); *Ministry of Fear* (1944, Victor Young); *Terror by Night* (1946, Hans Salter); *Night of the Demon* (1957, Clifton Parker); *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955, Andre Previn); *Cat Ballou* (1965, Frank de Vol); *Indiscretion of an American Wife* (1954, Aldo Cicognini); *Rampage* (1963, Elmer Bernstein); *Fool's Parade* (1971, Henry Vars); *The Wrong Box* (1966, John Barry); *The Mercenaries* (1968, Jacques Loussier); *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970, Miklos Rózsa again); *Lady on a Train* (1945, Miklos Rózsa yet again); *Union Station* (1950, David Buttolph and Heinz Roemheld); *Peking Express* (1951, Dmitri Tiomkin); *Berlin Express* (1948, Frederick Hollander); *High Noon* (1972, again Tiomkin); *Time Bomb* (1952, John Addison); *Man without a Star* (1955, Hans Salter); *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956, Victor Young); *Across the Bridge* (1951, James Bernard); *3.10 to Yuma* (1937, George Dunning); *Some Like it Hot* (1959, Adolph Deutsch); *Two Way Stretch* (1960, Ken Jones); *Northwest Frontier* (1959, Mischa Spoliansky); *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962, David Amram); *How the West Was Won* (1962, Alfred Newman); *Dr Terror's House of Horrors* (1965, Elisabeth Lutyens); *Track 129* (1988, Stanley Myers - about model railways); *Strangers on a Train* (1951, yet again Dmitri Tiomkin); *The Love Match* (1955, Wilfred Burns); *Gandhi* (1982, George Fenton); *The Train Robbers* (1973, Dominic Frontiere); *From Russia with Love*, featuring 007 James Bond on the Orient Express (1963, John Barry); *Boxcar Bertha* (1972, Gib Guilbeau and Thad Maxwell); *The Emperor of the North [Pole]* (1973, Frank de Vol, again); *Silver*

*Streak* (1976, Henri Mancini); *The Runaway Train* (1985, Trevor Jones); *The Railway Station Man* (1992, Richard Hartley); and *Horror Express* (1972, John Cacavas). Jerry Goldsmith wrote music for at least five railway films: *100 Rifles* (1969), *The First Great Train Robbery* (1979), *Breakheart Pass* (1975), *Von Ryan's Express* (1965) and *The Cassandra Crossing* (1976).

Most of the above titles are American, though quite a few are British and the roll-call of composers include some of the great names in the film field. In France, Michel Magne (1930-84) provided the music for *The Sleeping-Car Murders* in 1965. Underground railways figure in *The Taking of Pelham 123* (1974, David Shire), *Death Line* (1972, Jeremy Rose) and *Death Wish* (1974, Herbie Hancock), the New York "elevated" in *The French Connection* (1971, Dan Ellis). And there are many more railway feature films, especially if we include films with just one railway scene, perhaps at a station, as in *Goodbye Mr Chips* (1939 version, music by Richard Addinsell), *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1937, earliest version, Alfred Newman) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951, Alex North).

From the small screen we can cite, in addition to the Agatha Christie titles already noted, the title music from the first series of *Great Railway Journeys*, written by the late Paul Reade (later series have had title music by Ian Lyon, though much of the intervening music composed by others like Colin Winston Fletcher, Chris Witton and David Poore or is borrowed from various other sources including recorded music libraries). Specifically from children's television we must draw attention to the late Vernon Elliot's lively woodwind tune, with the bassoon especially prominent, for *Ivor the Engine*, I have heard these tunes played successfully in the concert hall on at least two occasions, and also to Mike O'Donnell and Junior Campbell's music for *Thomas the Tank Engine* (Hummie Man provided the music for the feature film *Thomas and the Magic Railroad*), and the music (composer unknown) for *The Woof*.

Nor should we forget commercials. I do not know who penned the pleasant little tune advertising Regional Railways in around 1997; the *Railtrack Share Offer* was accompanied by a snatch of Bernard Herrmann's music for the film *North by Northwest*.

Reverting to the large screen, there have been, following the Britten examples already mentioned, a host, literally scores, of railway documentaries with special music commissioned or taken from a publisher's library. Post-war examples include *Diesel Train Ride* (1959, music by Edwin Ashtey), *This is York* (1953, Leighton Lucas), *Wires over the Border* (1974, Richard Arnell, dealing with the West Coast Line electrification), *Giants of Steam* (1963, Ron Grainer), *Underground Centenary* (1964, Kenneth Jones, one of many railway documentary film assignments for him others being *On Track for the Eighties* (1980) and *They Take the High Road* (1960)), *125* (David Gow, who

turned his music into a concert overture, as we shall see), *Europe by Train* (1965, Elisabeth Lutyens), *Locomotion* (1975, Don Fraser), *Britannia - A Bridge* (1973, music, appropriately, by the Welshman, William Mathias); *Elizabethan Express* (1954) about the non-stop King's Cross-Edinburgh run, *The Long Night Haul* (1956) and *Blue Pullman* (1960), all with music by Clifton Parker, *London's Victoria Line* (1969, Edward Williams, again one of many railway documentaries for him others being *Train Time* (1952) and *Measured for Transport* (1962) for harp solo), *West Country Journey* (1953, Hubert Clifford), *Cybernetica* (1972, David Fanshawe, about Continental railways) and *A New Age For Railways* (1979, Christopher Gunning) [David Gow's *Overture 125* was commissioned from him for the introduction of InterCity 125 in 1978]. But it must be reiterated that this paragraph is a mere selection of railway documentaries which seem to be legion, mainly from British Transport Films and G.B. Instructional Films (which used, for example, music by Clive Richardson (his *Holiday Spirit*), Jack Brown (his *Metropolis*), Sidney Torch (his *Going for a Ride*) and Philip Green (his *Pan American Panorama*) among others) and there were other film makers as well. Their scores were often short, as is certainly the case with *Elizabethan Express* which I saw again recently, though Clifton Parker's snippets include some good railway music.

There were, at one time, railway documentaries on the radio and as just one example of them we can perhaps recall *London Underground* for which Elisabeth Lutyens once again provided the music. Among overseas film documentaries we can point to the music written by the Mexican Silvestre Revueltas for *Ferrocarriles de Baja California* (1938) and by Sven-Erik Bäck for the Swedish film *The Train* in 1948.

We leave films and return to brass bands. One might well assume that ensemble to be peculiarly suited to realise the mighty mechanical strength of the steam, or in more modern terms, the diesel or electric locomotive. And sure enough, Adam Carse (1878-1958), music historian and composer for amateur orchestras, who was born in the north-east of England, the cradle of railways, is credited with an overture for brass band *Puffing Billy*. One of William Rimmer's many marches, *North Star*, is surely named after that famous Great Western locomotive. Rimmer was a brass band man through and through, cornettist, conductor, adjudicator, composer and arranger. More recently, one of Gordon Langford's *Three Haworth Impressions* for brass is entitled *Worth Valley Railway* and is a jaunty tribute to that preserved line which enhances the Brontë Country so well. Arthur Butterworth's *Three Impressions for Brass* of 1968 represent splendidly aspects of Northumbrian industry. Northumbria saw the birth of railways in Britain, but Butterworth's "railway" movement is not a portrayal of Puffing Billy or Locomotive No. 1, as one might expect, but is instead a proud evocation of the Royal Border bridge at Berwick which carries the East Coast Main Line on its northward course towards the Scottish border. (Here perhaps is

the appropriate moment for us to mention Butterworth's choral symphony *Trains in the Distance*, for narrator, chorus, taped railway sounds and orchestra, composed in 1971 and setting poems by Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Louis Stevenson (the famous one we have already mentioned), Thomas Wolfe, Alfred Noyes and others. The finale of his First (orchestral) Symphony has a "programme" involving a journey by bus and rail [the "Royal Scot" and "Elizabethan" steam expresses] between London and Aberdeen.)

Also for brass band we have David Lyon's march from 1981 *God's Wonderful Railway*, Philip Lane's *Bluebell Line*, a tribute to the first of the standard gauge preserved lines (it shares a title with a piece for flute and piano by Christopher Gunning and Judith Pearce), Darrol Barry's *Inter-City* and, written sometime in the 1960s, *Honeymoon Express* by Charles Hanley and Charles Field. Philip Sparke's *Orient Express*, which is not oriental in colour, but is a lively, typical, quite extended piece of "train music" has been recorded on CD in a version for concert band. Staying with music for concert band we may recall Sammy Nestico's *Cable Car*, while the North Herts Wind Band commissioned Nigel Hess to compose for them *Stephenson's Rocket*, the stimulus being that Band's conductor who was a descendant of the great George Stephenson! Hess is of course also responsible for the theme music for the TV detective series *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates*, one episode of that series was set on the preserved East Lancashire Railway and for this Hess quickened up his theme tune to suit the railway action.

Many post-1945 light orchestral composers, mainly British ones, have tried their hand at "train music". Yet another *Orient Express*, by one Mohr, was recorded by Sidney Torch on the organ and with his Orchestra. John Gardner, born in 1917, wrote a descriptive movement entitled *Pullman Express*. Lew Stone's *Canadian Pacific* was popular just post-war. Harold Noble's *Blue Train* was published for piano solo but no doubt someone orchestrated it. "Trevor Duncan" (Leonard Trebilco) composed *Crankcraft*, a suite whose four movements bear the titles *Pistons*, *Valves*, *Cams* and *Tappets*, plus the single movement *The Twentieth Century Express*.

The following list of titles suggests that practically all "mood music" practitioners wrote at least one railway piece: Jack Coles, *Sunshine Express*, popular around 1960, and (a different piece) his *Seaside Special*, Peter Hope, *Rodeo Express*; *Running Off the Rails* (originally entitled *Locomotion*) by Clive Richardson; *Rhythm on Rails* and *Model Railway* by that prolific writer of "mood" (or "production" or "library") music, Charles Williams; the descriptive interlude *Riviera Express* by Joseph Engleman; *Holiday Express* by Macaffer, *Steel Rails* by one Freedman; *Midnight Express*, a fast galop by Ezra Reed for Paxton in the late 1940s; Sidney Torch, *Wagon Lit*; *Iron Monster*, composer not known; *Monorail* by Dennis Farnon, brother of Robert; *Brighton Belle* by Bill Worland, and very Farnonesque, dating from the 1960s; *High Energy Express* used

for BBCTV's Railwatch programme; *Paris Metro* by William Hill Bowen, once featured by George Melachrino's Orchestra; *Paris Pullman* and *Scenic Railway* by the French "mood music" writer Roger Roger; *Down Local*, composer not known, *Piston Rod* by Cecil Milner; *Florida Express* by Allan Gray; *Scandinavian Express*, which clearly sounds like a steam train, by the German composer Gerhard Winkler, even more popular for his *Neapolitan Serenade*; *Dublin Express* by Fred Hartley; Alan Langford (Alan Owen), *On the Move* and *Inter-City*; *Great American Railway*, *Tragedy on the Train*, and *Train Call*, all by Ronald Binge; *Motorail* and *Early Morning Train*, which latter is the finale of a suite entitled *Happy Weekend*, both by Vivian Ellis; Anthony Spurgin, *West Country Special*; *Puffin' Billy* by Edward White, inspired not by the old Northumbrian locomotive but by a small engine seen on the Isle of Wight, a movement once used as a signature tune for BBC Radio's "Uncle Mac's Children's Favourites"; *Main Line* by Jack Beaver; *Golden Arrow*, also by Jack Beaver and later used in the film *Gold Express* mentioned earlier; the late Anthony Mawer's *Riviera Express*, which is, I believe, a different piece from Joseph Engleman's mentioned above - Mawer's was originally for piano solo and entitled *Transcontinental*; and the third and last movement of Sidney Torch's *London Transport Suite*, composed especially for the BBC Light Music Festival of 1958 which is a tribute to Southern Electric and is entitled *The 5.52 From Victorloo!* Talking of Sidney Torch, he was reckoned a very fine theatre organist and some time ago I heard a record of him playing on the organ a cheerful number entitled *Flying Scotsman*, complete with atmospheric engine sounds supplied by the organ. This was not, as I at first thought, one of Torch's own compositions but was an arrangement of a piece by the Scots-born accordionist and light music composer of the period 1930-60, George Scott-Wood. *A Day's Outing* compiled by Reg Dixon and Fred Walmsley, for theatre organ begins with train sounds as the outing is, of course, to Blackpool. Django Bates' *Three English Scenes*, for big band, included a movement entitled *Abandoned Railway Station*, doubtless yet another sad commentary on Dr Beeching's closures. That celebrated American railway station, *Grand Central*, figures as the finale of Jim Parker's suite for brass ensemble (originally written for the Philip Jones Brass), *An Englishman in New York* - not so much a depiction of the station, more of an actual train ride.

Composers still write railway music. Pianist John Blood composed a solo, *From a Railway Carriage*, for a British Music Society recital in 1980. R. Murray Schafer composed *Train* in 1976 for a youth orchestra; this depicts a Canadian railway journey. There is Derek Clarke's *Southern Express* for wind ensemble. Hugh Masakela's *Coal Train (Stimela)* comes from South Africa; Daryl Runswick's *Waving to Trains* (1990) is for narrator, singers and pre-recorded tape. There is Reginald Gardiner's *Trains*, a spoken commentary rather than music strictly whose exact date is unknown at present but which is from as far back as the mid-1930s.

My fellow enthusiast for train music, Philip Pacey, has just (2000) completed a piano solo *Railway Rhythms, Variations on a Blues Theme* besides his choral setting of *Adlestrop* mentioned earlier. Robert Grant's *The Station Dash*, a teaching piece for trumpet and piano, presumably has a railway connection. In 1992 a minor Doncaster composer Ken Jackson penned a piano solo entitled *Bingley 100*, described as a "piece in Victorian Dance Style" (shades of all these Excursion Train Polkas and so on mentioned earlier?), for the centenary of that West Yorkshire railway station. Doncaster's Railway Plant Works duly earned a mention in Jackson's *Festival 800 Music* for women's choir and brass band which celebrated the 800th anniversary of Doncaster's first municipal charter in 1194. A Doncaster student, Simon Clausen, produced in 1998-9 *A Journey on the Orient Express*; this sports oriental colour within its basically jazzy train rhythms and his train, unlike most musical expresses, stops in the middle! Edward Huws Jones, a composer of *inter alia* music for junior string ensembles, entitled one of his pieces *East Coast Express*. (Edward, once a teacher with the Doncaster Music Support Service, lives in York.). Preserved railways have brought their own music. Apart from *Bluebell Line*, already mentioned, *Swanage Steam*, was recorded by the Yetties in the 1980s and the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway issued railway cassettes in 1988 and 1995.

Michael Finnis's *Freight Train Bruise* is avant-garde and jazz-influenced. Not so Raymond Parfrey's *Holiday Brochures Suite* for a quartet of clarinets, which includes a movement entitled *Steam Preservation Holiday* - this is a typical "train music" mode with its gradual acceleration and final deceleration and eclectic in idiom. Norman Harvey Rutherlyn's (Norman Harvey-Rogers) composed a lengthy sequence entitled *Churchill Music* which includes a movement entitled *Armoured Train* referring to Churchill's activities in the Boer War, although unfortunately, this particular movement was not orchestrated for the sequence. There is Malcolm Bennett's *Train* for trumpet and piano of around 1996. Not long ago I heard for the first time a movement from James Duncan Carey's *Trains Suite* for recorder ensemble and confirmed from it, as noted previously, the likeness of an American train whistle to the sound of a consort of recorders. Christopher Norton has indeed scored *Steam Train Blues* for recorder and piano. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Chat Moss*, described as being suitable for an amateur orchestra but actually premiered in 1994 by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, recalls George Stephenson's difficulties in laying the track of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in the late 1820s. The music appears to alternate between "train bustle" and portraying stark nature. In 1996 Davies returned to roughly the same railway territory - remembered from his childhood - for another orchestral tone poem, *Throstle's Nest Junction*; this was premiered at the new Bridgewater Hall in Manchester in November of that year. It is another atmospheric piece replete in train movement sounds. I have not heard Douglas Young's *Rain, Steam and Speed*, also for full symphony orchestra, inspired of course by Turner's famous painting. The Canadian film and orchestral composer Eldon Rathburn, born in 1916, has produced over the

last forty years a lot of railway novelty pieces bearing titles such as *Ghost Train*, *Six Railroad Preludes*, *The Train to Mariposa*, *Iron Horses of Delson* (1980), *Spiral Tunnel Boogie*, *St Lawrence Tubular Bridge Mazurka Polka* and *Rise and Fall of the Steam Railroad* (1983). Some of Rathburn's railway excursions in music were gathered together as early as 1969 under the title *Aspects of Railroads*. The *Rise and Fall* features banjos, jew's harp and synthesiser. Rathburn's earlier railway tunes include film music for *Road of Iron* (1955) and for the Buster Keaton "silent" *The Railroader* (1964). In the course of this survey many composers have visited railways more than once; Rathburn surely outscores them all comfortably.

We recalled earlier several dance music titles written to mark, or at least jump on the bandwagon of, the opening of a particular railway service. The Channel Tunnel is of course specifically a railway tunnel and its opening in 1994 was marked by Paul Patterson's brass fanfares *Paris Fanfare*, *Brussels Fanfare* and *Eurostar Fanfare* and by his more extended piece for brass choir *The Royal Eurostar*, all of them premiered in that year. (Eurotunnel incidentally was advertised on TV by Simon Jeffes' piece *Bean Fields*). In the previous year (1993) the minimalist English composer Michael Nyman wrote for orchestra his *MGV* (which stands for *Musique à Grande Vitesse*), a piece commissioned to mark the opening of the French Northern TGV. The repetitive minimalist idiom (some people find it monotonous) portrays the mechanical side of railway working particularly well. Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (1988) is another example of minimalism working well in that direction; John Adams' *Short Ride In A Fast Machine*, previously alluded to is perhaps still another.

The sheer variety of railway music is formidable. The titles seem to cover the whole world, every type of railway and all aspects of their operation and the forces for which they are written cover orchestras, chorus, solo voice, military and brass bands, big bands and other jazz combos, pop groups, solo piano, even solo bassoon as the Hungarian composer Otto Oromszegi's *Locomotive* is a quite engaging little piece of "train music" and is available on record. But we have yet to mention what is for many people the best-known railway piece by a British composer. Vivian Ellis, whom we have already alluded to, wrote many hits in the course of his composing career, but *Coronation Scot*, usually heard in its orchestral version but almost certainly conceived as a piano solo, was not at first intended for general publication. Ellis was a railway enthusiast and wrote the piece originally for his own pleasure (apart from *Motorail* and *Early Morning Train*, previously mentioned, Ellis's *Streamline* sounds as if it, too, had a railway origin). But in due course *Coronation Scot* came to be used as the signature tune of several of the Paul Temple detective serials on BBC Radio in the years after 1945 and that was that. In 1951, when I was expecting to hear *Pacific 231* for the first time, in a live concert at Sheffield, I asked a school friend what Honegger's piece was like, to receive the reply, "a bit little Coronation Scot, but not as good"! Ironically the train rhythm of

the piece was suggested to Ellis not by that popular LMS streamlined loco of the late 1930s, but by journeying on the GWR between Paddington and Taunton! Sidney Torch's vintage recording has been reissued a few years ago and there are good modern recordings as well.

*Coronation Scot* and all the other items of railway music I have mentioned - over 650 of them - are not the only compositions to be suggested, or probably suggested, by the notion of a train. Many of these are not overtly railway music. One of them apparently is that famous Rudyard Kipling ballad *Boots*, set to music directly after a railway journey and making use of railway type rhythms, by J.P. McCall, otherwise the great Australian baritone Peter Dawson. Several other "crypto-railway pieces" have been suggested, even the finale of Schubert's *Great C* major Symphony. Now this was composed, or at least started, in 1825, a great year for railways with the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, but with the best will in the world, I cannot believe it. More plausible candidates are parts of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Sibelius' *Night Ride and Sunrise*, the opening of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony ("*Romantic*"), the scherzo from Dvorak's D Minor Symphony (especially appropriately in view of that composer's well documented addiction to railways), works by Bartók, Debussy, Martinu, d'Indy, Virgil Thomson and Shostakovich, part of Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony* and Janacek's First String Quartet, subtitled *Kreutzer Sonata* and apparently based on a Tolstoy novel in which a killer confesses to murder whilst on a train journey. Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was apparently inspired in part by a New York subway train. And we should surely also mention the Russian composer Mossolov's notorious *Iron Foundry*, which may not have been inspired by a specifically railway foundry but it surely comes pretty close, as does Malcolm Arnold's symphonic study *Machines*, derived from a documentary film score on the iron industry.

It is satisfying that such a wide variety of railway themes appear in such a diverse collection of musical items, vocal, instrumental and orchestral. For me [Railways and Music](#) is a significant footnote to the social history of railways, both in Britain and abroad. Many musicians, probably many more than we have identified here, have had an interest in railways which has spilled over into their music. There are topics which relate to each other in a variety of ways. We have explored railwaymen making music; what of the hotel orchestras in railway hotels like Gleneagles, which at various times hosted Ambrose's orchestra and Henry Hall and his Band? Hall became the Musical Director of all LMS hotels, controlling no fewer than 32 bands countrywide, before he left to take up his best remembered position, as Director of the BBC Dance Orchestra.

And what of music at railway stations and other railway establishments? I have experienced this, at Doncaster railway station at Christmas and so too have, for example, the stations at Manchester and Birmingham, with more professional

forces. The National Railway Museum has from time to time staged concerts of railway music; one, in the 1980s, was recorded on cassette and another, in 1996, celebrated the inauguration of the Institute of Railway Studies in York. In May 1998 the launch of a newly re-titled train service, Northern Spirit, was marked by a brass band - Armthorpe Elmfield from Doncaster - playing at four major railway stations served by the new company: a throwback to Victorian days when, as we have seen, a brass band was present at the opening of a new railway line.

What, indeed, of music on the trains themselves? By this I do not mean "muzak", though as with the Austrian Railways' *Nostalgia Train*, on which I travelled a few years ago, this can help to create an atmosphere; but one does read about pianos being standard equipment on the Trans-Siberian and other long-distance railways - a pianist is employed in the restaurant car of the Eastern and Oriental Express which runs between Bangkok and Singapore. Less exotically trains plying between Sheffield and Huddersfield via Penistone regularly have live music as a feature - folk, jazz and other, including the musical *Brief Encounters on the Penistone Lane*, mentioned previously.

The subject of railways and music thus opens out many vistas in front of us and the scenery is almost always pleasant or stimulating. The possible programmes of railway music, assuming unlimited access to musicians or, more likely, a hi-fi system, each of them offering something for everyone and each offering attractive variety, are virtually endless. The topic could easily accommodate a whole series of concerts or illustrated talks or lectures.