

























Taunton and Paddington. This would have been the *Cornish Riviera Express*, but he settled instead for the name of the more prestigious train which was currently in the public eye.

The piece opens with the sound of a train whistle with loud chromatic chords, 'getting up steam' as is written in the score, the rhythm of the train is established by repeated accented chords, gradually speeding up until it reaches the familiar soaring melody on the strings. The journey continues replete with whistles, clanging bells and the occasional dissonant chord acting as a warning sign, until all quietens down and pizzicato strings bring the journey quietly to its end. Ellis was a master of both melody and orchestration, and it is the eminently hummable string tune that so effectively sums up an age of speed and luxury with the steam train in full flight.

### **Endnotes**

- 1 Pat Jackson. *A Retake Please!: Night Mail to Western Approaches* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999): 24.
- 2 J B Priestley. *Rain Upon Godshill* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1939).
- 3 GPO Film Unit (1933-1940). <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/464254/index.html>
- 4 The original music to *Turksib* was written by the Soviet composer Vissarion Shebalin (1902-1963). The film was released by the British Film Institute in 2011 as part of *The Soviet Influence: From Turksib to Night Mail* with a newly commissioned soundtrack by Guy Bartell.
- 5 Scott Anthony. *Night Mail* (London: British Film Institute, 2007).
- 6 Anthony. *Night Mail*, 41.
- 7 Jackson, *A Retake Please!*, 25.
- 8 Donald Mitchell. *Britten and Auden in the Thirties: The Year 1936* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1981): 84.
- 9 The tea rooms Auden refers to are in Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively. Catherine Cranston (1849 – 1934) was an influential figure in the development of elegant high-quality tea rooms, some of these were designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh.
- 10 Anthony, *Night Mail*, 84.

