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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Philip Lancaster

I have just subscribed to *Tempo* and was very pleased to read your review of the recent Dutton CD, 'Spirit of England', and your comments on Gurney's *War Elegy*. I am very pleased that you found it such a worthwhile piece.

During the past couple of years I have been undertaking much research into Gurney. As well as the co-edition of the *War Elegy*, amongst other pieces, this has resulted in the publication of the first complete (or as complete as can be) catalogue of his musical works.

In your review you comment that, 'had the fates decreed otherwise, the previously unimaginable phenomenon of a Gurney symphony might one day have appeared'. Gurney did write two symphonies, one in the same period as the *War Elegy* and another (completed in short score) in the asylum in 1925. Unfortunately the scores of both of these works are now missing. There are a couple of other extant orchestral works, the most

important of which is *A Gloucestershire Rhapsody* (a work of some 20 minutes duration), an edition of which I am just embarking upon.

As well as the symphonies, the compilation of the catalogue has also brought to attention a number of other significant elements which must force one to make a complete reassessment of Gurney's creative outlook: there are 18 violin sonatas, four piano sonatas, 15 piano preludes and 20 string quartets – not to mention the 330 songs and numerous other works from piano and violin miniatures to a large-scale setting of Whitman for baritone, chorus and orchestra, seemingly inspired by Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony*. Gurney seems to have thought of his quartets as his most important work.

The Catalogue of Musical Works has been published in *The Ivor Gurney Society Journal* (ed. R.K.R. Thornton), Volume 12 (2006), ISBN: 9780704426085. Copies can be obtained through myself or the Ivor Gurney Society.

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