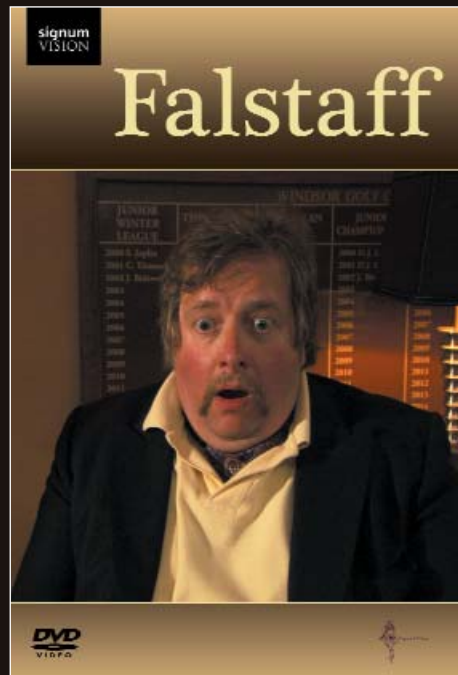


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# Peter Warlock

Some Little Joy



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# PETER WARLOCK SOME LITTLE JOY

A FILM BY

## TONY BRITTEN

A film drama about a man who, by his death at thirty six, had composed some of the most perfect gems of English songwriting and elevated hedonism to an art form.

<b>Peter Warlock/Philip Heseltine</b>	<i>Mark Dexter</i>
<b>Barbara Peache</b>	<i>Lucy Brown</i>
<b>Puma</b>	<i>Maimie McCoy</i>
<b>Winifred Baker</b>	<i>Georgina Rich</i>



Written & directed by Tony Britten  
Released in association with Capriol Films Ltd.  
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Shot in high definition entirely on location in England.  
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Menu screens: <b>English</b>	Colour mode: <b>Colour</b>	Screen Format: <b>16.9</b>	DVD format: <b>DVD 5</b>	Duration: <b>88 mins</b>	Subtitles: <b>none</b>	AC3 5.1 PCM stereo	
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## PETER WARLOCK SOME LITTLE JOY

### SCENE LIST

1.	00.00	The Peter Warlock Society
2.	05.33	Welcome to Eynsford
3.	08.33	Delius and Jelka in France
4.	10.09	Barbara and Philip
5.	14.32	Edith and Walter
6.	15.57	The bet
7.	17.00	Off to Oxford
8.	21.49	The Antelope
9.	22.56	The Arts Club
10.	27.45	The Journey home ("Pavane")
11.	32.44	Philip needs Winifred
12.	35.19	"The Cloths of Heaven"
13.	38.43	Off to Norfolk
14.	46.54	The Peter Warlock Society
15.	47.53	Puma
16.	53.45	Philip drunk - The Five Bells, Eynsford
17.	57.30	"Sleep"
18.	1.00.15	A new start
19.	1.01.43	Farewell to Eynsford
20.	1.04.54	Philip and the Delius's
21.	1.07.01	Van Dieren at the Antelope
22.	1.08.18	Philip and Winifred at the lake
23.	1.14.00	"The Fox"
24.	1.18.32	Edith and Walter disappointed
25.	1.19.45	"The Frostbound Wood"
26.	1.23.24	The Peter Warlock Society
27.	1.24.27	The end - "Pieds - en - l'air"
28.	1.26.44	End titles

Director/leading actor commentary

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# PETER WARLOCK SOME LITTLE JOY

The present day: Two prospective members of the eccentric Peter Warlock Society have arrived at the Antelope, an old fashioned pub in Eaton Terrace London. They are welcomed by members of the society, who introduce them to the story of Philip Heseltine - pen name Peter Warlock.

We go back to the bohemian world of mid twenties England, riotous episodes where Warlock and cronies such as composers Jack Moeran and Lord Berners mix with artists of the magnitude of Augustus John, and folk singer Harry Cox. Warlock's relationships with women are explored with specific reference to his long time girlfriend Barbara Peache, his exotic ex-wife Puma and spiritual soul mate Winifred Baker. As the roaring twenties race towards their conclusion, Warlock realises that he has to make an attempt to settle down and accept the reality that despite his undoubted genius, the musical elite will never welcome him.

By 1930 he has largely ceased composing, and whilst remaining a monumental thorn in the side of the musical and literary establishment has ceased to be a creative force in his own right. As we come back to the present day the Chairman of the Peter Warlock Society describes Warlock's suicide to the new recruits - a loose gas tap, an open verdict and the loss of an extraordinary figure who rivalled Purcell as a composer, Shaw as a critic and who elevated hedonism to an art form.

Shot on high definition entirely on location in England.

Duration: **88 minutes**

## WARLOCK AND I

Philip Heseltine's life and music has fascinated me for many years. As a boy treble, "Bethlehem Down" was a favourite, as a clumsy teenage conductor the first piece I ever attempted was the "Capriol Suite." When I went on to study singing at the Royal College of Music I discovered the main body of Peter Warlock's work - the songs, which not only suited my voice, but convinced me that here was an English composer whose word settings put him on a par with Purcell and Benjamin Britten.

It was later in life that I became aware of the Warlock "legend", the beer drinking hedonist who held court at the Café Royal, was a serial womaniser and killed himself at the tragically young age of thirty six. As a filmmaker I am drawn to larger than life characters and as I researched more deeply I became convinced that Warlock's story would make a fine film drama, as much as it would be ill served by the documentary form.

The first issue to be resolved in my own mind was that of his suicide. There have been many theories advanced about Warlock's "split personality", expressed as the quiet bookish transcriber of Elizabethan music contrasted with the riotous composer of drinking songs. This, to my mind is an over simplification, emanating from his friend Cecil Gray's biography, written shortly after Warlock's death and influenced, I believe by Gray's failure to remain close friends with him. That said, if Warlock were alive today, he probably would have been diagnosed as bi-polar and doubtless prescribed the appropriate medication.

But would that have been the answer? Much has been made of Warlock's swings between introspection and inability to apply himself to his writing and manic bursts of creative energy. The fact is that many writers and composers work in this fashion, myself included and this does not mean that we are all manic depressive. It should not be forgotten that Warlock achieved a huge body of work in a short time; musical and literary criticism, book writing, transcriptions and, of course, the composition of a body of songs which are now central to the repertoire. One thing is certain in my mind - his death was not an accident, but whether his suicide was the result of a clinical depression or simply despair about his place as a composer will never be resolved. I have, I hope merely posed the question in my film, the viewers must make their minds up for themselves.

One personality trait that is well documented is Warlock's increasing frustration and anger at the musical establishment's inability to recognise his talent. A certain amount of this anger was misdirected - many people, such as the publisher Hubert Foss, held him in high regard - offering appreciation and support that was often rather spitefully thrown back in his face. But it is true to say that then, as now, mavericks tend to be tolerated by the arts establishment if they confine themselves to their work and don't speak up too forcefully.

When Warlock was patronised or ignored he was incapable of toeing the line, this made him enemies and, despite his many friendships with a variety of creative people, reinforced his perception that he was an outsider.

I empathised with this as one by one the major broadcasters turned this project down, generally on the basis that the subject was "too obscure". Nowadays it seems that the only artistic figures worth making films about are those that are well known to the audience in the first place, a logic which would have Lord Reith spinning in his grave! I was increasingly reminded of Warlock's



fruitless championing of the work of composer Bernard Van Dieren, although it is fair to say that Van Dieren really was obscure - he himself maintained that Warlock's work would be loved long after he (Van Dieren) was forgotten. I also encountered a certain amount of distaste regarding Warlock's hedonistic lifestyle - again, something he suffered from to quite a degree during his life. Whilst I didn't want to make this aspect of his personality the main thread of the narrative, it seemed to me to be important, particularly as I had decided to set the body of the film during the Eynsford years, where the carousing and womanising were at a peak.

Having decided that this story had to be told and that Capriol Films would go where no commissioning editor dared, we raised the money and encountered the next major hurdle - the casting of the main character. Everything that happens in the script actually occurred, although not necessarily at the time or place indicated. I was also confident that the dialogue, particularly that involving Philip was redolent of the period and personalities. Therefore my aim was to cast the main characters, particularly Philip, as accurately as possible. Early on in casting, a young man came to see me who bore a striking resemblance to Philip, even down to the beard! Mark Dexter maintains to this day



that he just happened to have grown a beard, but given that the moment shooting finished he whipped it off and has not grown it again, I'm not so sure! Much more importantly, from the moment he first read to me it was clear that Mark had already inhabited the character to an extraordinary degree. It is terribly exciting for a writer to hear his words come to life in this manner and to this day I am astonished, delighted and occasionally spooked by the re-incarnation.

Philip Heseltine touched many people during his short life. He was part of a group of writers, artists and composers whose personal and professional paths crossed in a way that does not tend to happen so much today. Perhaps this was an unconscious reaction to the end of the Great War, a need to immerse themselves in their art as a way of forgetting the carnage. Or maybe that is too poetic an analysis and this was simply a loose group of creative people who more or less selfishly pursued their aims to the exclusion of any particular political or moral principles.

Certainly Philip was flawed - his attitude to women was chauvinistic bordering on cruel from time to time. Did he father a child with Winifred Baker? It's my invention in the film, but it has recently become known that he did father a quite famous English art critic, who was born after Philip died. Philip had no proper contact with his son Nigel and offended even his closest friends on occasion. But his many lovers and friends stuck by him, enjoyed his company and mourned his passing. He must have been a very charismatic person and I hope I have represented this in the film. But the most enduring memory, one that calls down the years with wit, beauty and poignancy is the music. I thought I would be able to expunge my fascination with the man when I made this film, but with the music comes the man and when I listen to the music he is often there at my shoulder, handsome, vibrant, witty and ineffably sad.

## AN EXPLANATION AND SOME ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The words "Some Little Joy" used in the title are from Warlock's exquisite setting of John Fletcher's "Sleep" - "Tho' but a shadow, but a sliding, let me know some little joy". The resonances with Warlock's life are clear.

Peter Warlock - Some Little Joy would not have happened without the Capriol Films shareholders, my thanks to them. My sincere thanks, of course to the cast, crew and everyone who worked so hard and with such good humour. Much good humour was also exhibited by the many people in North Norfolk who provided accommodation and allowed their homes, pubs and railway stations to be used as locations. To Hyperion Records, whose John Mark Ainsley recordings provide the musical backbone to the film and Barry Smith, whose book, Peter Warlock - The life of Philip Heseltine was such a source of inspiration in its creation.

Thanks also to the Peter Warlock Society for all their support and for sponsoring this booklet.

Finally, I am indebted to my dear friend and mentor, Clive Donner, whose perceptive and sometimes pithy observations turned my formless jottings into a script worth filming.

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Warlock, Peter [Heseltine, Philip (Arnold)] (b London, 30 Oct 1894; d London, 17 Dec 1930). Born in the Savoy Hotel, he came from a well-to-do family of stockbrokers, solicitors, and art connoisseurs, his father dying when he was only two. His domineering mother, Edith Covernton, had Welsh connections and Warlock was to have strong ties with Wales throughout his life. In 1903 she married Walter Buckley Jones and mother and son moved to Wales. At preparatory school his interest in music was awakened through the pianola; his education continued at Eton where his musical interests were encouraged

by a sympathetic piano teacher, Colin Taylor. It was Taylor who in 1911 obtained permission for him to attend a concert of Delius's music, an event which was to have a lasting effect on his life. Warlock's interest in Delius's music had begun as early as 1909 and, by the time of his first meeting with Delius at that concert in 1911, he had already become obsessed with his music. From then on a quite remarkable friendship developed between the two men and for the next seven years Delius was Warlock's mentor as well as a regular correspondent for the rest of his life.

Although it had been presumed that Warlock would follow in the family footsteps and work in either the Stock Exchange or Civil Service, there was a certain indecision about his immediate future and, on finishing school, he spent a few months in Cologne, studying German and the piano. These musical studies, however, proved unsuccessful and, resigned to a non-musical career, he entered Oxford in October 1913 to read for a degree in classics. Dissatisfied and unhappy, he left after only one year and for a short while enrolled as a student at the University of London, but this second attempt at a University career was even shorter lived than his first. In February 1915 he secured an appointment as music critic on the staff of the Daily Mail though he soon found the work frustrating and lasted in the position for barely four months. One of his early interests was Elizabethan literature and now, finding himself unemployed, he spent time in the British Museum editing early music.

It was during this period that he met D. H. Lawrence whose work he admired, soon finding himself part of the author's circle and planning a Utopian settlement in America. At the beginning of 1916 Warlock, a conscientious objector, followed Lawrence to Cornwall and involved himself in an unsuccessful venture to publish Lawrence's books. The friendship between the two men, however, proved highly volatile and they soon parted company under acrimonious circumstances.

Soon after Warlock's return to London he met the composer and critic, Cecil Gray, and the two soon became close friends, sharing a bohemian existence in Battersea. Together they planned a number of grandiose schemes by which to bring about the 'regeneration' of music in England. Warlock's meeting in June 1916 with the enigmatic, Anglo-Dutch composer Bernard van Dieren also had a profound effect on him and he now became an enthusiastic champion of his music. In November 1916 he published his first musical article and used, for the first time, the pseudonym, Peter Warlock.

Having in the meantime married an artists' model, Minnie Lucy Channing ('Puma'), who had earlier borne him a son, Warlock returned to Cornwall for a brief while in April 1917 and, outwardly, at least, resumed cordial, if distant, relations with Lawrence. What he did not know was that Lawrence was at the time writing Women in Love in which he and Puma were being introduced as two unattractive characters. When in 1921 he learnt that the book was to be published, he threatened legal action and Lawrence was forced to rewrite certain passages.

Although he had intended settling in Cornwall for a time, Warlock became alarmed at the renewed possibility of military conscription and in August 1917 fled to Dublin where he remained for the next year. During this period he became involved in certain occult practices which Gray claimed were psychologically damaging. This 'Irish' year was, nevertheless, a very positive and productive one, marked by a sudden surge of remarkable artistic productivity when, in the space of a fortnight, he wrote ten songs, some of which rank amongst his finest compositions. In August 1918 he returned to England and sent seven of these recently composed songs to the publisher Winthrop Rogers, using the pseudonym Peter Warlock, for he realized that the name Heseltine was already being regarded with suspicion and hostility by the London musical fraternity. Given also its

occult associations, the choice of name is significant. It was from this time on that he became more and more involved in a number of public and private quarrels which were to occur throughout his life.

In 1920 Rogers decided to reorganize a magazine which he owned, *The Organist* and *Choirmaster*, into something of more general interest. Accordingly *The Sackbut* was launched with Warlock as editor. Between May 1920 and March 1921 nine issues appeared and included a varied amount of material much of which was of a controversial nature. However, just as *The Sackbut* was beginning to succeed, Rogers, nervous of the contentious material, withdrew his financial backing, Curwen took over the publication, and an embittered Warlock was relieved of the editorship.

After this debacle an impecunious Warlock moved back to the family home in Wales where he lived almost continuously for the next three years. Here he completed a book on Delius, made a number of arrangements of Delius's works, transcribed an enormous quantity of early music and also composed a large number of original songs, completing in June 1922 his acknowledged masterpiece, the song-cycle, *The Curlew*.

At the beginning of 1925 Warlock decided to settle in Eynsford where he ran a kind of open house and it is from this period that much of the Warlock 'legend' originates. During these years he wrote a study of Gesualdo, a book entitled *The English Ayre*, continued with his early music transcriptions, and also produced a slowly decreasing number of original compositions, including some fine songs and perhaps his best known piece, the *Capriol Suite*. By autumn 1928, however, he had found it financially impossible to maintain the Eynsford life-style and moved back to Wales briefly before returning to London. Having felt a slow drying up of his creative abilities, he was more than grateful when Thomas Beecham invited him to edit a

magazine as part of a new operatic venture and to help in the organization of the *Delius Festival* held in October 1929. The festival itself was a great success but by the beginning of 1930 Beecham's venture had collapsed and Warlock was once again out of work.

Life became bleaker as the year 1930 progressed and there seemed to be little demand for his songs, if indeed the inspiration or will to compose was still there. Black moods of depression settled more frequently and he was found dead, of gas-poisoning, in his flat in Chelsea on the morning of 17 December 1930. At the inquest the coroner recorded an open verdict as there was insufficient evidence on which to decide whether death was the result of suicide or accident.

Warlock is essentially a miniaturist and the largest part of his output consists of solo songs with piano accompaniment. There are in addition choral works (some unaccompanied, some with keyboard accompaniment and a few with orchestra), the remaining handful of works being for orchestra or for piano. He was also a distinguished editor and transcriber of early music (570 published items) as well as an author (9 books, 73 articles), editor and critic (51 reviews). At a time when musical scholarship was still very much in its infancy, he made an enormous contribution to the rediscovery of early English music. Here he showed a rare respect for the composers' intentions, his strict editorial practice being to present only that which the composers had written without emendations or additions.

The initial influence of the Victorian and Edwardian drawing-room songs (notably those of Roger Quilter), can be seen in his early settings (such as 'There is a lady sweet and kind'). Although elements of Delius's style were absorbed into his harmonic palette at an early stage, his encounter with the music of van Dieren had a marked effect on his developing

style and his somewhat austere 'Saudades' carefully imitate the van Dieren model. As a result his style became more disciplined, less harmonic and more contrapuntal in texture. Acquaintance with the music of the Elizabethans added yet a new influence as in 'As ever I saw' and 'Sweet content', with a strong vein of medievalism and mysticism present in songs such as 'My ghostly fader' and 'The bailey berith the bell away'. Folk-song elements also emerge ('Yarmouth Fair' and 'Milkmaids') and the roistering Warlock of the pubs and taverns surfaces in songs such as 'Captain Stratton's Fancy' and 'Good Ale'. The influence of Bartók, another of Warlock's enthusiasms, even manifests itself, particularly in *The Curlew*. The idiosyncratic harmonic language with its unlikely and disparate mixture of Edwardiana, Delius, van Dieren, Elizabethan, and folk-music gives Warlock's music a strongly personal voice. Among his choral pieces are some exceptionally beautiful carol-settings, notably 'Bethlehem Down' and 'Balulalow'. The marked contrast between the extrovert and gentler settings seemed for some to confirm an apparent dichotomy in the Warlock/Heseltine personality and the pseudo-psychological interpretation of his complex character as schizophrenic was exploited by Cecil Gray in his memoir. However, acquaintance with Warlock's complicated life story, with its constant family pressures, his lack of self-confidence, wild emotional swings, and lack of any permanent employment or regular income, confounds such simplistic explanation. The split-personality theory was, at any rate, vehemently denied by his closest friends. His final frustrations lay, no doubt, in his lack of formal musical training and the miniature forms in which his genius moulded itself led him into a kind of artistic cul-de-sac. In the end he had no way of breaking through the barriers of his self-created musical language either to develop new harmonic techniques or explore new territories of form.

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