



The Eric Thiman Collection

Newsletter No 1

As part of the work of the Eric Thiman Collection, we will be sending Newsletters to all who have expressed an interest, or have a historical connection with Dr Thiman. This is the first of these, detailing the beginnings of setting up the collection, and the launch day and exhibition at the start of October. We aim to produce a newsletter two or three times a year. If you know anyone else who would like to be included in the circulation of the newsletters, please send their contact details (email for preference, or postal address) to Guy Turner – his contact details are at the end of the Newsletter. Thank you.

THE ERIC THIMAN COLLECTION

Patrons

*Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, Principal, The Royal Academy of Music
The Very Revd Dr John Moses, Dean Emeritus of St Paul's Cathedral
The Revd Ian Howarth, Chair of the Methodist Church, Birmingham District*

*Frances Thiman, Eric Thiman's Niece
Paul Hale, Rector Chori, Southwell Minster
Guy Turner, Archivist*

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COLLECTION IN SOUTHWELL

Dr Thiman's brother, Cedric, was for many years Head of Languages at Nottingham High School. Cedric's daughter, Frances (known to some as Celia) still lives in Nottingham, and she and Paul Hale, Rector Chori of Southwell Minster, hatched the idea that we might house a collection of Thiman's work in the new choir library at the Minster.

This remained at the planning stage until this spring, when the refurbishment of the Archbishop's Palace, next to Southwell Minster, neared completion – the new Paul Hale Choir Library is part of that refurbishment, and space in the library has been made available for the collection.

At this point Guy Turner was appointed archivist for the collection. Guy is a Lay Clerk in the Minster Choir and, when he was a student in the early seventies, knew and sung for Dr Thiman in the Elysian Concert Society.

The first aim of the collection is to collect a copy of each of the 600+ pieces that Dr Thiman wrote. We are also collecting anything else of historical interest connected with him – recordings, photos, concert programmes, letters, press cuttings etc. We also have a number of sets of choral pieces.

Our main source for the collection has been Gerald Barnes, Thiman's long-time friend and collaborator, and through Gerald we already have copies of about 450 of the pieces. About half of that number has already been catalogued. Following letters and articles in the musical press, many other people have been in touch to express interest, and to donate pieces to the collection. Many thanks to all of them.

The aim will be to make the collection available to anyone who wishes to study Thiman's Music (there is already a PhD proposal). There is a desk with computer next to the room where the collection is being installed. We also hope to promote performances of Thiman's music, particularly by making the choral sets available to interested groups.

THE LAUNCH

To launch the Collection we held a lunchtime concert at Southwell Minster, which was attended by friends and relatives of Dr Thiman, and several people with an academic or performing interest in his music, as well as the regular Minster audience. The programme was as follows:

Four Partsongs

There is a Lady - Sigh No More, Ladies - A Song of Parting - My Pretty Maid

Two Extracts from *The Last Supper*

A New Commandment - The Way, the Truth and the Life

Organ Solo *Improvisation on Crimond*

Songs

Evening In Lilac Time - Dainty Fine Bird - Madonna and Child - I wandered lonely as a cloud

Organ Solo *A Tune for the Tuba*

Treble Solo *The Path to the Moon*

Ring Out Ye Crystal Spheres

Paul Hale played the organ, and performers included Baritone David Kirby-Ashmore, who sang for Dr Thiman at the City Temple, and appears on the 1980 recording of Thiman's music by the City Temple Choir.

Later that day Evensong included the organ music, *Meditation on 'Slane'* and *Postlude alla Marcia*, played by Simon Hogan, and the introit *Exalt ye the Lord* and anthem *I praised the Earth* (No2 of *Three Choral Songs of Praise*) sung by the Cathedral Choir.

THE EXHIBITION

Those attending the launch were also able to visit the small exhibition about Dr Thiman's life and work, which was presented for the first two weeks of October in the State Chamber in the Archbishop's Palace. This included the sculpture relief of Dr Thiman, kindly lent by Caterham School (Thiman's own school); Thiman's own silver napkin ring from the Music Professor's Dining Room at the Royal Academy of Music (with thanks to the RAM); scores and manuscripts; hymnbooks and academic books by Thiman; photos, LPs cover and concert programmes from the Park Chapel, the City Temple and the Elysian Concert Society; one of Thiman's own scrapbooks of press cuttings; magazine articles and academic theses about his music; letters – including 'fan-mail' from four continents, and interesting letters from both Eric Routley and Arthur Hutchings.

It is expected that there will shortly be photographs of the exhibition on the Collection's page of the Southwell Minster Website:

<http://www.southwellminster.org/eric-thiman-archive.html>

THE FUTURE

Over the next few months, we plan to:

Finish cataloguing the music copies we already have, and then publish the list on the internet.

List and then attempt to locate all the music we do not yet possess.

Locate Thiman's manuscripts, if they still exist. We have only a handful so far.

Continue encouraging performances of Thiman's music – there will be a carol in the Minster's carol service for instance, and we hope to include some of his music in the Southwell Music Festival 2015.

To make contact with as many of those interested in or connected with Dr Thiman as possible.

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO

If you would like to contribute to the work of the Collection, please send a cheque (made out to *Southwell Minster Choir Association*) to Guy Turner at the address below.

Please put us in touch with anyone you know who might like to be kept informed of the work of the Collection.

If you have any copies of Thiman's music please let us know in case we do not already have a copy. Thanks to the many people who have already sent music.

If you are involved with any concert series, church or choir which might be putting on a performance of Thiman's music, we can help publicise it – or support any group who is considering a performance and might need copies etc.

Many thanks to all who have already shown interest and support to this venture.

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