

Anti-Modernism, Nationalism, and Difference in English Music



Ruth Gipps: Anti-Modernism, Nationalism and Difference in English Music by Jill Halstead

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By Jane Doe

English music has a long and rich history, dating back to the Middle Ages. However, it was in the late 19th century that English music began to take on a distinctive character, influenced by the complex interplay of anti-modernism, nationalism, and difference.

Anti-modernism, a reaction against the perceived negative effects of modernity, was a powerful force in English society in the late 19th century. This anti-modernist sentiment found expression in a variety of ways, including the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Gothic Revival. In music, anti-modernism manifested itself in a rejection of the complex harmonies and rhythms of continental composers such as Wagner and Strauss. Instead, English composers sought to create a music

that was more rooted in the English folk tradition, and that expressed a sense of national identity.

Nationalism was another important force in English music in the late 19th century. After centuries of relative isolation, England was becoming increasingly engaged with the wider world. This engagement led to a renewed interest in English history and culture, and a desire to create a music that was uniquely English.

Finally, the concept of difference also played a significant role in the development of English music in the late 19th century. English composers were aware of the advances being made in continental music, but they were also keen to create a music that was distinctive and different from that of their European counterparts.

The Music of Edward Elgar

One of the most important composers of the English anti-modernist movement was Edward Elgar. Elgar was a self-taught composer who was deeply influenced by the English folk tradition. His music is characterized by its rich melodies, lush harmonies, and evocative use of orchestration.

Elgar's most famous work is the Enigma Variations (1899). This work is a set of 14 variations on an original theme, each of which is based on a different friend or acquaintance of Elgar. The Enigma Variations is a quintessentially English work, full of nostalgia and whimsy.



The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams

Another important figure in the English anti-modernist movement was Ralph Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams was a lifelong champion of English folk music, and his music is often infused with folk melodies and rhythms.

Vaughan Williams's most famous work is the Pastoral Symphony (1921). This work is a symphony in four movements, each of which depicts a different aspect of the English countryside. The Pastoral Symphony is a beautiful and moving work that captures the essence of the English landscape.



The Music of Benjamin Britten

In the 20th century, the English anti-modernist movement continued to flourish, with composers such as Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett. Britten was one of the most important composers of the 20th century, and his music is characterized by its emotional depth, lyrical beauty, and social consciousness.

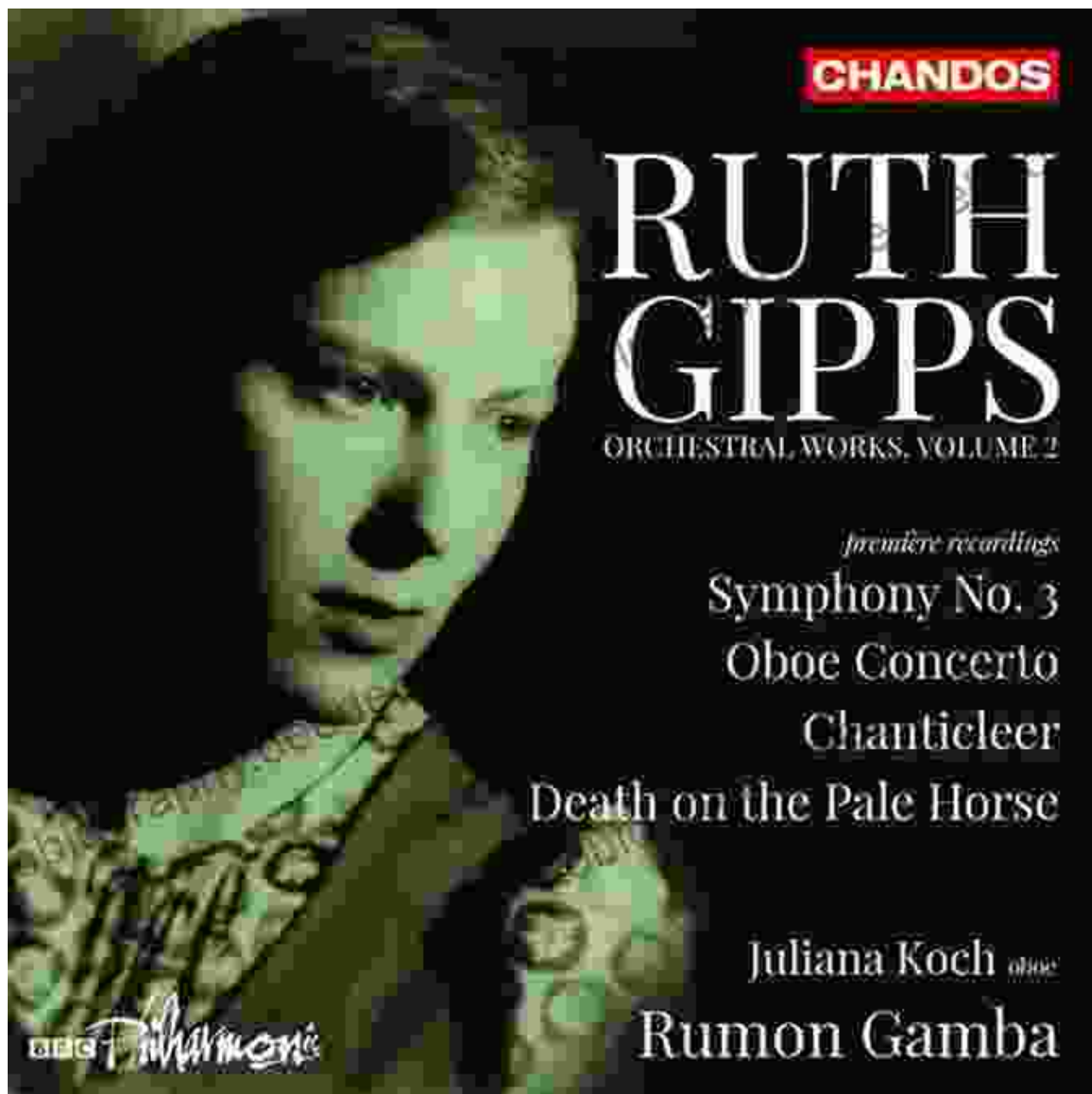
Britten's most famous work is the War Requiem (1962). This work is a setting of the Latin Requiem Mass, but it also includes poems by the English war poet Wilfred Owen. The War Requiem is a powerful and moving work that speaks to the horrors of war and the importance of peace.



The Music of Michael Tippett

Michael Tippett was another important composer of the English anti-modernist movement. Tippett was a committed pacifist and socialist, and his music often reflects his political beliefs.

Tippett's most famous work is the opera King Priam (1962). This work is based on the ancient Greek myth of the Trojan War, and it tells the story of the fall of Troy from the perspective of the Trojans. King Priam is a powerful and moving work that explores the themes of war, love, and loss.



The anti-modernist, nationalist, and difference in English music is a complex and fascinating topic. This article has only scratched the surface

of this complex web of influences. However, it is clear that these forces have played a significant role in the development of English music, and have helped to create a music that is uniquely English.

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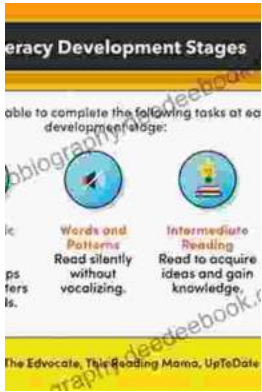
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