Queens College Research Enhancement Grant for Summer 2016
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Arts and Humanities
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Project Description
A $5,000 Research Enhancement Grant will fund a research trip to the United Kingdom to complete archival research for my substantial article “Sir Granville Bantock: A Forgotten ‘Pioneer of Contemporary British Music’,” which is an expansion of a paper I read at the April 2015 The State We’re In Conference in Surrey, UK.¹ The article will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal, such as the Musical Quarterly, the Proceedings of the Royal Association of Music, or the Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland. Drawing upon Jay Winter’s “pluralistic approach” and using contemporary writings on Bantock, his music, and issues of identity and modernism, this project will use Bantock’s music and career as a lens through which British music culture before and after the Great War may be reassessed. The resulting article will explore how political and social anxieties of the time affected expressions of modernism and British identity in music as well as the framing of British musical history.

Sir Granville Bantock: A Forgotten “Pioneer of Contemporary British Music”
In the years leading up to the Great War, some British critics called Sir Granville Bantock (1868-1946) “one of the most brilliant of the younger generation of composers” (Musical Times [Nov 1906]: 758) who, along with Joseph Holbrooke and Sir Edward Elgar, “forms a triumvirate from which the highest musical achievements are to be expected” (Musical Opinion [Jul 1911]: 683-4). His multifaceted career as a composer, conductor, educator, and promoter of contemporary European and British music significantly impacted Britain’s musical life, particularly his compositional career—which embraced a wide array of interests, ranging from Celtic, Tudor and Elizabethan music to the music of so-called “Oriental” cultures and Classical antiquity—and his support of contemporary music. Yet Bantock never comfortably fit within the prevalent narratives of British music in the twentieth century, what Aidan Thomson calls “the seemingly inevitable, seamless narrative, running from [Sir Hubert H.] Parry and [Sir Charles Villiers] Stanford, through [Sir Edward] Elgar, Vaughan Williams, [Benjamin] Britten and [Michael] Tippett, to the Manchester school,” which featured Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Alexander Goehr. This narrow chronicle of British music ignores the fragmentation of Anglo-British culture leading up to and after the Great War, and the competing artistic expressions that this generated as well as music outside of London. Bantock spent most of his career as Principal of the Birmingham and Midland Institute of Music (1900-1934) and Peyton Professor of Music at Birmingham University (1908-1934), and was a central figure during Birmingham’s rise as an important musical center in the early twentieth century. However, most British music scholarship has, until recently, focused on music in London and, among contemporaneous composers, those who embraced pastoralism, inspiration from folk music, and the rise of modern music after the Great War. Bantock’s legacy as a composer mostly rests on his initial reception as a modernist and “Oriental” composer, tendencies at odds with prevailing critical tastes, and the fact that his career was largely based outside of London weakened his influence within establishment circles. This project shows how the Great War served as a dividing point in British culture resulting in privileging certain types of musics and culture over others.

¹I have submitted a paper proposal to read a revised version of this paper at the national American Musicological Society meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, in November 2016. Completing the archival research this summer would be extremely beneficial in revising this paper.
In 1904, a German critic labelled Britain *das Land ohne Musik*. This unwarranted moniker triggered self-conscious anxieties that shaped British musical culture from the turn of the century through the Second World War with the Great War marking a major change in how natives perceived and promoted their music. As the reception of Bantock’s music demonstrates, critical shifts in what defined “modern” music significantly altered composers’ careers. While the *avant-garde* art of Germany in the first half of the twentieth century has dominated the definition of “modern,” with French art following closely behind, Britain (and other nations) developed their own responses. The success of Bantock’s pre-war works, for example, illustrate his skill as an orchestrator—a crucial element of modern music before World War I—while the less enthusiastic reception of his inter-war compositions suggest that his retention of broadly tonal harmonic language failed to embrace new trends in pitch organization then considered essential to a modernist idiom. By taking a broader view of Bantock’s place within British musical culture and larger issues of identity and modernism, it becomes possible to address why Bantock, once an important figure, was forgotten.

Recent scholarship on British music has proven that, rather than being *das Land ohne Musik*, Britain enjoyed a rich musical culture throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though much of this research focuses on a London-centric view of music, often emphasizing a top-down approach foregrounding dominant institutions and composers (as in Hughes and Stradling’s *The English Musical Renaissance 1840-1940*), and studies of twentieth-century music in Britain tend to employ a narrow view of modernism relying on contemporary German models, which were at odds with the largely conservative nature of British culture at the time. Yet, as Jay Winter has noted, “[c]ultural history is a chorus of voices; some louder than others, but they never sound alone” (*Remembering War*, 136). My project engages with and contributes to two recent shifts in scholarship: expanding the London-centric view of British music to include the entire British Isles (including issues of nationalism and identity in music, whether British, Celtic, English, Irish, Scottish, or Welsh) and reassessing the narrow view of modernism in music. Winter’s scholarship on the fragmentation of identities from the 1890s through the Great War, placed within his work on memory and remembrance, provides a broader framework for this article and an opportunity to place music in Britain within this larger context.

Thus far, research on Bantock emphasizes isolated stylistic or employment periods, compositions, or individual aspects of his career. In reexamining existing (yet underutilized) contemporary sources, this project will study how Bantock was viewed throughout his career and shortly after his death. Reception of Bantock’s music and career varied significantly over his fifty-plus year career, and contemporary writings about his music illustrates how modernism and musical culture developed in Britain. For example, successive editions of the *Grove Dictionary of Music* increasingly downplayed his role as a modern composer, emphasizing instead his compositions based on Oriental topics and Elizabethan and folk music, but Chester’s 1922 miniature essay on the composer touts him as a champion of modernism who happened to be interested in Oriental and Scottish topics. Yet, after his death in 1946, Bantock soon vanished from scholarship on British music. Exploring the history of British music through a wider lens encompasses the multitude of musics, identities, and musics throughout the British Isles (and elsewhere). This not only includes the music of Bantock, but of others whose expressions of Britishness and modernism during the interwar period also lay outside mainstream practices (such as Arnold Bax, Joseph Holbrooke, and Cyril Scott), as well as those whose careers were centered outside of London.
Project Budget and Justification

This proposal requests $5,000 to fund a summer 2016 research trip to the United Kingdom. I have also applied for a NEH Summer Stipend, which is $6,000 for 8 weeks of research. If I receive this stipend, Research Enhancement funds would supplement the NEH funds. If I do not receive the NEH award, the $5,000 would partially fund five weeks in the United Kingdom. Partial funding from the Research Enhancement Grant would result in a shortened trip that would hinder completing the archival research necessary to finish this project.

For my article, my methodology relies on reviewing Bantock’s papers, letters, manuscripts, and contemporary writings on his music (including reviews and archival resources) in order to explore these shifting currents leading up to and after World War I within the larger view of British (and European) music. I have already completed some archival research, notably at the BBC Written Archives, preliminary work with the Bantock Collections (which includes manuscripts, letters, and other documents) at both in the Special Collections Department of the Birmingham University Library and the Worcestershire Council Archives, and through journals available digitally in the United States (particularly The Musical Times). I will use the research funds for travel to the United Kingdom for five or eight weeks during the summer to complete my archival work consulting the Bantock Collection in the Birmingham University Library; the Birmingham University School of Music archives; Birmingham and Midland Institute of Music faculty archives; materials at the City of Birmingham Library; the Worcestershire Council Archives; the British Library to consult contemporary newspapers and periodicals (particularly the Monthly Musical Record, Musical Opinion, and Musical Standard), Birmingham newspapers, and other publications unavailable in the US); and Bantock’s diaries and other personnel documents held by his descendants in the greater London area.

### Estimated Budget

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### Funding

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<td>NEH Summer Stipend (application pending)</td>
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<td>Research Enhancement Grant</td>
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<td><strong>Total Funding</strong></td>
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2I should know the results of my application in March. Only 9% of applicants for 2015 were granted funds.  
3Costs based on perspective hotels and current conversion rates.  
4A UK phone number is vital for connecting with colleagues and scholars in the UK. This figure is for a SIM card and pay-as-you minutes as I already own a UK cell phone.
JENNIFER OATES, Ph.D.

PUBLICATIONS


“Practical Ways to Bring Information Literacy into the Undergraduate Music Curriculum.” College Music Symposium, 44 (2004): 74-82.


Manuscripts under development


“Navigating the Uncharted Seas of British Electronic Resources.” article to be submitted to Notes, in progress.

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Sir Granville Bantock: A Forgotten “Pioneer of Contemporary British Music,”” The State We’re In: Directions in Researching Post-1900 British Music, University of Surrey, 16-17 April 2015


“Provincial or National? The Edinburgh Dunedin Association and the Articulation of British Identity, 1911-1917,” Biennial Conference for Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Cardiff, Wales, 24-27 June 2013


“Navigating the Uncharted Seas of British Electronic Resources,” National Music Library Association meeting, Dallas, Texas, 17 February 2012

“‘Thank God, it is British!’: The Scots’ Contribution to Nineteenth-Century British Music,” Eighth Biennial Conference for Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Queen's University Belfast, 21-24 July 2011

“Scotland, the Celtic North, and the Sea: Bantock’s Hebridean Symphony (1915),” the Greater New York Chapter of the American Musicological Society, Wagner College, Staten Island, New York, 16 October 2010 and North American British Music Studies Association, Fourth Biennial Conference, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, 29 July-1 August 2010


“Brigadoon: Lerner and Loewe’s Scotland,” Musical Theatre in 1957 Symposium, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 9-10 November 2007


**GRANTS, HONORS AND AWARDS**

- NEH Summer Stipend 2016, application pending
- Ralph Vaughan Williams Fellowship, 2004