

## Conducting the Croydon Phil the Trinity Way: Alan Kirby, Myers Foggin and James Gaddarn

**Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts**  
**8<sup>th</sup> May – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

For the past year the much-respected Croydon Philharmonic Choir has been celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> season. Whilst the choir has no connection with Trinity Laban today, its history is nevertheless closely related since their first three musical directors were all involved in some way with the then Trinity College of Music. The association began in 1914 when Alan Kirby, who became an honorary fellow of TCM and whose collection of conducting scores were eventually bequeathed to the college library, founded the choir. Forty-odd years later, the baton passed to Myers Foggin, a former principal of Trinity. Finally, James Gaddarn, who taught at the college for thirty-five years, conducted the choir between 1973 and 1999. This exhibition tells the story of these conductors through material housed here in our special collections. Exhibits include Alan Kirby's score of the *Apostles* (inscribed by Elgar when he guest-conducted the choir in 1933), Myers Foggin's personal scrapbook, and the programme for Adrian Boult's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday concert in 1969 at which the choir performed under James Gaddarn.

### **Alan Kirby (1889-1959)**

After founding the Croydon Philharmonic Choir in 1914 Alan Kirby continued to conduct it until his death in 1959. He was known particularly for his work on Elgar, and especially the oratorios *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* which at that time were rarely performed. Adrian Boult in his obituary of Kirby wrote, 'to hear him direct *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* was to gain an insight into these works and to feel a spiritual experience which comes only too rarely in the concert hall ... the performances were not just concerts of rare beauty, but acts of worship of deep significance'. Kirby was an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College of Music and bequeathed funds which enabled the college to establish

the Alan Kirby Prize for choral conducting. He left his collection of conducting scores to the National Federation of Music Societies and these were later given to the college, forming part of the Bridge Memorial Library.

### **Myers Foggin CBE (1908-1986)**

Myers Foggin conducted the Croydon Philharmonic in the 1960s and 1970s. He was also Principal of Trinity College of Music for fourteen years until 1979 and president of the National Federation of Music Societies from 1967 to 1972. Although Myers Foggin was around 20 years younger than Alan Kirby, he conducted from an older edition of Handel's *Messiah* and his markings suggest that his approach to performance of the work may have been similarly 'old-fashioned'.

### **James Gaddarn (1924-2012)**

Of the three conductors represented here, James Gaddarn had the longest association with Trinity. He was a student here, studying under Charles Kennedy Scott, and later became professor of vocal studies, teaching at the college for thirty-five years. He was the musical director of the Croydon Philharmonic between 1973 and 1999 and during that time employed the choir in several Trinity performances. He died just two years ago in March 2012. Obituaries can be read in the [Guardian](#) and the [Independent](#).

## Exhibits

1. Alan Kirby's score of Vaughan Williams, *Sea Symphony* (London: Stainer & Bell, [1918?]), 782.99 VAU (Bridge Memorial Library). Inscribed by Henry Wood and the composer.
2. Alan Kirby's score of Handel, *Messiah* (London: Novello, 1902), 782.99 HAN (Bridge Memorial Library)
3. Alan Kirby's score of Elgar, *The Apostles*, 782.99 ELG OVERSIZE (Bridge Memorial Library). Inscribed by Elgar when he conducted the work in Croydon on 6 May 1933.
4. Myers Foggin's address book and scrapbook, MS / MISC 3
5. Programme for Myers Foggin's retirement concert from TCM which he conducted on 9 July 1979 at the Royal Festival Hall, TCM 14/1/3
6. Cyril Cork, 'An appreciation of Myers Foggin', in *TCM Bulletin*, 46 (October 1986), pp.3-4 (TCM archive)
7. Myers Foggin's score of Handel, *Messiah* (London: Novello & Co., [1859]), 782.99 HAN (Bridge Memorial Library)
8. James Gaddarn's copy of Elgar, *The Kingdom* (London: Novello, 1907), 782.99 ELG OVERSIZE (Bridge Memorial Library)
9. Programme for Adrian Boult's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday concert, Royal Albert Hall, 8/4/1969, Blackheath Halls Archive, BH-E
10. TCM concert programmes involving the Croydon Philharmonic Choir and conducted by James Gaddarn, TCM 14/1/3