

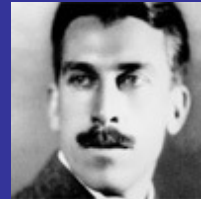
Marlow U3A Music Appreciation Group, Dec 2009

## Sir Arthur Bliss (1891-1975)



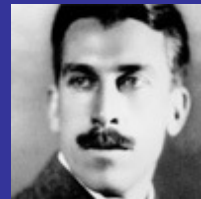
### *Things to Come*

## Sir Arthur Bliss



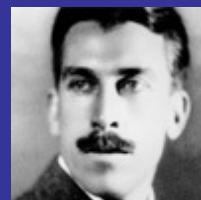
- Arthur Bliss studied at Cambridge and with Stanford at the Royal College of Music
- After the First World War, his works showed the influence of Stravinsky and Les Six, attracting some notoriety
- In the 1920s his style broadened into a more Elgarian vein, with such works as *A Colour Symphony*
- Three ballet scores followed: *Checkmate* (1937), *Miracle in the Gorbals* (1944) and *Adam Zero* (1946).

## Sir Arthur Bliss



- ♪ In 1935 he composed the first great film score for Korda's version of H.G.Wells's *Things to Come*
- ♪ His Piano Concerto (1939) was composed for Solomon, the Violin Concerto (1955) for Alfredo Campoli and the Cello Concerto (1970) for Mstislav Rostropovich.

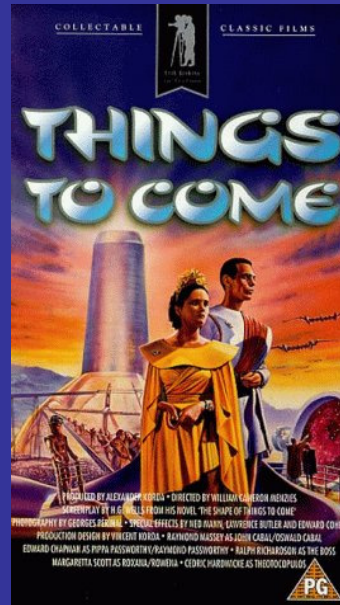
## Sir Arthur Bliss



- ♪ During the Second World War he was Director of Music at the BBC, laying the foundations for the future Third Programme and Radio 3
- ♪ He was appointed Master of the Queen's Musick in 1953, in succession to Sir Arnold Bax.

## *March and Epilogue from Things to Come*

- ♪ **Things to Come (1936)** was a British science fiction film produced by Alexander Korda and directed by William Cameron Menzies, with screenplay by H.G.Wells.
- ♪ After decades of war and pestilence, the last surviving band of engineers and mechanics formed an organisation known as "Wings Over the World". They built a civilisation that renounced war and outlawed independent nation-states.



## *March and Epilogue from Things to Come*

- ♪ The film had a mixed reception, but the music was a sensation. A suite (1935) was a brilliant success at the Proms even before the release of the film and the music has been a standard of the orchestral repertoire ever since.
- ♪ It is considered by many to be one of the greatest film scores ever written, and possibly the finest of all British film scores.

## *March and Epilogue from Things to Come*

- The full score comprises 11 movements, the most famous of which is the *March*. Like the preceding *Prologue*, this has an ominous and menacing feel.



## *March and Epilogue from Things to Come*

- The *Epilogue* is based on a simple *maestoso* melody: dignified, sad and reflective in the central section, but gaining in strength and confidence in the brave new future towards the end.
- Some versions of this are played too quickly, but Bernard Herrmann's reading has the right degree of gravitas, grandeur and "thrilling valedictory emotionalism in every chord"!

## Things to Come



## Things to Come

