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Constant Lambert: Beyond The Rio Grande

By Stephen Lloyd



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To the economist and ballet enthusiast John Maynard Keynes he was potentially the most brilliant man he'd ever met; to Dame Ninette de Valois he was the greatest ballet conductor and advisor this country has ever had; to the composer Denis ApIvor he was the greatest, most lovable, and most entertaining personality of the musical world; whilst to the dance critic Clement Crisp he was quite simply amusician of genius. Yet sixty years after his tragic early death Constant Lambert is little known today. As a composer he is remembered for his jazz-inspired *The Rio Grande* but little more, and for a man who selflessly devoted the greater part of his life to the establishment of English ballet his work is largely unrecognized today. This book amply demonstrates why he deserves to be held in greater renown. With numerous music examples, extensive appendices and a unique iconography, every aspect of the career and life of this extraordinary, multi-talented man is examined. It looksnot only at his music but at his journalism, his talks for the BBC, his championing of jazz (in particular Duke Ellington), and - more privately - his long-standing affair with Margot Fonteyn. This is an indispensable biography for anyone interested in Constant Lambert, ballet and British musical life in the first part of the twentieth century. STEPHEN LLOYD is a writer on British music and author of *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Boydell, 2001).



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Editorial Review

Review

Lloyd is the first biographer to tell the full unexpurgated story. MUSIC AND LETTERS Terrific. THE GUARDIAN BOOKS OF THE YEAR Intensely researched ... Lloyd covers every aspect of the man's life ... there is scarcely a dull page throughout the book. (Five stars) CLASSICAL MUSIC A model of meticulous scholarship, as authoritative as it is compendious. ... The result is both majestic and moving. THE GUARDIAN This magisterial book is the best possible case for a Lambert revival. No Lambert enthusiast should miss it. GRAMOPHONE This magnificent book is a wholly remarkable achievement ... This book is more than valuable, appearing at a time when one had begun to imagine that studies of this importance and quality were in serious danger of dying out. Stephen Lloyd has restored this reader's faith in British musical scholarship and the publishers equally deserve our praise for the distinguished manner in which this book is presented. MUSICAL OPINION (A) monumental new biography ... a superb resource, thoroughly researched and rich in appendices. DANCING TIMES A revelation ... well researched and well written ... this fine biography enables us to put Lambert's life and achievements objectively in context. ELGAR SOCIETY JOURNAL I strongly recommend this book to all to share my fascination for a long-lost era when giants walked the earth ... If Constant Lambert himself is now a somewhat obscure figure to many, this book should bring him into a much clearer focus. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS SOCIETY JOURNAL Full of great names ... it's a wonderful history of British music at that period. An intriguing and marvellous book ... (with a) tremendous amount of research. BBC RADIO 3, MUSIC MATTERS Fascinating ... This is a very detailed account of a working life ... Stephen Lloyd gives us a satisfying number of letters both to and from Lambert, allowing us a sense of his enchanting voice. THE SPECTATOR BR> Lambert's fascinating, multifaceted personality and Lloyd's informed insights keep us turning the pages. (Four stars out of five.) BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE As close to definitive as a biography can be. Mr Lloyd gets absolutely everything right ... Far more important, Mr. Lloyd makes a compelling case for Mr. Lambert's continuing significance ... I hope it soon finds its way into the hands of a smart orchestral conductor looking for an underappreciated composer to champion. WALL STREET JOURNAL

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