

# The Interwoven lives of Cecil Sharp, Isadora Duncan, and Ralph Vaughan Williams

Bill Tuck



Figure 1. Cecil Sharp

The initial provocation for this paper was the discovery of an intriguing entry in Cecil Sharp's diary for 17 February 1915 (while on his first visit to the USA) where he recounts that he "had tea with Isadora Duncan". This was possibly the only meeting between these two luminaries of the dance world, but it serves as a focal point for the study of dance in the context of the early decades of the 20th century, a turbulent period that encompassed the First World War, the launch of Les Ballets Russes and the Age of the Automobile.

Despite the enormous importance of these two figures to the history of dance, there is almost no overlap in either the real world or the 'intellectual world'. I can find no other record of them meeting together even though a number of opportunities arose at various times, including Isadora's well-documented visits to London in the period 1898-1900, where her collaborations with other luminaries of the music world – such as Arnold Dolmetsch – must have been well-publicised.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 2. Isadora Duncan

## Connecting Cecil Sharp and Isadora Duncan

The extent of the current 'intellectual' distance between individuals can be measured by the infrequency with which they appear together in the dance research literature. A quick search on JSTOR for "Cecil Sharp" gives 2930 hits, while restricting it to "Cecil Sharp" AND "dance"

---

<sup>1</sup>Arnold Dolmetsch and Cecil Sharp were almost exact contemporaries (born in February 1858 and November 1859, respectively) and by 1900 both had well-established careers as professional musicians in London. Furthermore, Sharp and Dolmetsch for several years lived no more than a few streets away from each other in Hampstead. Yet their contact seems to have been minimal, if they ever did meet.

The one small link I have been able to trace is that, quite early on, both Sharp and Dolmetsch became fixated on learning to play the pipe and tabor. In Sharp's case it followed his 'discovery' of Morris dancing around Christmas 1899. For Dolmetsch, it was part of an emerging interest in early wind instruments, for up until 1900 he had only played string instruments – mostly viol and harpsichord. Pipe and tabor had been used by Dolmetsch in a production of *As You Like It* in 1897 and also in *The Tempest* around the same time. It is worth noting that he did not give a public performance on the recorder – the instrument of his later notoriety – until February and March of 1900. While Sharp made frequent use of his pipe & tabor – manufactured, I believe, by the Dolmetsch firm – in his lecture demonstrations, he never achieved the skill level of his daughter Joan. Arnold Dolmetsch's original instrument is now in the collections of the Horniman Museum, London.

(to eliminate those primarily about his work on ‘folk-song’) gives 1953. A similar search for “Isadora Duncan” gives 3182 hits (while for comparison “Diaghilev” gets 3252). These figures provide a rough measure of the visibility of each within the intellectual world.

By combining searches, we get a rough measure of their perceived proximity. Combining “Cecil Sharp”, “dance” and “Isadora Duncan”, for example, gives a mere 17 hits. The first to come up as measured on relevance (*TS Eliot and the Dance*, by Nancy Hargrove, 1997)<sup>2</sup> however, reveals 29 occurrences of “Duncan”, but only 2 for “Sharp” (both referencing his 1924 book with Paul Oppé *The Dance: An Historical Survey of Dancing in Europe*).

The second hit (*Creating a Canon in British Ballet* by Beth Genné, 2000) shows 7 occurrences of “Duncan” and 2 of “Sharp” - but 99 for “de Valois”!

The third hit (*The Future of Ballet* by DL Murray from 1926) is a review of the Sharp/Oppé book and unsurprisingly has 27 occurrences of “Sharp” but only 2 of “Duncan”.

The conclusion is that there is almost **no overlap** between these two individuals within the intellectual domain – to the academic ‘dance history’ world, they appear to inhabit different planets.

By way of comparison, a similar search for the conjunction of “Cecil Sharp” and “Ralph Vaughan Williams” on JSTOR yields 221 hits, a much higher figure, as is to be expected given their strong mutual interest in folk song. Yet even with a restriction to those which also include the mention of “dance” this search yields no fewer than 173 hits.<sup>3</sup>

Even though this method can only yield rather rough statistics, it does provide a useful map of the ‘intellectual landscape’. Now made available by the existence of vast machine searchable databases - such as JSTOR, national newspaper archives, or the printed music holdings of the British Library - counting occurrences of significant words is an important new research tool, particularly for studies in the Humanities, such as historical dance research.

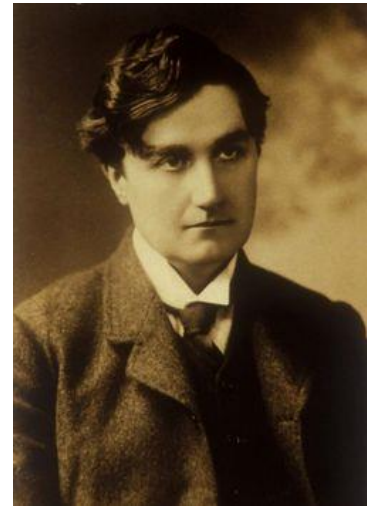
---

<sup>2</sup> Nancy D. Hargrove: T.S. Eliot and the Dance, *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Summer, 1997), pp.61-8.

<sup>3</sup> A similar result can be derived from a search for occurrences of “Cecil Sharp” and “Arnold Dolmetsch”: CS gets 2930; AD gets 1254, but the combination gets only 38. Thus, despite their mutual interest in the revival of ‘early music’, their geographic proximity in London, identical ages and careers as professional musicians, their ‘intellectual separation’ is almost complete.

## Connecting Ralph Vaughan Williams and Isadora Duncan

In fact, the one figure that does, in some sense, unite both Cecil Sharp and Isadora Duncan is Ralph Vaughan Williams (whose 150th Anniversary is celebrated this year [2022]). In 1911, Vaughan Williams wrote music for three plays by Euripides – *The Bacchae*, *Electra* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* – then newly translated into English verse by Gilbert Murray. Isadora Duncan had danced for the composer and asked him to write music for her to dance to within *The Bacchae*. One assumes that Vaughan Williams was sufficiently impressed by the dancer and her style of performance to willingly undertake the commission. The project, however, was not without problems. A public performance took place at London’s Royal Court Theatre on 31 May 1912. Duncan danced in the first two items, but the planned production of *Iphigenia in Tauris* was of the music alone.



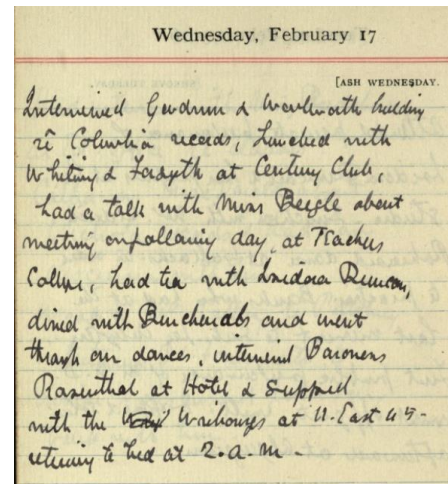
**Figure 3.** Ralph Vaughan Williams

Although seldom heard these days, it was described at the time as being music of ‘undeniable beauty’, while Gilbert Murray wrote that the music and verse was set ‘in my judgement extraordinarily well’. It is uncertain if the full staging of these pieces, with dance, has yet been attempted.

### Forward to ‘Tea with Isadora’

The afternoon tea engagement referred to in the introduction to this paper had followed a private performance by Isadora Duncan and her pupils at her studio the previous day. This viewing had presumably been set up by one of Sharp’s contacts in New York (possibly Mrs Aldrich). What sort of performance he may have seen is unrecorded, but it may have been by the collection of Isadora Duncan’s former students, now formed into a troupe of professional performers. Dubbed by the press as **The Isadorables**, they had been displaced from Paris by the war, arriving with Duncan in New York in late 1914. They made their American debut on 7 December 1914, at Carnegie Hall with the New York Symphony (which indicates that they did have serious professional standing or, at least, substantial financial backing).

There is no record of what Sharp and Duncan may have discussed at their tea-time tête-à-tête, but it is certainly one at which it would have been illuminating to have been a ‘fly on the wall’. The views of Sharp were, in many respects, similar to those of Duncan, particularly as regards ‘ballet’ and its need for serious reform. But their approach to this reform could not have been more different. Nor do we have any first-hand account of what Sharp actually thought of the dancing of The Isadorables (though something may yet be found in the archives). However, he does reveal in correspondence to a Mrs Conant that:



**Figure 4.** Cecil Sharp’s diary entry - Vaughan Williams Memorial Library

After a dance show in New York, a Basque musician, a very first-rate man, saw us dance in the morning and I. (Isadora) Duncan's girls in the evening ... Our show made it quite impossible for him, he said, to look at the vapid movements of the Duncanites.<sup>4</sup>

The same item is noted in a later entry in Sharp's diary (1 July 1918) where he meets up with the Basque musician Laparra:

'Laparra told me he went last Sat[urday] night to see Isadora Duncan's pupils dance and that having seen ours in the morning made hers look very poor stuff! This was nice of him & quite genuine criticism.'

### **Cecil Sharp & Harley Granville-Barker**

The reason for Sharp's visit to New York was to assist Harley Granville-Barker in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This had been mounted at the Savoy in London in February 1914 and was later invited to transfer to New York, where it opened in February the following year. Sharp had been responsible for arranging the music and dances for the London production and Granville-Barker was keen to have his assistance in New York. The production itself had been noted for its adventurousness in exploring new ways of presenting this Shakespearian classic. Cecil Sharp leaves for America on the *Lusitania* in December 1914 (WWI had broken out in July of that year).



**Figure 5.** Scene from Granville-Barker's production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*

Interestingly, Isadora Duncan had herself been engaged as a dancer (playing First Fairy) in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that had been taken by the theatrical impresario Augustin Daly from New York to London in 1895. This had been among her very first

---

<sup>4</sup> Evelyn K. Wells: Cecil Sharp in America, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Dec., 1959), pp. 182-185.



**Figure 6.** Isadora Duncan as First Fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

professional roles in theatre (at age 18) – just as Cecil Sharp's engagement as choreographer and music director (at age 55!) were his own 'first' engagements in main-stream professional theatre. So, no doubt the relative merits of these two productions, along with their respective producers, and comparison of experiences may have been a topic of lively conversation at their tea party!

We have little information about exactly what Sharp created for the performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, save for one tantalising note that he used *Sellenger's Round* with a final reverence of the whole circle of dancers towards Titania's mound, as a sort of ritual dance of the fairies.<sup>5</sup>

There is no record of Sharp having actually seen the earlier production by Augustin Daly of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or anything else in which Isadora Duncan had performed during the intervening 20 years prior to their New York meeting. This in itself is somewhat surprising as Duncan had visited London for several extended periods between 1895 and 1914 and her performances were well-publicised within the social and artistic circles that had

adopted her – including such musical luminaries as the Dolmetsch family, who performed with her both in London and in Paris.

### **Cecil Sharp's further adventures in the US**

Sharp's diaries reveal in some detail his activities during the four months of this initial visit to the States, alongside his engagement with the Granville-Barker production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His detailed cash accounts show just how successful he had been during this first visit in soliciting further teaching and lecturing engagements throughout the US. He sails for England on 21 April 1915, but plans to return to America in June of the same year.

The reasons for his return home may have been to do with his concern to keep an eye on developments within the Folk Dance world in England, where rifts had been emerging between the rival factions of Sharp and Mary Neal. There were also worries about his family back home and, of course, his ever-present concern about money.

### **Cecil Sharp, Isadora Duncan, and the *Lusitania* incident**

Sharp leaves for England on the *SS Adriatic*. According to Maude Karpeles, "he had been pressed by his friends not to take the risk of a double voyage [but to stay in America], or at any rate to delay his journey for a week and sail on the *SS Lusitania* which, being a faster ship, was thought to be safer. But Cecil, who hated a change once his mind was made up, did not like the

---

<sup>5</sup> Evelyn K. Wells: Cecil Sharp in America, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Dec., 1959), pp. 182-185.

idea of allowing ‘those \*\*\*\* Germans’ to upset his plans. So perhaps for once his obstinacy saved his life’.<sup>6</sup>

Duncan, too, had planned to return to England at this time. Her venture in bringing The Isadorables to New York was proving expensive and her recent tour of the US with them had been a financial disaster. Thus, she may have been in need of more profitable engagements back in Europe to replenish the coffers – though the war would surely have placed much of this in jeopardy. Apparently, Duncan had been due to leave the United States in 1915 aboard the *Lusitania*, but historians believe her financial situation at the time drove her to choose a more modest crossing. In the event, she left eight days later aboard the rather more humble *Dante Alighieri*. The *Lusitania* departed New York on 1 May 1915; on May 7 it was torpedoed by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland with the loss of nearly 1,200 lives.<sup>7</sup>

The sinking of the *Lusitania* by the Germans marked a significant turning point in the War, though not yet sufficient to bring America into the fray, while the avoidance of so catastrophic an ending marks yet another extraordinary coincidence in the lives of these two remarkable people.<sup>8</sup>

### **In the shadow of the First World War**

The shadow of war, of course, loomed over this whole period. In the case of Isadora, it had been preceded by the much re-counted tragic loss in April 1913 of her two young children in a bizarre drowning accident, and by the death in August 1914 of her new-born third child. It is not unreasonable to see her trip to New York as in some way an attempt to escape the reminders that Paris and France might present of these very recent tragedies, as well as to secure the safety of her ‘surrogate’ offspring, The Isadorables.

For Sharp, the shadow of war took the form of constant worry about the safety of his own son who had enlisted at the outbreak, along with the members of the EFDS Display Team that he had carefully nurtured since their formation in 1912.<sup>9</sup> His close friend Ralph Vaughan Williams had also enlisted as a medical orderly, a role of considerable danger. Sharp himself at 55 was too old to serve as a soldier, while his poor health left him unfit to enlist in any other capacity.

America, being neutral at that time, offered a means both of escape from the immediate danger of war, and a way to secure a living from the work to which he had devoted his life, the collection and dissemination of folk-song and dance. While the war had severely curtailed such activities in England, America was receptive and eager to learn. It also proved a rich resource for further explorations, which enabled him to combine his very profitable lecture and teaching engagements with extended sessions of folk-song collecting in the Appalachians.

---

<sup>6</sup> Maud Karpeles: Cecil Sharp: His life and Work, p 128.

<sup>7</sup> Greg Daugherty: 8 Famous People Who Missed the Lusitania, Smithsonian Magazine, 2 May 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Note: 1201 were drowned and 761 survived out of the 1,266 passengers and 696 crew aboard. 123 of the casualties were American citizens.

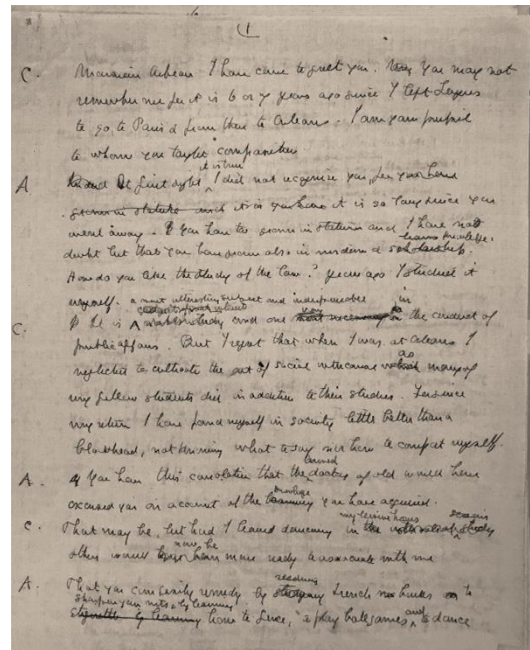
<sup>9</sup> EFDS, the English Folk Dance Society, was founded by Cecil Sharp in 1911. In 1932 it merged with the Folk Song Society to become the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS).

It was while engaged on one of these collecting trips into the countryside that he learned of the deaths of no fewer than four of the six members of the EFDS Display Team, who were all killed in July/August 1916 at the battle of the Somme. His Diary entry for 7 October 1916 reads:

Reached Asheville at 3.30 bought fruit on the way up to the Campbells. There the English mail reached us and I read the awful news of poor [Reginald] Tiddy's death. Now that he, Butterworth, Lucas & Wilkinson have gone I seem to have lost all my pillars except one — V[ughan] Williams and any day something may befall him. I feel too sad to get to work to do anything.



**Figure 7.** Left: The EFDS Display Team pictured shortly before outbreak of WWI. Right: The opening page of Cecil Sharp's translation of Arbeau's *Orchesography* – Vaughan Williams Memorial Library



This must have been very dispiriting for Sharp and could well be seen as a major factor in his withdrawal from any ambition towards dance performance, as opposed to teaching or research.

### Sharp, Duncan and Vaughan Williams during and after WWI

For Sharp, the song-collecting expeditions into the Appalachians had resulted in a vast quantity of new material that then needed to be processed, arranged, published and lectured about. At the same time, his health – never of the best – began to deteriorate. He moved to Montreux in Switzerland for several months in October 1922 in the hope that the change of climate would help him recuperate. While there, he spent his time trying to master French – without any great success in the spoken form – but his ability to read and translate was more in keeping with his character. This led to him making the acquaintance of Cyril Beaumont while browsing in his Charing Cross Road bookstore. Learning that they were both working on the same project of bringing Arbeau to the attention of the English-speaking public, he passed over his completed manuscript (now in the collections of the Vaughan Williams Library).<sup>10</sup> Beaumont published the first English

<sup>10</sup> Maud Karpeles: *Cecil Sharp: His Life and Work*

translation of *Orchesography* in 1925, with an extensive introduction by the Peter Warlock, composer of the well-known *Capriole Suite*, based on Arbeau's tunes.

Sharp's attention was diverted at this point towards writing a complete *History of Dance*, with the help of his friend Paul Oppé. This resulted in a very elegant volume: *The Dance: An Historical Survey of Dancing in Europe*, that was finished and published on the 1 January 1924, just six months before Sharp's death on 23 June 1924.

The book gives a valuable insight into the way that Sharp thought about both the past of dance and where he felt it should go in the future. Although it may lack the detailed knowledge of historical dance that modern scholarship might bring to the subject, it is a valuable account of what was known at the time, as well as being amply illustrated with a fine selection of prints, many in colour. The first attempt to give a detailed description of the dances themselves did not appear until 1949 with the publication of Mabel Dolmetsch's *Dances of England and France*.

### **Isadora Duncan**

Duncan returned to France in 1915 and set up her 'salon' in the Hotel Meurice. From the description in the first-hand account by Maurice Dumesnil (author of *An Amazing Journey: Isadora Duncan in South America*) her coffers had been well and truly replenished, presumably through her connection to the Singer fortune. With Dumesnil as Music Director, she embarks on a six-month tour of South America from June to December of 1916, departing from Buenos Aires for New York on the *Vestris* – an appropriate choice! Further American tours follow, though with diminishing success. She had by this time been largely abandoned by the Isadorables.

In 1921, Duncan's radical-leftist sympathies took her to the Soviet Union, where she founded a school in Moscow. However, the Soviet government's failure to follow through on promises to support her work caused her to return to the West and leave the school to her protégée (and adopted daughter) Irma Duncan. A period of political and artistic notoriety follows in America before she takes up refuge on the French Riviera, ending with her death in yet another bizarre accident in 1927:

... her life was a tragic one, especially when it came to automobiles: In 1913, her two small children drowned when the car they were riding in plunged over a bridge and into the Seine in Paris, and Duncan herself was seriously injured in car accidents in 1913 and 1924.

On the day she died, Duncan was a passenger in a brand-new convertible sportscar that she was learning to drive. As she leaned back in her seat to enjoy the sea breeze, her enormous red scarf ("which she had worn since she took up communism," one newspaper reported) somehow blew into the well of the rear wheel on the passenger side. It wound around the axle, tightening around Duncan's neck and dragging her from the car and onto the cobblestone street. She died instantly.<sup>11</sup>

In a way, this tragic end to Isadora Duncan's life also brought to a close the "heroic" phase of the Age of the Automobile.

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/dancer-isadora-duncan-is-killed-in-car-accident>

## Ralph Vaughan Williams

Vaughan Williams does indeed survive the war. But it is several years before he feels able to pick up composing again. In a letter to Gustav Holst, he wrote: ‘I sometimes dread coming back to normal life with so many gaps...out of those 7 who joined up together in August 1914 only 3 are left - I sometimes think now that it is wrong to have made friends with people younger than oneself’.

Included among those lost was George Butterworth, his protégé and one of the most promising composers of that generation – and a member of the ill-fated EFDS Display Team.

As to composing for dance, his most notable work is *Job*, based on the verse and illustrations of William Blake. This work was finally performed (in concert form) in 1930.



**Figure 8.** George Butterworth (1885-1916)

## Epilogue: The dance legacy of Sharp, Duncan and Vaughan Williams

Our first conclusion from this research is that there was very little overlap between the worlds of Isadora Duncan and Cecil Sharp. While both were highly significant figures in trying to point the way towards the ‘future of dance’, the meaning of this was for each of them very different. In part this could be summed up by saying that Isadora Duncan was primarily interested in public, concert-type presentations, whereas Sharp was more concerned with ‘social’ dance. This corresponds, in the words of music theorist Thomas Torino, to the difference between the ‘presentational’ and the ‘participatory’ form.<sup>12</sup>

To Sharp, following his experience with the Granville-Barker production in New York, a life devoted to work in the theatre had little appeal. For Duncan, on the other hand, public performance was what she craved. Thus, while both were searching for a way in which the current forms of dance performance - whether ‘classical ballet’ or ‘skirt dancing’ - might be reformed, neither were able to realise their dreams during their lifetimes.

TS Eliot provided a useful statement of their different positions in an article published in 1925 (one year after the death of Sharp, and only two before that of Duncan). This was referred to earlier in this paper where it was quoted by Nancy Hargrove in her 1997 article: TS Eliot and the Dance:

“In April 1925 Eliot wrote a review of the book by Sharp & Oppé: *The Dance: An Historical Survey of Dancing in Europe* (1924). In this, Eliot reveals his own in-depth knowledge of the dance as well as his interest in how ballet may develop in the future. After indicating that a legitimate critic of ballet should have studied ‘dancing amongst primitive peoples, [such as the dance ceremonies of Australian Aborigines]’ should possess ‘a first-hand knowledge of the

---

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Torino: *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*.

ballet from bar practice to toe work,' should 'frequent the society of dancers, musicians, choreographers, and producers,' should understand "the evolution of Christian and other liturgy, (For is not the High Mass – as performed, for instance at the Madeleine in Paris – one of the highest developments of dancing?) 'and finally he should "track down the secrets of rhythm in the (still undeveloped) science of neurology.'"

With a list like this of requirements, I am not sure one should take Eliot seriously. In addition, Eliot faults Cecil Sharp not only for lacking all of these criteria but also for never having 'really understood the modern ballet (such as that of Diaghilev),' indirectly revealing that he himself has some insight into them. He also criticizes Sharp for his suggestion that a new ballet should be founded on what Eliot considers 'a dead ritual,' concluding his review by promising to consider 'the question of what the ballet of the future should be 'founded on'" in a subsequent article. In this same article, Eliot is shown to be full of admiration for the way in which Isadora Duncan has succeeded in breathing new life into the moribund form of classical ballet.



**Figure 10.** A scene from Vaughan Williams's *Job: A Masque for Dancing* (1931)

Nevertheless, it is important to note that both Sharp and Duncan shared a mutual interest in 'dance of the past', although each had a totally different approach to what they understood by the past and how it should be recreated. In Sharp's case it was indeed a well-informed and scholarly approach to the available sources. As mentioned earlier, he had spent his final years engaged upon a complete translation of Arbeau's *Orchesography*, before embarking on the even more ambitious project of writing a complete *History of Dance*. However much he may have misunderstood the origins of - or misinterpreted the style - of dance as recorded in Arbeau or Playford, Sharp genuinely believed in as accurate a reconstruction as possible.

Duncan, on the other hand, took the past as represented by the images of dancers to be seen on the Greek vases held in the British Museum as inspiration. Her interpretation was in no sense ‘scholarly’, however, for she had no intention of building an exact recreation of classical dance based on these images, but treated them rather as sources for an impressionistic dance that might evoke in the audience a kind of ‘spiritual’ understanding of the classical aesthetic. In this regard she was operating well within the conventions of 19<sup>th</sup> century romanticism, little different from the dance style created in the ‘attitudes’ of Lady Hamilton a century earlier.<sup>13</sup>

The case of Vaughan Williams is both more complex and longer lasting, if only because he was much younger than the other two and lived for very much longer. It was also the case that, being of independent means, he could freely engage amateurs to perform his works, rather than seek commercial outlets, and it has frequently been suggested that for this reason it was not taken seriously, so that establishing a ‘professional’ reputation for the composer was unnecessarily delayed. Also, in this regard his involvement in the collecting and publishing of folk song would clearly not have helped.

Despite some earlier involvement with dance and even the composition of music for Isadora Duncan, it was not until the creation of *Job* as a ‘masque for dancing’, that he established himself as a major composer for ballet. First performed in public as a ballet in 1931 by the nascent Vic-Wells Ballet company to choreography by Nina de Valois, this work marks the first truly ‘English’ ballet.

There was little in this work, however, that might link it to the dance ideas of Cecil Sharp as presented in his work for Harley Granville-Barker (except possibly certain similarities in the approach to stage design – see Figures 5 & 10). In retrospect it was probably the loss of the EFDS display dance team at the Battle of the Somme that altered the course of dance in Britain, or at least delayed any attempt to incorporate traditional English dance (whether Morris or Country Dance) into the ballet repertoire.

It was not until a later generation of choreographers such as David Bintley, along with the emergence of male dominated dance companies such as BalletBoyz, that anything approaching what might be imagined as the dance style advocated by Sharp would begin to find a place in English ballet.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Shay: *Wrapped in Greek Robes of Spirituality: The Historic Context for Isadora Duncan's Dance Performances*, *Theatre Arts Journal*, 2017

<sup>14</sup> L. Wallis: *An exploration of the work of David Bintley, a very ‘English’ choreographer, with particular reference to his use of English Morris dance in Still Life at the Penguin Café and the process of translating ‘genuine’ English Morris dance to a theatrical environment*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance/ City, University of London, 2010.

It is perhaps both fitting and ironic that one of BalletBoyz most important and successful ballets, *Young Men*, was an evocation of the very World War I that had led to the demise of Cecil Sharp's EFDS dance team and the forced abandonment of his idea of a re-invigorated 'ballet' far removed from the feminised 'toe-dancing' of the classical nineteenth century form against which he - along with Isadora Duncan and Ralph Vaughan Williams -- had rebelled in the early years of the twentieth century.



**Figure 11.** BalletBoyz *Young Men* (2016)