



THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

Poem by Robert Browning

Song for Voice and Piano
by

Granville Bantock

VOCAL SCORE



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Cover Image: "Guardian Angel" by Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), 1650



The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

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Source Information

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Vocal Score:

Royal College of Music Library

Oxford University, Bodleian Music Section, Weston Library

Royal Academy of Music Library

Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation

Unknown

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Reference Material and Software

Notation Software: Finale v. 26 *Audio Software:* Garritan Personal Orchestra 5 *Graphic Software:* Adobe Photoshop CS5

Document Software: Adobe In Design CS5 *Music Notation Reference:* Behind Bars by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011



Granville Bantock was born in London. His father was an eminent Scottish surgeon. His younger brother was the dramatist and film director Leedham Bantock. Granville Bantock was intended by his parents for the Indian Civil Service but he suffered poor health and initially turned to chemical engineering. At the age of 20, when he began studying composers' manuscripts, at South Kensington Museum Library, he was drawn into the musical world. His first teacher was Dr. Gordon Saunders at Trinity College of Music. In 1888 he entered the Royal Academy of Music where he studied harmony and composition with Frederick Corder, winning the Macfarren Prize in the first year it was awarded.

Early conducting engagements took him around the world with a musical comedy troupe. With his brother Leedham Bantock he wrote a couple of music hall songs which met with some success. He founded a music magazine, *The New Quarterly Music Review*, but this lasted only a few years. In 1897, he became conductor at the New Brighton Tower concerts, where he promoted the works of Joseph Holbrooke, Frederic Hymen Cowen, Charles Steggall, Edward German, Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford, Corder and others, frequently devoting whole concerts to a single composer. He was also conductor of the Liverpool Orchestral Society with which he premiered Delius's *Brigg Fair* on 18 January

1908. He became the principal of the Birmingham and Midland Institute School of Music in 1900. He was a close friend of fellow composer Havergal Brian. He was Peyton Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham from 1908 to 1934 (in which post he succeeded Sir Edward Elgar). In 1934, he was elected Chairman of the Corporation of Trinity College of Music in London. Bantock was knighted in 1930. His students included the conductor and composer Anthony Bernard and the composer Eric Fogg. In 1898 he married Helena von Schweitzer (1868-1961) who acted as a librettist for him.

His music was influenced by folk song of the Hebrides (as in his 1915 *Hebridean Symphony*) and the works of Richard Wagner. Many of his works have an "exotic" element, including the choral epic *Omar Khayyám* (1906–09). Among his other better-known works are the overture *The Pierrot of the Minute* (1908) and the *Pagan Symphony* (1928).

Shortly after the composer's death in London in 1946, a Bantock Society was established. Its first president was Jean Sibelius, whose music Bantock championed during the early years of the century. Sibelius dedicated his Third Symphony to Bantock. Edward Elgar dedicated the second of his *Pomp and Circumstance* marches to Bantock.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Granville_Bantock

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose dramatic monologues put him high among the Victorian poets. His verse was noted for irony, characterization, dark humour, social commentary, historical settings and challenging vocabulary and syntax. In 1846 Browning married the older poet Elizabeth Barrett and went to live in Italy. He continued to be prolific, but his reputation today rests mainly on his middle period. By his death in 1889 he was seen as a sage and philosopher-poet who had fed into Victorian social and political discourse.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Browning

In the summer of 1848 the Brownings travelled to Fano, Italy, hoping the cool sea breeze of the east coast of Italy would provide a respite from the stifling heat they had been experiencing in their home in Florence. They found Fano even hotter than Florence. Looking for some shade they entered the Church of San Agostino and discovered a large painting, *The Guardian Angel*, by a seventeenth-century artist known as Guercino. In a letter to Mary Russell Mitford, 24 August [1848], Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote: “. . . we found it uninhabitable from the heat.. vegetation scorched into paleness, the very air swooning in the sun, and the gloomy looks of the inhabitants sufficiently corroborative of their words, that no drop of rain or dew ever falls there during the summer . . . —yet the churches are beautiful, and a divine picture of Guercino's is worth going all that way to see.”

When the Brownings returned to their hotel in Ancona, Robert composed a poem inspired by the painting, which he titled “The Guardian Angel: A Picture at Fano.”

<https://blogs.baylor.edu/armstrongbrowning/tag/fano/>

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

(A Picture at Fano)

by
Robert Browning

I

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

II

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

III

*I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?*

IV

*If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.*

V

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

VI

*Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the beach.*

VII

*We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
—My angel with me too: and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—*

VIII

*And since he did not work thus earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong—
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.*

The Guardian Angel

Robert Browning
1848

Granville Bantock
1920

Andante sostenuto con umiltà

Voice

Piano

5 *p supplicando*

Dear and great An - gel, _____ would'st thou on - ly leave _____ That child, _____

pp sost. *ten.*

9 *più p quasi ad lib.*

a tempo

pp

dim.

rit.

_____ when thou hast done with him, _____ for me! _____

dim.

Poco più agitato.

cresc.

13

mp

3

Let me sit _____ all the day here, — that when eve _____ Shall find per -

13

fp

espress.

Leg.

*

Animando.

cresc.

poco

16

p

formed thy spe - cial min - is - try, _____ And time _____ come for de - par - ture, thou, sus -

16

p

cresc.

poco

Leg.

*

Leg.

*

Meno mosso.
con tenerezza

più p

19

pend - ing Thy _____ flight, _____ mayst see _____ an - oth - er child for tend - ing,

19

a

poco

L.H.

più p

22 *sempre p* **Allargando.**
dim.

An - oth - er still _____ to qui - et _____ and re - trieve.

22 *dim.*

25 **Tempo primo, ma non troppo lento.** *pp*

Then I shall feel thee step one

25 *p espress.* *pp*

29 *p sost.* *sempre p*

step, _____ no more, _____ From where thou stand - est now, to where I

29 *p* *pp*

33 *più p sost.*

Poco stringendo.

gaze,

33 *più p*

dim. sost.

p

Leg.

Lento misterioso.

37 *mp* *quasi parlando*

And sud-den-ly my head is cov-ered o'er With those wings, white a-bove the child who prays now

37 *pp sost.*

legato

pp

Andante cantabile.

40 *mf espress.*

on that tomb and I shall feel thee guard-ing me,

40 *mp*

espress.

Lentamente.*p*

43 *cresc.*

out of all _____ the world; _____ for me, dis - card - ing _____

43 *mf*

p sost.

dim.

46

— Yon heaven thy home _____ that waits _____ and opes its door. _____

46 *dim.*

Più lento.*pp*

49

49 *pp*

espress.

Poco più moto.

mf *espress.*

52

How soon all world-ly wrong

pp *rallentando*

dim.

mf *espress.*

leg.

*

leg.

*

56

cresc.

poco

a

poco

— would be re - paired! — I think how I should view the earth — and skies And sea, —

56

cresc.

poco

a

poco

59

dim.

Lentamento.

p *tranquillo*

più p

— When once a - gain my brow was bared — Af - ter thy heal - ing, with such

59

dim.

pp

Allargando.**Poco largamente.**

62 *mf marc.* *più f* *mp espress.*

dif - fer - ent eyes. — O world, — as God has made it! — All is

sf marc. *più f* *mp*

Leo. *

66 *cresc. molto* *mf*

beau - ty, all is beau - ty: And know - ing

ten. *ten.*

cresc. molto *mf*

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. *

70 *cresc.* **Lentando.** *mp espress.*

this is love — and love is du - ty. — What fur - ther

cresc. *mp espress.*

Leo. * *

74

rall. ***p*** *dim.* **Molto tranquillo.** ***pp*** *sost.*

may be sought for or de - clared? _____

78

sost. L.H. ***ppp***



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