

# **Julian Clifford – The phenomenon (1877 – 1921)**

## **An introduction**

### **Synopsis**

Julian Seymour Clifford studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire and the Royal College of Music. He was a talented musician, composer, conductor and concert pianist, conducting many orchestras around the country, and when he was 29, was engaged to conduct the Harrogate Municipal orchestra for the summer season and stayed from 1906 -1921.

He gave the first provincial performance of Elgar's Second Symphony in 1911 and soon after that he invited Elgar to the Kursaal at Harrogate to conduct the Enigma Variations and Schumann's Piano Concerto with Clifford as soloist.

He engaged artists such as Kreisler, Melba and Paderewski and, as musical director as well as general entertainments manager to the town, influenced the musical flavour of the place greatly and widened its fast growing reputation.

Clifford was a lively personality, and as a conductor, his showmanship delighted his audiences. He also composed a variety of works including a piano concerto, a song cycle and a tone poem.

He was recognised as an outstanding conductor who championed British music, created a permanent orchestra and raised standards of orchestral playing. His compositions, though popular at the time are now largely unknown.

He took the orchestra to Hastings in 1919 for the winter seasons, still spending the summer in Harrogate. His sudden death in 1921, aged 44, was a great shock to both towns. He is buried in Hastings St Leonards.

## **Finzi Trust Scholarship 2012- 13**

### **Dr Frankie Williams**

# Julian Clifford – The phenomenon (1877 – 1921)

## An introduction

*‘The phenomenon was called Julian Clifford. Tall, slim, with wavy hair carefully parted on the right and sufficient left at the back to establish that he was indeed an artist, he belonged to the comparatively new race of virtuoso conductors’* – this was Kenneth Young’s introduction to the conductor of the Harrogate Municipal Orchestra (1906-1921) in his book – ‘Music’s great days in the Spas and Watering places’(Macmillan). Clifford was also referred to as the *‘darling of the Kursaal’* and described as *‘the glamorous and popular Julian Clifford, who attracted large crowds regularly’* (Harrogate Advertiser - Neesam).



Julian Clifford - Manager of the Kursaal, Harrogate 1906

So who was this phenomenon, this virtuoso charismatic musician?

## 1877-1901

Julian Seymour Clifford was born on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1877 at 13 Colville Square, Bayswater, London, the third child of Thomas Clifford (1844-1909) and Caroline Augusta Octavia Brooke (Clifford) who were married in 1869. Thomas and Caroline had two other children, Caroline and Thomas, who were born in Dublin in 1874 and 1875 respectively. Caroline Augusta came from Irish landed gentry, her grandfather being Sir Joseph Brooke Bt. She was musical and a piano pupil of Sir William Sterndale Bennett, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music. She died in 1879 leaving trusts from a pre-marriage settlement for her husband and separately for her children. The children aged 5, 4 and 2 were sent to live with their maternal grandmother and aunts in Staplehurst in Kent. In 1888 the two boys attended Ardingly College, moving on to Tonbridge School in Kent in 1889. Julian started violin lessons in 1884, aged 7, with the father of W Frye Parker and was giving solo recitals by the age of 10. In 1892 after their grandmother died, Thomas went to study law and then to join the army (Connaught Rangers), and had a distinguished military career; Julian studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire where he was organist at the English church and then to the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London. At the RCM he studied the organ with the Master of the Queen’s Music, Sir Walter Parratt, and piano with Frederic Cliffe. He also played the organ at King Charles the Martyr at Tunbridge Wells.

Clifford left the RCM in July 1896, took up residence in London and, although he had gained a diploma on the organ at Leipzig, decided to focus on the piano and went to study with Jozef Sliwinski, the Polish pianist who had studied with Rubinstein and Leschetizky, and was known as an

outstanding interpreter of Chopin and Schumann in particular. In 1897 Clifford wrote *Grande Valse Caprice*, dedicating it to Jozef Sliwinski, and performed it on 3<sup>rd</sup> June at the Steinway Hall, London.



Entry in Autograph Book - Grand Valse Caprice

1898 saw further public performances including his *Three Episodes* for piano on 23<sup>rd</sup> May at St James Hall London: 'a word of praise may be given to Mr Clifford's fanciful new pianoforte sketches or episodes' (The Times 26 May 1899), and a Chopin recital at Steinway Hall London in July. He completed his *Piano Concerto in E minor* in 1899, giving a performance, possibly the premiere, on Christmas Eve at the Queen's Hall. By 1900 he was established as a successful young pianist with a number of compositions for both piano and voice being performed in London and around the country. He had formed the Julian Clifford Concert Party with the violinist John Dunn and the cellist Clyde Twelvetrees. In 1900, *Song of Spring*, with words by Edward Teschemacher was added to his list of compositions, and his *Piano Concerto* was given a number of further performances including Llandudno in September and a performance at a National Sunday League Concert in October. This was soon to be followed by a song *Farewell Sweet Love*, with words by A. Valdemar. It had a simple violin obbligato, but was thought 'rather commonplace' by The Times on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1901, 'it is a pleasant drawing room piece of its time and has an enigmatic imaginative romantic flow'. It was later arranged for cornet and also for euphonium, and was often performed at the Kursaal, Harrogate.

## 1902 - 1906

On 17 December 1902 Julian Clifford married the Rt Hon Alice Margaret Mary Henniker (daughter of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Henniker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Hartismere, MP for Suffolk and Governor of the Isle of Man) at All Saints Knightsbridge with a reception at the Thornham Estate in Suffolk. Alice Margaret was a

soprano with a wide interest in music who studied with Mathilde Marchesi. The Hon Mrs Clifford was well connected, and early in 1903 the Cliffords gave one of many Grand Orchestral Concerts in London at the Queen's Hall under the patronage of HRH Mary of Teck, the Princess of Wales at that time. On 22 December 1903 their son Julian Major Herbert Henniker Clifford was born, who also became an orchestral conductor. Clifford continued to perform as a soloist for the next few years including at Promenade concert number 12 on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August 1904 in Saint-Saens *Concerto no 4 in C minor* and Anton Rubinstein's *Etudes op23 No 2 in C major*. He had completed the song cycle '*Dream of Flowers*' in 1905 – with words written by his sister-in-law The Hon Ethel Henniker which was dedicated to Lady de Tabley of Knutsford, whom we believe was a friend of the Hon Mrs Clifford. It consists of five songs: *The Dream; The Rose; The Lily; The Poppies; and The Sea Pinks*. The songs have memorable melodies with challenging florid piano accompaniments. They were written for soprano but also work well for tenor. Clifford orchestrated *The Poppies* and *The Sea Pinks* and they were often performed. *The Rose* was also arranged for cornet.

By 1905 Clifford had a reputation as a fine pianist and had a number of compositions published. He had performed across the United Kingdom and in Europe, in front of royalty and at the Queens Hall Promenade concerts. He had accompanied soloists including the actress Mrs Patrick Campbell and Madame Alice Gomez, and had experience as a choral conductor in Tonbridge, Leipzig and with the West London Choral Society. Perhaps the most important development was his orchestral conducting. He conducted the National Sunday League concerts at the Queens Hall, forming the 'Julian Clifford Orchestra' from some of the best players in London. He had also conducted the Queen's Hall, Leipzig Conservatoire, London Symphony, Bournemouth and Bath orchestras and the Westminster Orchestral Society. He was already a keen advocate of British Music and was a leading light at the British Musical Festival at the Liege Exhibition of 1906, in which his *Piano Concerto* had a number of successful performances and was well received.

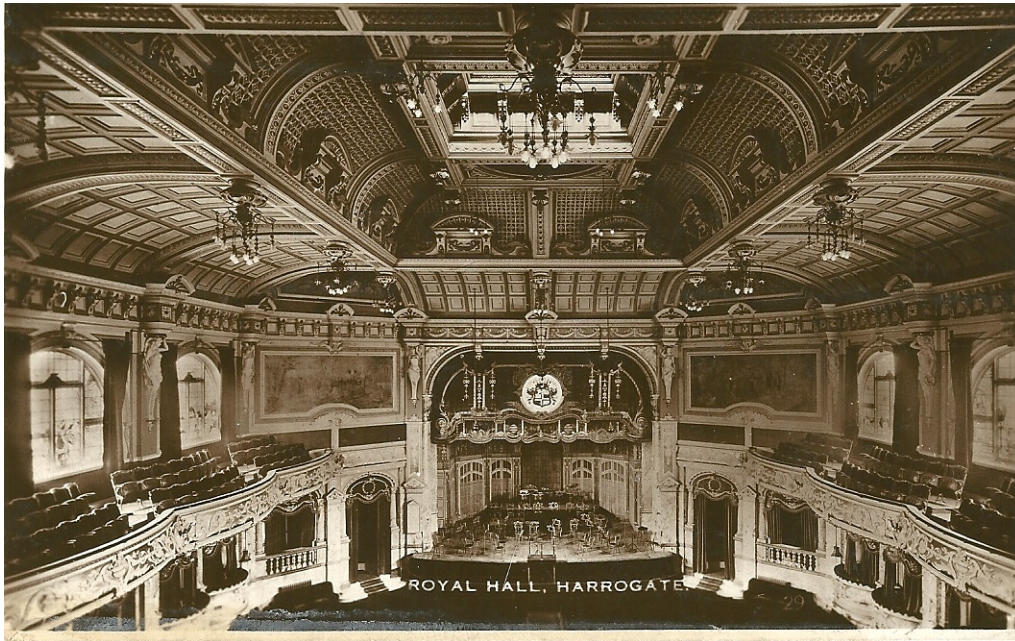
### **Harrogate 1906-13**

It was in Harrogate from 1906 that Clifford really began to forge his reputation. His family moved there when he was appointed Music Director of the Harrogate Corporation and Municipal Orchestra, living first at 8 Grove Road, and in 1909 at the White House, 8 Coppice Drive. He took over a smallish orchestra from the 'austere' C.L.Naylor. As well as the orchestra's conductor, Clifford held the post of the General Entertainments Manager for the Royal Hall, engaging performers of national and international standing. Harrogate was a popular spa town with beautiful gardens and heated springs, and was soon to have a fine reputation for its music. In the summer of 1907 Clifford, known as the '*popular head of the Music at the Kursaal*' (Harrogate Advertiser), had hit the headlines for taking the '*unprecedented step of stopping a concert because of the chattering of some women during an orchestral performance. Mr Clifford had stopped the orchestra and walked off the podium to general amazement*'. This scandalised older members of the council who were also present as it was a direct snub to the visitors. Younger councillors were, however, supportive, as was the Harrogate Advertiser, which printed advice on how to shush noisy visitors! Clifford had much work to do to educate his audiences in listening to classical music. In the autumn of 1907 Clifford's orchestra performed in London where The Times reported it as '*efficient*' and with '*a general assurance of ensemble*' but the string tone needed improvement and the wind was '*coarse and unbeautiful*' – so there was still a lot of work to do, but the Harrogate Municipal orchestra was on its way to an exciting future. The orchestra in Harrogate played on most days and was augmented to 45 once a week for the Wednesday afternoon concerts. Clifford started to build the orchestra using his musical personality. He introduced 'composer' nights; for example Beethoven on Mondays, Wagner on Tuesdays and Tchaikovsky on Thursdays! The orchestral season ran from March to October. Out of season the Cliffords toured and Julian taught, composed and conducted in Birmingham, London, across England and in Scotland. Among others, Clifford brought the following artists to Harrogate; John McCormack, La Scala Opera, Leopold Godovsky, Ernst von Dohnanyi, Marie Hall, Fritz Kreisler,



Busoni, Paderewski, Melba, Pavlova, Mark Hambourg, Henry Wood, and Thomas Beecham conducting Elgar's First Symphony. He also founded the Yorkshire Permanent Orchestra and established himself as a leading pianist and conductor aged only 32.

The Harrogate Orchestra was based at the Kursaal, built by Robert Beale and Frank Matcham, which seated 1400 with another 1500 in the promenade areas. It was later renamed 'Royal Hall' (in deference to anti-German sentiment) and described by the Harrogate Advertiser as a '*Palace of glittering gold*'. It is now the only surviving Kursaal in mainland UK. It was reopened by HRH Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales in January 2008 after a £10.7 million restoration.



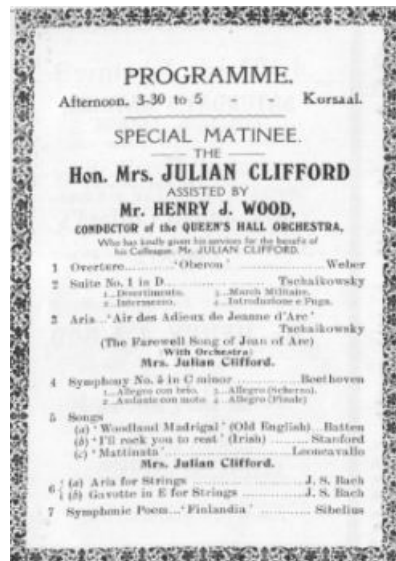
Royal Hall, Harrogate (after name change from Kursaal)

Clifford became unwell in the summer of 1908 with some kind of rheumatic complaint, being unable to walk or lift his arms. He mentioned this in the columns of the Harrogate Advertiser in June 1908: *'I should like to take this opportunity, if you will allow me, to express my sincere thanks to the many kind friends who have made enquiries during my illness. I can assure both them and also many patrons of the Kursaal unknown to me personally, who have been kind enough to express their regret at my absence, that it is a very great trial to me not to be able to do my work at this time of the year. At the present minute, even if I could walk at all (which I cannot), I have so much rheumatism in my right shoulder that it would be impossible for me to conduct. The day when I shall be able again to take my place at the Kursaal, I hope, is not far distant. It is my one great wish to take up my duties again, and I shall certainly not delay doing so one moment longer than is absolutely necessary.'*

His illness continued for a year until August 1909. In March of that year his father Thomas Clifford died while holidaying in Cannes and his uncle Robert Pearson Duncan also died that month (husband of Aunt Emma Jane who had helped look after Julian as a child). This all had a devastating effect on Clifford. Dr Churchill Sibley took over the baton at Harrogate. The council were quick to note the substantial and almost disastrous drop in ticket sales and revenue. They argued amongst themselves, wondering whether to dismiss Clifford and return to a more Music Hall approach to draw back the crowds. Luckily they voted to keep Clifford on as Music Director when he was well enough to return in August, and full halls were soon to show good returns and the classical

programmes and international nature of the programming was retained and saved alongside lighter programmes such as Illuminated Garden proms, performing sea lions and illusionists! Clifford had been responsible for all of this, but John Wilshire, the Kursaal Manager now took on everything outside the classical programme.

Clifford's illness gave him time to compose and his wife continued to give concerts across the country including premiering his song 'Heathertime' at a concert in Bath as reported in the Times of Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 1908. In June 1909 Henry Wood, a good friend of the Cliffords, gave a benefit concert in Harrogate in aid of Clifford.



Henry Wood Benefit Concert for Julian Clifford 1909

1910 was a year of consolidation with Clifford regaining his strength and energy. On Wed 18<sup>th</sup> May the *Funeral March from Gotterdammerung* was given its first Harrogate performance in memory of his late Most Gracious Majesty Edward the Seventh. Clifford gave recitals, played concertos, worked alongside Melba, Paderewski, Myra Hess, Kubelik, Backhaus, Liza Lehmann, and conducted works by Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Glazounov and Richard Strauss. He began to run public rehearsals on Mondays which were very popular and he conducted the Leeds Philharmonic Chorus of 280 voices.

1911 was an especially exciting year. On 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 1911 the Times announced: 'Mr Julian Clifford will give an orchestral concert at 8.15 at the Queen's Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra. An overture 'To the New Year' and a song cycle by the concert giver (Julian Clifford) will be heard, as well as Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and the last scenes from *Gotterdammerung*'. Clifford was very popular as Malcolm Neesam relates: 'Julian Clifford had a wide and loyal following. Audiences loved his handsome appearance, his dramatic manner on the podium, his white gloves, his flashy stocks with diamond pin ... he had transformed Harrogate's concert life'. Visitors in 1911 included Queen Alexandra, her niece Her Imperial Highness Grand Duchess Maria Georgievna of Russia, Queen Amelie of Portugal, Princess Victoria, Prince Henry of Russia (brother of the Kaiser) and Prince Christoph of Greece. Harrogate as a spa, enhanced by Clifford's superb musical programmes was a very popular resort.

By 1911 Harrogate was featured regularly in *The Musical Times*. The first provincial performance of Elgar's Second Symphony conducted by Julian Clifford on 9 August 1911 was hailed a great success, with the Harrogate audience appreciating the work '*more so than their London counterparts*'. The orchestra of 70 musicians had an unprecedented eight rehearsals and demand for seats was high. The symphony was dedicated to the memory of his late majesty King Edward VII and Clifford's performance '*brought about the full stateliness and kingly nature of the music*' (*Harrogate Advertiser*). Clifford was determined to raise standards of orchestral playing and this example of careful preparation impacted greatly on the players who were also his loyal colleagues and followers.

The 1912 season saw 26 weekly concerts and the birth of a daughter Margaret Stella. The success of Elgar's Second Symphony in Harrogate in 1911 resulted in a visit from Elgar. On Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 1912 Sir Edward Elgar conducted the Harrogate Municipal Orchestra in a 21<sup>st</sup> special symphony concert programme that opened with his *Imperial March*, followed by his overture *In the South* and *Variations on an Original Theme*. The second half of the concert saw Julian Clifford as soloist in the Schumann *Piano concerto* and ended with Elgar's *Chanson de Matin* and *Wand of Youth Suite*. The event was remembered by violinist Julian Best: '*In 1912 I was playing at the Majestic Hotel when Julian Clifford came up to the platform and asked whether I could do a rehearsal and concert at the Kursaal, as it was known then and now the Royal Hall. I jumped at the opportunity as Elgar was a great favourite of mine and I welcomed the honour of such an event.*' It was an event that showed just where the Harrogate Orchestra under Clifford's brilliant and inspired leadership had reached. The *Harrogate Advertiser* agreed: - '*The largely augmented symphony orchestra played admirably under Sir Edward's baton, and Mr Julian Clifford's playing of the Schumann Piano Concerto added interest to one of the best classical concerts of the season.*' Clifford was as comfortable as the soloist as he was as the conductor. Derek Hudson in his '*Norman O'Neill – a life of mine*' (1945) tells of a concert in Harrogate where O'Neill had promised to play the piano in his own composition for piano and orchestra '*– all went well at rehearsal, but at the last minute, perhaps his courage failed, and he and Clifford changed places – Norman conducting and Clifford playing.*'

1913 was the Wagner centenary year and another big and successful season for Clifford and Harrogate. To celebrate the centenary the famous Wagnerian singers Cecily Gleeson-White and Frank Mullings performed in two concerts with an augmented orchestra. Throughout his conducting career Clifford had given Wagner nights but also supported and was a great advocate for British composers, and on 27 May 1913 a British composers' night was held in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Kursaal. Others appearing at the Kursaal in 1913 included Tetrzzini, Melba, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Kreisler, Paderewski, Pavlova, Felice Lyne, Harry Lauder and Vesta Tilley. Violinist Julian Best was re-engaged by Clifford for the 1913 season, during which the soprano Tetrzzini appeared. Best writes: '*She didn't need an orchestra so the orchestra went to Scarborough where they joined the Spa orchestra there and the combined orchestras gave an afternoon concert in the Spa Pavilion with the two conductors being Clifford and Alick Maclean.*' In 1913 the Lord Mayor of London Sir David Burnett visited Harrogate to open the new pump room and attend a banquet at the wonderful Majestic Hotel. The orchestra performed Clifford's *Coronation March*, together with Tchaikovsky's *1812 overture*.

Clifford's schedule was strenuous and included symphony concerts, tea dances, solo recitals, teaching, lectures, booking artists, organising schedules for bandstands and other entertainments. He also started Saturday concerts in Leeds. He was an excellent organiser and had a flair for business as well as music. He also continued to compose. Clifford performed the Tchaikovsky *Piano Trio* with John Lawson, former leader of the Kursaal orchestra and James Messeas on cello in the Winter Gardens. He was also an associate of the Philharmonic Society.

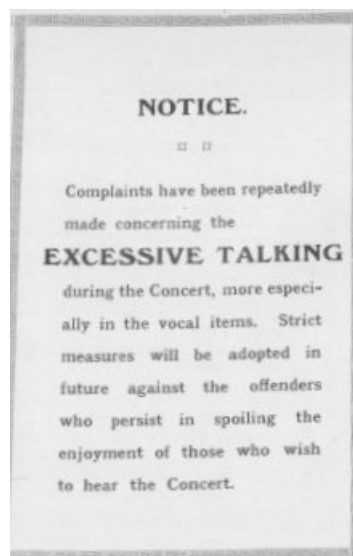
## 1914-18 The War Years

In January 1914 Clifford conducted the Yorkshire Permanent Orchestra in a performance of *Parsifal* by Wagner at the Leeds Coliseum followed by excerpts from *Parsifal* at the Lyceum Theatre in Sheffield on 7<sup>th</sup> February; he also conducted the Bradford Permanent Orchestra. March 1914 heralded the beginning of another great season for Julian Clifford and Harrogate. He wooed his audiences with varied performances and offered coupon tickets for symphony concerts that were transferrable. He wrote an open letter on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1914 to the Harrogate Advertiser: *'Thanking you (all the audiences) for your kind support during past seasons, and trusting that you will again help me in my endeavour to make this year's symphony concerts an even greater artistic and financial success than before'*.

Clifford had arranged an exciting programme of 26 concerts and a special concert, including works by Cowen, Farrar, Stanford, Dvorak, Brahms, Cesar Franck, Stravinsky, Liszt, Coleridge Taylor, Delius, Hervey, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Strauss (*Tod und Verklarung*) and of course some Clifford. Beethoven's Choral Symphony was planned together with the Leeds New Choral Society, and Hervey, Farrar and Sir Alexander Mackenzie were amongst those who would conduct their own works.

As was the custom the Mayor opened the season and informed the packed house that the previous financial year had been *'the most successful in every respect in the history of the Kursaal'*. The future prospects looked even brighter as they had retained the *'most able Music Director Mr Julian Clifford, who he knew would be welcomed by them and the thousands of visitors who would patronise the Kursaal during the season'*

On July 18 1914 Julian Clifford thanked the audience for their improved attention over the last fortnight following his earlier reprimand to the audience for chattering and rustling their papers during the orchestral pieces. He definitely had an educational role!



Programme notice 1914

In April 1914 the very English programme for St George's Day included *'Our Empire'* (Kiefert), a selection from Edward German's *Merrie England*, *Salut d'Amour* (Elgar) and *Three Light Dances* by Percy Grainger, as well as the first performance in Harrogate of Mendelssohn's *Violin concerto in A minor* with John Lawson as soloist. On 20<sup>th</sup> April 1914 prior to conducting at Birmingham Town Hall, Clifford was the first initiate to the Degree of Fellowcraft of the Mozart Lodge of Freemasons in Birmingham.

At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 Clifford joined the Volunteer Training Corps – 5<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshire Volunteers, although musical events carried on in Harrogate. On 12<sup>th</sup> August he shared the podium with Vaughan Williams, who conducted the first performance in Yorkshire of his



overture to *The Wasps*, and Clifford conducted the second performance of Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony*, and the first outside London. It was well received.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1914 a Grand Orchestral Concert for the War Fund took place - '*An orchestral concert such as probably has never been known in Harrogate before*'. It was organised by Julian Clifford who brought orchestral musicians from the Harrogate orchestra together with those from Leeds and Bradford, and musicians from the hotels. Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Clifford conducted this large body of instrumentalists, all of whom gave their services free. Clifford wrote in the Harrogate Advertiser on 28th August: '*Will you grant me space in your paper to thank the Harrogate hotel managers for their generosity in putting their orchestras at my disposal last Sunday? May I at the same time express my appreciation of the excellent playing that came from this quarter?*'

Thoughts of the war were never far away and many young men from Harrogate died before Christmas 1914. Following the Battle of Heligoland Bight on August 28<sup>th</sup> Clifford announced from the conductor's rostrum to enormous applause that the British North Sea Fleet had sunk four German destroyers; the orchestra then played the national anthems of the Allies. Clifford's brother Thomas was a regular soldier and in 1914 was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Prince of Wales Leinsters in France. The Hon Mrs Clifford's brother Lord Henniker was with the Rifle Brigade and she made sure parcels were sent regularly to them both and their men by the people of Harrogate. This is an extract from Captain Thomas Clifford's letter of 11<sup>th</sup> December 1914 on receiving a parcel: '*Please thank all the kind donors on behalf of the men and myself for the cigarettes and matches, socks, mufflers, shirts, rugs, pillows etc – messages, cards, notepaper and boracic ointment. The rug will do well in the trenches, though too good for such a use really. We may advance any day, and cannot carry much with us. It is awfully good of everyone at home to do so much for everyone out here. The men are extremely grateful and send their thanks to the kind friends who are giving their time and means to make the lot of thousands here more comfortable. You should see the terrible havoc the guns have made round here. I am awfully sorry for the wretched people, but a lot still live on the farms or what remains of them*'. He survived, despite being badly wounded at the battle of Ypres, and later became Commandant of Prisoner of War Camps in Egypt. Major Clifford relinquished command in 1920. He died in 1933.

A number of well-informed London families moved from London to Harrogate in the war years. For example Gerald Finzi's mother consulted Julian Clifford regarding composition lessons for Gerald when she moved to Harrogate in 1915. Clifford suggested his friend and colleague Ernest Farrar, himself a pupil of Charles Villiers Stanford. Ernest Farrar was the organist at Christ Church in Harrogate and dedicated various works to Clifford including his second orchestral rhapsody, *Lavengro*, the *Caprice for piano op 23*, *The Forsaken Mermaid* and *Variations on an Old English Sea Song op 25*. Clifford was a mentor to Farrar and they worked closely on many musical projects including arranging music to accompany William Russell's two hour silent film of *Tannhauser* shown on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1914. Some of Farrar's scores (in the Bodleian Library in Oxford) show Clifford's performance markings; Clifford performed them frequently. Having suggested that the young Gerald Finzi should study with Farrar, Clifford invited them to attend orchestral rehearsals, enabling Finzi to get to know many contemporary works – especially those of Elgar and Vaughan Williams. On 29<sup>th</sup> September 1915 the first performance of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* was given in Harrogate. Clifford conducted and Farrar had trained the choir.

1915 saw performances of Clifford's new song '*Stay not Away*', orchestrated versions of *Poppies* and *The Sea Pinks* from *A Dream of Flowers* and *Ode to the New Year*. He also arranged works for orchestra such as the *Marche Funebre* from the *Chant Seraphique* by Guilment in memory of Auber Norton, for many years the principal Second Violin of the Harrogate Orchestra. This piece was also played as a memorial to Francis Cecil Yates age 23 who was killed in action on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1915. Francis had worked at the Kursaal for seven years, first as a programme boy, later as Assistant Electrician and Stage Manager. He was one of the first to enlist when war broke out. The war was never far away.

Clifford continued to perform chamber music, including the Dvorak *Piano Quintet* with John Lawson (violin I), Leonard Busfield (violin II), Thornton Turner (viola) and James Messeus (cello). He also gave piano recitals: for example a programme on 15<sup>th</sup> July included Tchaikovsky's *1<sup>st</sup> Piano Concerto*, Cesar Franck's *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* and Chopin's *Scherzo in C# minor, Impromptu number 2* and *Etude on the Black notes*. He accompanied artistes such as Clara Butt and organised visits by artistes such as Constance Collier, seen advertised below.



A Walking Advertisement

Clifford had toured extensively in Belgium in the early 1900's and now gave charity concerts in aid of the Belgians. As well as supporting British composers he also supported women composers. 1915 saw concerts by Juliette Folville, Professor of Music at the Liege Royal Conservatoire and Dame Ethel Smyth, both of whom conducted at least one of their own works. Smyth conducted the overture of her new opera *'The Boatswain's Mate'*, said to be modelled on Emmeline Pankhurst – Mrs Pankhurst was in the audience! In September Madame Pavlova invited Clifford to conduct for her before she left for her American tour.

1915 also saw the patronage of Her Imperial Highness Grand Duchess Maria Georgievna of Russia (sister of Prince Andrew of Greece, our Duke of Edinburgh's father), who is said never to have missed a Julian Clifford concert. Clifford and the orchestra gave many charity concerts under her patronage in aid of the hospitals. The Grand Duchess stayed in Harrogate for the duration of the war, while tragically her husband and other Russian aristocrats who returned to Russia were killed in the Revolution.

As part of the Shakespeare Tercentenary celebrations in the presence of the King and Queen on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1916, the British Academy, led by Sir George Alexander with the London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Henry Wood, Sir Thomas Beecham, Edward German, Hamilton Harty, Norman O'Neill, Landon Ronald and Julian Clifford took part in a Shakespearian Music event at Drury Lane Theatre. Clifford was honoured to be involved.

He was interested in the medium of film. For example on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1916 the orchestra accompanied Griffith's film *'Birth of a Nation'* and Clifford also worked with Claude Verity who was developing a way of synchronising recorded music with moving film.

Clifford continued to add many new titles to the orchestral library. Much would have been in manuscript. Programming was obviously mainly built on that repertoire, and as Neesam suggests, this is why many works were repeated a great deal. The library of music was intact until 1930 but was sold and has disappeared, with many of the works seemingly lost. Clifford maintained a tough schedule and continued to develop musical taste in his audiences.

The violinist Julian Best revisited Harrogate for the 1917 season: *'My sister and husband had moved to Harrogate in 1916 to take over a garage and petrol station in Valley Mount, a few yards from Coldbaston Road, so I spent two weeks with the orchestra. There were three days rehearsing before we opened. There were two newcomers in the first violins desk, the leader was a very fine violinist named Alex Cohen. I looked upon Clifford as a very clever man. We had the finest artists at Harrogate and there was never a hitch. I studied him very closely and learned a lot from his conducting'*.

In August 1917 Clifford conducted a Grand Wagner Concert including the *Prelude to Act 3 of Lohengrin*, the *Prelude to Parsifal*, the *Overture and Venusberg music from Tannhauser*, the *Ride of the Valkyries*, Frank Mullings singing the *Prize Song from Mastersingers* and the *Forging Song from Siegfried*, and the *Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan and Isolde*. It is noteworthy that there was no embargo on German music in the First World War. 1917 also saw Clifford conducting the Bradford Permanent and Leeds Symphony Orchestras, the Sunday League Concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra and the New Beecham Orchestra in Birmingham.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 1917 the Musical Times reported: *'Mr Julian Clifford had secured from his small but efficient orchestra a high level of performance, and as he is now a conductor of the Bradford and Leeds Permanent Orchestras, he should be in a position to raise the standard of orchestral performance still higher in the West Riding'*, and in the same edition they reported: *'Harrogate, the famous spa in the West Riding of Yorkshire has profited vastly from the war.... During the war the town has been unprecedentedly thronged by numerous drinkers (of the cure) and bathers who in other times would be at Carlsbad or on the continent. A forced patriotism, but for the good of all concerned'*.

In the 1918 season, Julian Clifford continued to support British composers and conductors including Arnold Trowell, Weston Nicholls, Holbrooke, Holst, O'Neill and Mackenzie. However in 1918 Lieutenant Ernest Farrar, the promising young composer, was killed in action. The Clifford family was devastated as was Farrar's young pupil Gerald Finzi. In response to the death of Farrar, which reflected the sadness, tragedy, horror and loss of the First World War, Clifford wrote the tone poem *Lights Out*, probably his best composition and dedicated to Farrar, which now appears to be lost.

The war ended. It had had a deep impact on every family, and the world would never be the same again. Clifford and his orchestra remained in Harrogate from March to October 1919. A number of Farrar's works were included in the season's programme and Clifford gave the first performance on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1919 of *Lights Out* in memory of his friend: *'a graceful and sincere tribute, showing a more distinct creative power than any of his previous compositions'* Musical Times 1<sup>st</sup> November 1919. The programme note read:

*'In memory of my dear friend, Ernest Farrar, killed in Action September 18<sup>th</sup> 1918. This work needs no long explanation, as its meaning is made clear by the Dedication on the Score. It is intended as an impression of the musician, whose musical ideals would have led him far in the world of music and of Art, of the strength and purpose characteristic of the man, and the friend, and of regret for a life of high promise, so suddenly cut short on September 18<sup>th</sup> last year.'*

*The work opens with the bugle call, 'Lights Out,' which is sounded at the close of every soldier's day, and later on is heard a suggestion of the 'Last Post'. Mr Farrar's compositions, which have nearly all been produced here, in Harrogate, are now receiving due recognition in all parts of England; the memory of what he had already accomplished, and his personality, will remain with us through them. "Their works live after them."*

**Hastings and St Leonards - Harrogate 1919 - 1921.**



Julian Clifford -1919

Clifford then took his orchestra to the South coast town of Hastings, in those days a fashionable seaside resort. The Winter Orchestra, as it was known, performed at the Palace Pier Pavilion from November to March, thereby creating a permanent orchestra all year round; in Harrogate from

March-to October and in Hastings from November to March. Adrian Boult commented on this as being a good model in a lecture on orchestras to the Musical Association in February 1923. He noted that the permanence of employment was the important factor, so not having to hunt for extra jobs all the time. He acknowledged they had little time for rehearsal (though Clifford did schedule extra rehearsals for new or challenging symphonic works). Boult also noted:- *'but if they have to play out of doors in the morning they can surreptitiously rehearse things which they intend to do later at symphony concerts!'* Boult acknowledged Clifford as a conductor *'of great distinction'* in a letter of December 1946.

International artists were booked for the season including Melba, Lamond, Marie Hall and de Pachman. Programmes included the first performance in England of Faure's suite *Pelleas et Melisande*, new works by Arnold Trowell, Holbrooke, Norman O'Neill and Clifford's *Lights Out*. The Hastings and St Leonards Advertiser welcomed Mr Julian Clifford's orchestra to Mr J H Gardner's Palace Pier at St Leonards: *'Monday saw the dawn of a new era – the formation of a musical centre for the South Coast... every seat was taken, indeed every available space was taken.'* Clifford hoped to make Hastings and St Leonards the musical centre of the South of England. His orchestra were now playing to a consistently high standard which was recognised by the music critic W H Speer: *'One cannot fail to note that this is an orchestra whose members have been accustomed to play together for a long time and under the same conductor, and the result is a finish which can only be obtained when these conditions are fulfilled.'* (Hastings and St Leonards Observer).

Thomas Cook and Sons distributed brochures about the resort, in French and English, on both sides of the Channel, and a publicity film was shown at the picture house in Shaftesbury Avenue in London and elsewhere. Clifford ran similar musical programmes to those in Harrogate. On Saturday December 13<sup>th</sup> 1919 the programme included *Lights Out* for a second time – W H Speer wrote: *'A second hearing of this item confirmed me in the opinion that it is an exceptionally fine composition'*. The people of Hastings loved Clifford and valued him highly. He continued to champion British composers, teach, compose, give solo recitals and conduct around the country with a punishing schedule.

Another conductor on the south coast, the ex-bandmaster Dan Godfrey at Bournemouth, although a friend, was also in some ways a competitor and didn't always take too kindly to the arrival of Clifford's orchestra in Hastings and the popularity he gained so swiftly. Clifford's charismatic personality, good organisational skills and showmanship were promoting Hastings far and wide. Godfrey wrote to the national press castigating Clifford for neglecting British Music, which was not in fact true. Clifford responded tartly: *'I am surprised that Mr Godfrey, as Music Director of Bournemouth, should try to interfere with my management at Hastings; and furthermore I wonder at the Bournemouth Corporation allowing him to criticize the policy of another corporation'*. Godfrey's view of Clifford as conductor was that he *'always seemed too imitative in his interpretations to be great'*. However others did not agree with him. Even though they challenged each other in this way they remained friends.

Many learned much from attending the concerts in Hastings at the Royal Hall, Palace Pier and Elite Cinema, including Wilfred van Wyck who ran a concert agency in London for many years:- *'During my youth I used to hear Julian Clifford quite a lot at the Elite Cinema, St Leonards-on-Sea where for the first time I heard many world famous pianists including Siloti, Emil van Sauer and many others'*. On April 1<sup>st</sup> 1920 The Musical Times reported that schools were invited to concerts and that Clifford gave a lecture on *'The Orchestra'* with illustrations from the players. This resulted in *'many excellent essays pouring in as a result of the educational value of a municipal orchestra'*.

Clifford programmed complete concerts of his own music and in January 1920, one was reported to be *'full of interest and free from the least trace of monotony'* (St Leonard's Chronicle). He was also praised for his interpretation of Brahms in the *Violin Concerto* performed by Lena Kontorovich, a pupil of Adolph Brodsky, (who was a close friend of Brahms, principal of the Royal Manchester College of Music and also taught John Lawson, the leader of Clifford's orchestra).



In March it was back north to Harrogate for another successful season with imaginative programmes and including celebrities such as Madame Blanche Marchesi, Arthur de Greef, Dame Nellie Melba and Pavlova. *'Julian Clifford presents 30½ weeks of Continuous Entertainment, nearly 400 concerts for £2-2s-0d or about 1½ d per concert – without a season ticket 1/6d per concert – why delay!'* Why delay indeed. In October Clifford presented the second winter season for Hastings at the Royal Concert Hall which had been refurbished at great expense.

Hastings was eager for the return of the orchestra and the season was opened on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October by the Rt Hon the Earl of Beauchamp KG, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Included in the season was a week long British Musical Festival where Percy Fletcher, Thomas Dunhill, Norman O'Neill, Sir Frederick Cowen, Dr W H Speer, Edward German, James Glover and Julian Clifford would conduct works of their own, and works by other British composers including Farrar, Bridge, Elgar, Mackenzie, Vaughan Williams and Hervey would be played. Clifford gave two more performances of *Lights Out* in November and December to good reviews:- *'it is a work of genuine inspiration'*, Hastings Chronicle November 1920; *'Very impressive – where the composer's marked personality is underlined by some vivid and picturesque instrumentation'*, Musical Times 1<sup>st</sup> December 1920.

*'The laudable ambition of the Hastings Corporation to place the town in the first rank of pleasure resorts – musically and otherwise – is rapidly materialising'* reported The Musical Times on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1921. Clifford had attracted attention by once again giving first provincial performances including Montagu Phillips' *Piano Concerto* which had been well reviewed at the recent 'Proms' in London. The British music week might well have annoyed Dan Godfrey in Bournemouth as it received much positive press coverage. Compositions by Coleridge-Taylor, a friend of Clifford, were also included as were pieces by Hamilton Harty. Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony* was performed in March, a first hearing in Hastings. Also to the delight of the audience:- *'Pouishnoff and Mr Julian Clifford swapped horses on March 13<sup>th</sup> when the Persian pianist appeared as the conductor of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto (in Bb) in which, as soloist, the Hastings conductor surpassed even his noted standard of excellence. It was no mid-stream exchange, for each was well-nigh as happy in this transposition of roles as in his own particular sphere.'* – Hastings and St Leonards Observer.

And so April saw the orchestra go north again to Harrogate. Clifford conducted the opening three concerts and then took a month away to tour while his deputy Leonard Busfield took over. Sadly the orchestra's ex-leader, John Lawson died at this time. Clifford returned in May to conduct the Enigma Variations by Sir Edward Elgar:- *'an interesting item. These are more or less "mood pictures", fourteen in number. And quite apart from the fact as to whether or not the listener can "see" with the eyes of the composer, they are interesting and piquant. They were beautifully played.'* Harrogate Advertiser 28<sup>th</sup> May 1921.

Clifford continued his interest in music for the stage and the new medium of film. In March 1921 his orchestra accompanied a sporting film *'Won by a Head'* and in April *'The Call of the Road'*. He was a regular visitor to the Savage Club in London where he met many of his friends who wrote and directed music for theatre including Norman O'Neill and James Glover.

And so Clifford left Harrogate again for Hastings in October, not knowing he had completed his last season there. His sparkling personality, musicianship and leadership had established both Harrogate and Hastings as places of musical consequence. He was admired as a conductor, pianist, leader, teacher, organiser and advocate of high standards and British music, and was rumoured to be in line for a knighthood.



Cartoon from Hastings Observer 29<sup>th</sup> October 1921

He continued a punishing schedule introducing a chamber series on Tuesday evenings and giving charity concerts when he could. He conducted the orchestra on the afternoon of Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December and fell ill with influenza on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>. This developed into double pneumonia, leading to his death at 5 West Ascent, St Leonards, Hastings at 6 am on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December aged only 44.

The news was a great shock to all concerned and met with great sorrow. Flags on all municipal buildings in Hastings and Harrogate were flown at half mast. Local and national press posted obituaries and notices, and many letters of appreciation for his life followed. The family received messages of condolence from musicians all over the world.

A Requiem mass was held at Christ Church, Hastings followed by a funeral service where his orchestra played, conducted by his friend Dan Godfrey. The service included *Lights Out*. Many had to stand outside, such were the crowds. The interment took place at Hollington in the Wood churchyard near St Leonards in inclement weather. Harrogate held a memorial service at St Peter's Church on the same day. A bust was commissioned from Italy by Hastings Corporation and Mr J H Gardner of the Palace Pier for the grave, which has sadly been stolen.

Clifford had been recognised as an outstanding English conductor who worked hard to raise standards of orchestral playing and champion British music. He had created a permanent orchestra, and thrilled many audiences both as a conductor and pianist. His compositions were popular at the time and will be discussed further in another paper. A catalogue of his works appears below. W H Dyer, the publicity agent for Hastings described Clifford as: *'brilliant, electrifying, and quick witted, attractive and humorous in personality. His orchestra and audiences loved him. It was a great loss to British Music when he died so young.'* It was clear he would be sadly missed. The Musical Times spoke of his untimely death:- *'Music in England loses one of its noted personalities and a worker of*

*the kind we can ill spare. He had high ideals, and as a naturally gifted conductor takes his place amongst the foremost in the country'. Let us allow Clifford the last word: -*

*'We still, surely, must have a feeling that British Art should have a chance, and Germany is slowly but surely gaining a footing again in this country, largely owing to our apathy; and we must ourselves help our own composers if we wish to raise British Art to the high level it has reached in other countries.'* Julian Clifford, Musical Director and Entertainments Manager to the Hastings Corporation, January 1921.



Julian Clifford 1877 - 1921

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St Leonards Chronicle  
Tonbridge School  
White Rock Pavilion, Hastings  
Martin Yates  
Yorkshire Post Library

## Catalogue of Works

### Works for orchestra

1911 <b>Overture to the New Year</b>	
1914 <b>Ode to the New Year</b> – orchestral ballad solo quartet, chorus and orchestra. Dedicated to the Council of the National Sunday league.	Edwin Ashdown piano score arr Ernest Farrar. Words by M. Clifford.
1913 <b>Fairy Fancies</b> Intermezzo for piano. Salon orchestra: 2 Picc/Fl/Ob/Cl in A/Bsn/ Trumpet/ Harmonium/ Timps/Tambourine/Glock/ Celeste/Piano Score	Schott and Co.
1911 <b>Fanfare</b> for the Coronation Service .at St Luke's Harrogate	
1918 <b>A Song of Joy</b> composed for Armistice Day	
1905 <b>A Dream of Flowers</b> Song Cycle. Words by Ethel Henniker (sister-in-law) dedicated to Lady de Tabley. For voice and orchestra: 4. The Poppies 5. The Sea Pinks	
<b>Suite de Concert</b> for orchestra	
1918 <b>Meditation</b> dedicated to Hon Mrs Julian Clifford	Schott for Full orchestra and for Small orchestra
<b>Meditation</b> for Band (arr F Winterbottom 1923)	London 1918 Hawkes and Son Military Band
<b>Ballade in D</b> for orchestra	
<b>Piano Concerto in E minor</b> (scored by Dan Godfrey) (i) Allegro with Cadenza, (ii) Andante con amore (iii) Finale	
<b>Lights Out</b> Tone Poem dedicated to Ernest Farrar	
<b>Serenade for Strings</b>	
1913 for visit of Lord Mayor of London) Semper paratus 27 Dec 1919.	Boosey and Co.
1922 <b>Midge for Strings</b> - Pizzicato.	Boosey and Co.
1921 <b>Viviana</b> – foxtrot for orchestra.	
<b>White Rose Waltz</b>	
1913 <b>Kursaal (Royal Hall) Ragtime</b>	
1918 <b>Kursaal (Royal Hall) Cakewalk – Two Step</b>	
1915 <b>Caprice d'Amour</b>	

## Works for Piano

1914 <b>Prelude in C minor</b> for piano	Phillipsons Ltd
1911 <b>Nocturne in B major</b> for piano.	Goodwin and Tabb
<b>Nocturne no 2 in Bb</b> for piano 'Under the Trees'	Schott and Co
1918 <b>Under the Trees</b> Nocturne for Piano in Bb major, arr Ernest Reeves for Piano Trio	Schott and Co.
1918 <b>In the Cathedral</b> (Meditation) for Piano. (Also arranged for cello and piano)	
1897 <b>Grand Valse Caprice</b> for piano)	Schott and Co
1917 <b>Valse Caprice No 2</b>	
1918 <b>Valse Mignonne</b> (Birds on the Wing)	Rossini and Co
1909 <b>Three Episodes for piano</b> . No1 in D, Allegro No 2 in F Andante Appassionata No 3 in D minor Vivace – Scherzo	Metzler & Co (1909) USA 1899 Willcocks and Co
<b>Once upon a time</b> . Prelude moto perpetuo.	

## Songs

1905 <b>A Dream of Flowers</b> Song Cycle. Words by Ethel Henniker (sister-in-law) dedicated to Lady de Tabley 1 The Dream 2 The Rose 3 The Lily 4. The Poppies 5. The Sea Pinks	Chappell and Co.
1908 <b>Heathertime</b> for Soprano 1908	London
1908 <b>Farewell Sweet Love.</b> Words by A.Valdemar	Metzler and Co.
1907 <b>A Song of Spring.</b> Words by E. Teschemacher	Chappell
1915 <b>Stay not Away</b> for soprano.	

## Arrangements by Julian Clifford

Glazunov: <b>Sixth Symphony.</b> Arranged for Piano 1911
Handel: <b>Dead March from Saul.</b> Arranged in memoriam Thomas Turner, lead viola
<b>Morris Dance</b> 1918
Julian Clifford: <b>The Rose</b> from <b>A Dream of Flowers.</b> Arranged for cornet 1911
Bach: <b>Organ Fugue in G minor.</b> 1911.
Juliette Folville: <b>Berceuse.</b> 1917.
Alexandre Guilmant: <b>Marche Funebre</b> from <b>Chant Seraphique.</b> Orchestrated 1913 for Auber Norton; second version for Francis Yates in 1915.
Wagner: <b>Tannhauser Music</b> to the William Russell film 1913. Arr Clifford and Farrar
Bach: <b>Tocatta and Fugue in D minor</b> for piano
Julian Clifford: <b>Farewell Sweet Love.</b> Arranged for cornet and also euphonium.

**Discography - Recordings made by Julian Clifford (Snr)** (His son Julian made many recordings with Decca)

Columbia Records Dark Blue label 1916-17	British Library
Conducted by Julian Clifford      10 inch	
Peer Gynt Suite 1, 2 3 and 4.	
Lohengrin Introduction to Act 3	
Fairy Fancies Intermezzo – Julian Clifford	

**Piano concertos known to have been performed by Julian Clifford**

**Clifford:** Piano Concerto in E minor.

**Sir Frederic Cowen:** Piano Concerto in Bb minor

**Farrar:** Variations on British Sea Songs (dedicated to JC)

**Liszt:** Piano Concerto No 1 in Eb.

**O'Neill:** Variations on an old Irish Melody (dedicated to JC)

**Saint Saens:** Piano Concerto No 2 in G minor

**Saint Saens:** Piano Concerto No 4 in C minor

**Schumann:** Piano Concerto in A minor

**Stojowski:** Piano Concerto no 1 in F# minor

**Tchaikovsky:** Piano Concerto No 1 in Bb minor