

*The Previously Unexplored Correspondence
of
Robin Milford (1903-1959)*

No. 1; Date: January 28th? 1925?; Addressee: 'Peep' (Kirstie); Sent From: Epsom.

Pertinent Musical/Social/Personal Aspects	Comments
You will be glad to hear that Mr Foss & Mr Greaves both like my 'Pied Piper' very much, & the former told Frosty that he thought my Composition was getting better & better & a great advance on what I used to do. Which is rather encouraging coming from the brilliant & up-to-date Hubert! I am sending you the first copy of 'Rutterkin'. It looks quite jolly I think, 'Parson Hogg' should follow soon. Dick asked a Mr Turberville, a friend of his who has just gone as a senior class master to Epsom College, to dinner here last night. He seemed a very nice, shy little man. After dinner Dick was keen to try through 'Rutterkin' as there were 3 rich voices (not counting Frank), so we all went upstairs & made an awful row bawling it. I also had to play my piano pieces (which I played a little better than the abominable way I have been playing them lately) ...	This is one of the very few occasions when Robin addressed Kirstie as 'Peep', and certainly in such an endearing manner, in writing, apart from musical dedications. It is a note to Kirstie, rather than a posted letter. Sadly, the remainder of this note is missing.

No. 2; Date: ?; Addressee: Kirstie; Sent From: Epsom.

Pertinent Musical/Social/Personal Aspects	Comments
Vaughan Williams was very nice to me today and said he liked a lot of my 1st movement very much. I am going to alter a certain amount, which he suggests. I should like to show you what he says, if I see you any time. <u>Please</u> no sit up late copying my music. It is very sweet of you to do it, but it will only be more worry if you get really ill also.	Written in pencil and undated. There is a personal aspect to this letter in that Robin is worried that he might be placing his work before Kirstie. Also he comments on one of his usual depressions. Clearly Kirstie is also ill at this point. Robin is not sure when he will see Kirstie again.

No. 3; Date: February 6th?; Addressee: Kirstie; Sent From: Epsom.

Pertinent Musical/Social/Personal Aspects	Comments
I want to get a lot of music done soon; to finish my 3 Psalm Preludes, to revise the Opera, to do the Violin & Viola Concerto, which is sketched out in 3 movements, to copy my piano pieces neatly & send them to Mr Balfour Gardiner, & to do some songs. Songs are very hard to do well. I hate the sloppy way a lot of people turn them out, but I am specially keen always to write beautiful songs now; & I know you would rather have few & good than the reverse. Earlier in the letter: ... I hope I shall grow very healthy and strong for you, my Treasure, shall lose my horrid complexion, & look a more fit companion for you, when I go about with you.	These works perhaps suggest this letter being written around 1925/1926 because the 'Psalm Preludes' were published by the OUP in 1927 (only two, not three), and the opera ('Vertue') was completed in 1927. The Violin Concerto was not completed until 1937, and the Viola Concerto was never completed. The reference to Balfour Gardiner shows Milford's respect for this great man. It is interesting to see Milford's thoughts on song composition. This earlier paragraph shows Milford's consciousness of his poor physical health and state. He clearly wishes to be strong and healthy for Kirstie. Sadly, this was never really to be the case.

No. 4; Date: February 20th?; Addressee: Kirstie; Sent From: Epsom.

Pertinent Musical/Social/Personal Aspects	Comments
... I have been feeling all day that I must come over to see you again, though I have heaps of work to do. But you come before all my work & everything else. Perhaps that isn't right, but anyhow you do & always will. Do you think we had better give up trying to meet every day, as I know it nearly always upsets something or interrupts you in something when I come over, & just wait for Sundays, & only meet in the week if it is easily convenient? If you take think that is best, I shall certainly take to writing & posting letters all the days I don't see you, for I cannot bear to let you go to bed without saying "God bless you Darling". I feel depressed tonight, I seem to have seen so little of you these last few days, & now this Sunday is all dished up, & perhaps it will be nearly a fortnight before I can really have a good long time with you. However – I am adding a 4th movement to my Concerto, a kind of glorified jig, but of course it will take me some time to finish.	"But you come before all my work & everything else ..." says it all. Could this refer to Milford's <i>Suite for Chamber Orchestra</i>, Op 5, which the composer may have changed to a concerto? This work certainly contains a 'jig'.

No. 5; Date: February 21st; Addressee: Kirstie; Sent From: Epsom.

Pertinent Musical/Social/Personal Aspects	Comments
My Own Darling Peep, I have just finished my solitary little tea. I had a kind of very dim hope that you might be able to share it with me, but I knew it was very unlikely. I am coming over in a few minutes just to leave this little note, but I know you will be working, & indeed I see how hard it is for us to meet except sometimes, so I will try & find as much time as I can for little letters, which I will bring over & drop in the letter-box, so that I need not disturb the household, & yet so that you will know a little about what I have been doing in the day. I am sorry you thought that I was putting my work before you today (just what I said I could never do, in my letter yesterday), but I think you must have known in your heart that it was not that; indeed I wasn't really doing any work at all. But I feel utterly depressed just now. We cannot play tennis (two lovely afternoons together & generally tea at the end, it used to be), we cannot go for our rides, which were going to be such fun, we cannot even have tea together, & sometimes we cannot meet though I have come all the way over to Ashstead, & as for lovely walks, & best of all beautiful peaceful times together with no one else near – well we did have a most lovely time last Sunday, so perhaps it is unfair to grumble at that, but I am thinking of this Sunday which will all be spoilt for me. I have just rung Daddy up & he will very glad to have all 3 of you. He asked if I was coming & I said I didn't think I would, there would be such a squash, rather hoping that he would say there was plenty of room, but he didn't. Any how I dare say I shouldn't have enjoyed it. Vaughan Williams was very nice to me today & said he liked a lot of my 1st	'Peep' was Milford's 'pet' name for Kirstie. It shows the composer's true love for her. The opening section of this letter shows Milford at his most vulnerable, sensitive, personal and frightened state – all with Kirstie, which is remarkable. It is the only negative piece of correspondence between them, showing Milford as a true Romantic, caring and loving individual. Depression is never far from the surface.

movement very much. I am going to alter a certain amount, which he suggests. I should like to show you what he says, if I saw you any time. Please do not sit up late copying my music. It is very sweet of you to do it, but it will only be one more worry if you get really ill also.

I am very glad you slept last night, though I do not feel tonight as if my praying for it helped much.

Oh I wish I could make you well & happy.

This probably refers to Milford's first symphony Op 12 (not recognised by the composer).

Milford's only concern, at this stage, was Kirstie.