

**“THEIR DEATH SHALL IN NO WISE HAVE BEEN IN VAIN”:  
GIDEON FAGAN’S STUDIES AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
MUSIC IN LONDON, 1922-1926**

**Heinrich van der Mescht**

*Department of Music, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield, 0028*

**“Their death shall in no wise have been in vain”: Gideon Fagan se studie aan die Royal College of Music in Londen, 1922-1926**

Die Suid-Afrikaanse komponis Gideon Fagan (1904-1980) het tussen 1922 en 1926 aan die Royal College of Music (RCM) in Londen studeer. So het Fagan sy ouer broer Johannes (1898-1920) nagevolg wat in 1920 selfmoord gepleeg terwyl hy ’n student aan die RCM was. Wanneer sy broer se tragiese dood in ag geneem word, kan afgelei word dat die begin van die 17-jarige Gideon se studie emosioneel ’n uiters moeilike ervaring was. Gideon Fagan het in ’n bekende komponis ontwikkel en was die eerste Suid-Afrikaansgebore dirigent wat internasionale erkenning verwerf het. Die dood van sy broer Johannes was nie tevergeefs nie: Dit vind neerslag in die hersiening van werke van Johannes en in die toonsetting van die lied *Klein Sonneskyn*.

**Sleutel terme:** Gideon Fagan, Johannes Fagan, Royal College of Music, Suid-Afrikaanse komponiste

The South African composer Gideon Fagan (1904-1980) studied at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London between 1922 and 1926. Fagan followed in the footsteps of his elder brother Johannes (1898-1920) who had committed suicide in 1920 while a student at the RCM. Considering his brother’s tragic death, beginning his studies must have been emotionally extremely difficult for the 17-year-old Gideon. Gideon Fagan became a well-known composer and the first South African born conductor who gained international recognition. The death of his brother Johannes was not in vain: It is reflected in Gideon’s revision of some of Johannes’s works and in the setting of the song *Klein Sonneskyn*.

**Key words:** Gideon Fagan, Johannes Fagan, Royal College of Music, South African composers

## Introduction

The South African composer and conductor Gideon Fagan (1904-1980) was included in Donald Brook's book entitled *Conductors' Gallery: Biographical sketches of well-known orchestral conductors including notes on the leading symphony orchestras, and a short biography of the late Sir Henry Wood* in 1946.<sup>1</sup> The volume includes 32 conductors working in England.<sup>2</sup> Fagan's stature is also emphasized by his inclusion in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* in three consecutive editions: 1954,<sup>3</sup> 1980<sup>4</sup> and the latest of 2001.<sup>5</sup> Stegmann<sup>6</sup> mentions that Fagan was the first musician born in South Africa to achieve prominence as a conductor. Fagan is also included in Riemann's *Musik Lexikon* (1959)<sup>7</sup> and in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1979),<sup>8</sup> although he is omitted from the latest edition of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2001).<sup>9</sup> It is clear that Gideon Fagan is a very prominent and important figure in South African musical life.

It was on 30 September 1922 that Gideon Fagan (**Figure 1**), born on 3 November 1904 in the town of Somerset West near Cape Town in South Africa, and therefore a mere 17 years old, enrolled at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London. The ideal of studying at the Royal College of Music was a long cherished one. Fagan's brother Johannes Jacobus, born on 22 February 1898, gave Gideon his first music lessons, and nurtured his musical development.<sup>10</sup> Johannes enrolled at the RCM on 25 September 1916 at the age of 18 but, after about six months, had to return to South Africa due to

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<sup>1</sup> D. Brook, *Conductors' gallery: Biographical sketches of well-known orchestral conductors including notes on the leading symphony orchestras, and a short biography of the late Sir Henry Wood* (London, 1946), pp. 51-54.

<sup>2</sup> Some are mentioned in this article: Adrian Boult, Constant Lambert, Stanford Robinson, Malcolm Sargent, Guy Warrack.

<sup>3</sup> G.F. Stegmann, Fagan, Gideon, in E. Blom (ed.), *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th edition, 3 (London, 1954), pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> G.F. Stegmann & P. Griffiths, Fagan, Gideon, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 6 (London, 1980), p. 360.

<sup>5</sup> G.F. Stegmann & J. May, Fagan, Gideon, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, 8 (London: 2001), p. 513.

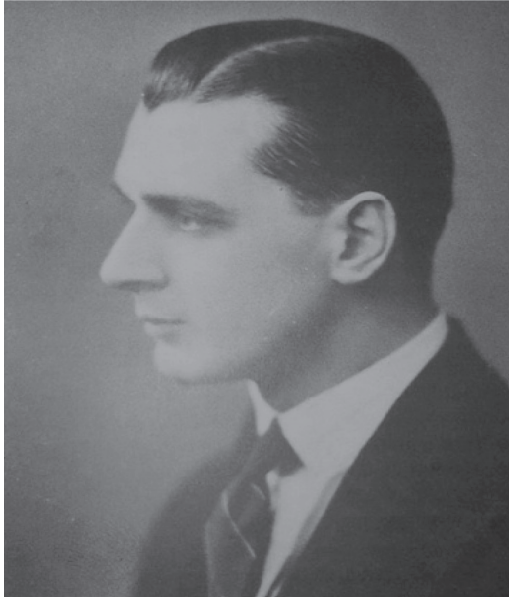
<sup>6</sup> G.F. Stegmann, Fagan, Gideon, in E. Blom (ed.), *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th edition, 3 (London, 1954), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> W. Gurlitt, Fagan, Gideon, *Riemann Musik Lexikon*, Personenteil A-K (Mainz, 1959), p. 485.

<sup>8</sup> J. Bouws, Fagan, Gideon, in F. Blume (ed.), *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 16 Supplement (Kassel, 1979), columns 172-173.

<sup>9</sup> L. Finscher (ed.), *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* Personenteil 6 (Kassel, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia* 2 (Cape Town, 1982), p. 48.



**Figure 1: Gideon Fagan**

(Q. Fagan, *Henry Allan Fagan 1889-1963*, Cape Town, 1975, p. 55; by kind permission of Gawie and Hannes Fagan)

bad health. He continued studying with William Henry Bell in Cape Town and heard his *Prelude for Orchestra* performed in 1919 by the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra. After more than two years in South Africa, Johannes Fagan re-entered the RCM in April 1919. But on Tuesday 13 July 1920 he committed suicide by taking cyanide.<sup>11</sup> The question therefore is whether Gideon Fagan achieved the success that was not granted Johannes Fagan in his short life. The aim of this article is to determine in which ways Gideon attained the promise that his elder brother Johannes could not fulfil at the RCM. Furthermore, the influence Johannes's death had on Gideon's compositions will be investigated. Allusions will be made to the fact that Gideon Fagan was often reminded of the ubiquitous *memento mori* and the brevity of life. During the course of the article references will also be made to some of Gideon Fagan's (later famous) fellow students, amongst them other South Africans, and to important concerts taking place in London. This is in order to paint the broader context and the extremely stimulating circumstances in which Fagan was developing his expertise.

<sup>11</sup> See H. van der Mescht, "I shall take the leap to the great beyond...": Johannes Fagan's studies and suicide in London, 1916-1920, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 21(1), 2007, pp. 72-92.

## Investigation of available documentary sources

There are five sources on RCM students that can be consulted in the Library and Archive of the RCM in London.<sup>12</sup>

- In the Students' Registers, personal particulars (for example the date of enrolment, the date of leaving the RCM, the home address, the address where the student lived in London, and the father's profession) can be found. This information is written on a separate page for each student. On the back of this page particulars about fees and payment dates can be found.
- The Study Registers reveal the specific teachers with whom every student studied.
- The RCM published an annual report of the previous year's activities. So, for example, the report for the academic year 1922/1923, Gideon Fagan's first year at the RCM, was published in 1923 with the following title: *Report of the Council, Statements of Account, &c, for the year ending 31st August, 1923; and the proceedings at the Thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting of the Corporation, 2nd July, 1923.*
- The R.C.M. Magazine appeared three times per year and offers general articles about the College and its students. It usually contains the beginning-of-term address to the students by the Director of the College, in this case, Hugh Allen.
- The Minutes of the Executive and Finance Committees are also available. These meetings were held about six times per year. The minutes contain material about a variety of letters received, a report by the Director, information about scholarships awarded, details of finances, appointment of committees, decisions, particulars about students, etc. Gideon Fagan's name is not found in these Minute Books.

There are no Gideon Fagan music manuscripts in the Archive of the RCM in London, nor any letters from or to him. The main South African sources on the Fagan brothers are the *South African Music Encyclopedia (SAME)*,<sup>13</sup> the *Dictionary of South African*

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<sup>12</sup> I would like to acknowledge the help afforded to me by Mr Chris Bornet and Dr Peter Horton of the Library and Archive of the Royal College of Music in London.

<sup>13</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia 2* (Cape Town, 1982), pp. 48-50; G. Fagan, Fagan, Johannes Jacobus, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia 2* (Cape Town, 1982), pp. 51-52.

*Biography*<sup>14</sup> and Bouws's chapter on "Johannes en Gideon Fagan".<sup>15</sup> These sources provide little detail about Gideon Fagan's studies at the RCM.

### The Fagan family

Gideon Fagan came from an extremely talented family. The father of the two musician brothers was Henry Allan Fagan (1865-1931) and the mother Catherina Susanna Smith (1864-1937).<sup>16</sup> For the Fagan family it was nothing strange to study in London. Gideon Fagan's uncle was the Afrikaans philologist and lexicographer Prof. J.J. Smith (1883-1949) who completed a BA Hons at the University of London.<sup>17</sup> Gideon Fagan's eldest brother, named after his father, was Henry Allan Fagan (1889-1963), who had left South Africa in 1910 and studied at the University of London where he obtained an LLB in 1914. H.A. Fagan became a cabinet minister in 1938 and Chief Justice of South Africa in 1957.<sup>18</sup> In addition, he was a foremost Afrikaans poet and playwright.

After completing his studies at the RCM, Gideon Fagan set his brother H.A. Fagan's poem "Wagter op die tooring" (Watchman on the tower) for voice and orchestra in 1926 when he was about 22 years old, and "Die bergblommetjie" (The little mountain flower) for voice and piano (1935).<sup>19</sup> Johannes Fagan used a poem by H.A. Fagan for the song *Soos die windjie wat suis* (Like the wind which rustles); this was revised by Gideon Fagan in 1930.<sup>20</sup> For the song *Die nag* (The Night), Gideon Fagan used his own text.<sup>21</sup> Gideon Fagan's last orchestral work was his oratorio *Een Vaderland* (One Fatherland, 1977-1978) in which he employs lines from a poem by his brother H.A. Fagan near the beginning and the end of the work. These lines are taken from H.A. Fagan's poem "Nkosi Sikele I-Afrika" (translated: God, bless Africa):<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in C.J. Beyers (Editor-in-chief), *Dictionary of South African Biography* 5 (Pretoria, 1987), pp. 255-256; C.G. Henning, Fagan, Johannes Jacobus, in C.J. Beyers (Editor-in-chief), *Dictionary of South African Biography* 4 (Durban, 1981), p. 152.

<sup>15</sup> J. Bouws, *Suid-Afrikaanse komponiste van vandag en gister* (Kaapstad, 1957), pp. 49-51.

<sup>16</sup> C.G. Henning, Fagan, Johannes Jacobus, in C.J. Beyers (Editor-in-chief), *Dictionary of South African Biography* 4 (Durban, 1981), p. 152.

<sup>17</sup> W.J. de Kock & D.W. Krüger, Smith, Johannes Jacobus, in W.J. de Kock & D.W. Krüger (eds.), *Dictionary of South African Biography* 2 (Cape Town, 1972), pp. 677-679.

<sup>18</sup> Q. Fagan, *Henry Allan Fagan* (Kaapstad, 1975), pp. 34, 63, 69.

<sup>19</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia* 2 (Cape Town, 1982), p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> *EAK-Kunsliedbundel* (Johannesburg, 1984), pp. 23-25.

<sup>21</sup> W.N. Naudé, *Orkestrale tegnieke in geselekteerde werke van Gideon Fagan (1904-1980)*. (DMus thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1984), p. 346.

<sup>22</sup> W.N. Naudé, *Orkestrale tegnieke in geselekteerde werke van Gideon Fagan* (1984), p. 12. The present South African national anthem also uses these words at the beginning of the anthem. It means: "God, bless Africa."

Seën, Heer, die land wat vele volkre dra,  
 almal verenigd om Gods seën te vra  
 op net een tuiste, net een Vaderland,  
 want die Alwyse het ons saam geplant  
 en saam laat wortel in Suid-Afrika.

Translated it reads:

Bless, o Lord, the land which carries many nations,  
 all united to plead for God's blessing  
 on only one home, only one Fatherland,  
 for the All-wise has planted us together  
 and let us root together in South Africa.<sup>23</sup>

In *Die Huisgenoot* of 6 June 1924, there appeared a simple Afrikaans song with chordal accompaniment set on the text “’n Treurlied” (A lament) by C. Louis Leipoldt on page 27. The composer was indicated as “H.A.F.”, which would most likely have been H.A. Fagan, father or son. Gideon Fagan was also multitalented: For his setting of Keats’s “I had a dove”, Gideon Fagan supplied an Afrikaans translation in the music text (*Die Duifie*), dedicated “Aan my Moeder” (To my Mother).<sup>24</sup>

The two Fagan sisters, Hester (piano) and Sofia (cello), also studied in London<sup>25</sup> and were in the city when Johannes Fagan committed suicide in 1920. The two other brothers had died several days apart in 1895.<sup>26</sup>

Gideon Fagan attended the South African College of Music in Cape Town between 1916 (the year Johannes left for the RCM) and 1922.<sup>27</sup> His main teacher was William Henry Bell (1873-1946) who had come to South Africa from London in 1912

<sup>23</sup> The translation is by the author of this article.

<sup>24</sup> G. Fagan, *I had a dove / Die Duifie* (London, 1931). A recording of this song by the South African mezzo-soprano Betsy de la Porte (who also studied at the RCM between 1925 and 1929, therefore overlapping the end of Gideon Fagan’s studies) can be found on His master’s voice No. FJ 105.

<sup>25</sup> Q. Fagan, *Henry Allan Fagan* (Kaapstad, 1975), p. 54. Although it is mentioned in this source that the Fagan sisters also studied at the RCM, there are no records in the Archive of the RCM to prove this.

<sup>26</sup> The tomb stone in the cemetery of the Oude Kerk in Tulbagh mentions the father (Henry Allan Fagan), the mother (Catherina Susanna Fagan), two brothers who died very young and Johannes J. Fagan. Laurens J. Fagan (born on 19 April 1890) died on 4 December 1895 and Albertus P. Fagan (born on 29 May 1891) on 29 November 1895. See Figure 5 in H. van der Mescht, “I shall take the leap to the great beyond...”: Johannes Fagan’s studies and suicide in London, 1916-1920, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 21(1), 2007, pp. 90-91.

<sup>27</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia* 2 (Cape Town, 1982), p. 48.

to become the Head of the South African College of Music. Previously, between 1909 and 1912, Bell had been a professor of Harmony at the Royal Academy of Music in London.<sup>28</sup> In South Africa Bell later became the composition teacher of some of South Africa's leading composers, including Hubert du Plessis, Stefans Grové and John Joubert. On Johannes's return to Cape Town in 1917, after six months in London, the two brothers would certainly have discussed the excitement of musical life in London and specifically at the RCM. In 1919 Johannes left once more for the RCM in London, and in 1920 the terrible news of his suicide was received. Two years later Gideon Fagan enrolled at the RCM. One can imagine the apprehension with which the Fagan family saw the 17-year-old Gideon Fagan leave for London.

When studying the material available in the Archive of the RCM, it becomes clear that Johannes Fagan was not one of the leading pianists or composers among the RCM students. He never appeared in one of the official RCM student concerts as a pianist; neither were any of his compositions heard there.<sup>29</sup> Due to difficult circumstances (his bad health and the death of his fiancée) he was unable to fulfil the great promise he showed.

### **Circumstances at the Royal College of Music in 1922 and Gideon Fagan's enrolment**

Gideon Johannes Fagan was student No. 5491 and, although the classes had started on 18 September,<sup>30</sup> he enrolled on 30 September 1922<sup>31</sup> (**Figure 2**).

On 30 September his enrolment form was filled in, stating that he came from "Somerset West, C.P. South Africa". His father was Henry Allen (sic) Fagan, an auctioneer. Conducting was not his principal subject: instead, the piano was filled in as "Principal Study" and conducting as "Second study". His "Date of Leaving College" after four years of study was 12 June 1926, when Fagan was only 21 years old. Here "½ term" was added. One wonders why Fagan attended for half a term only. To this information in ink there was added in pencil "London address Vernon House, Park Place, St. James's, S.W.1" (**Figure 3**).

<sup>28</sup> R. Barnett, Bell, W(illiam) H(enry), in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd edition), 3 (London, 2001), p. 183.

<sup>29</sup> See H. van der Mescht, "I shall take the leap to the great beyond...": Johannes Fagan's studies and suicide in London, 1916-1920, *South African Journal of Cultural History* 21(1), 2007, p. 71.

<sup>30</sup> See *The R.C.M. Magazine* 18(3), 1922, p. 86.

<sup>31</sup> See *Students' Register E – J: Sept. 1921 to July 1931*, Archive of the RCM. Malan incorrectly gives 1923-1926 as the years of Fagan's studies. See J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia 2* (Cape Town, 1982), p. 48.

Application Regn. No. <i>5491</i>	Name in Full <i>Gideon Johannes Fagan</i>	<i>London House, Park Place, St James's, SW 1</i>
HOME ADDRESS LONDON ADDRESS	<i>Somerset West, C. P. South Africa</i>	
Age last birthday and date of birth	<i>17, 3rd November 1904</i>	
Father's Name and Address	<i>Henry Allen Fagan, C. P. South Africa</i>	
Father's Profession or Occupation	<i>Auctioneer</i>	
Generator for Fees		
Present Study	<i>Piano, Conducting</i>	
Instrument Studied		
Date of Entering College	<i>September 30th 1922 (Admitted)</i>	Date of Re-entry
Date of Leaving College	<i>June 12th 1926 (2 Term)</i>	Date of Leaving
Number of Terms Suspected	<i>11/8</i>	
Salute or Degree		
REMARKS		Place in Grade Lists
		Harmony Counterpoint Tutorship tested

**Figure 2: Gideon Fagan's enrolment form**  
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal College of Music, London)



**Figure 3: The building at Park Place, St. James's, London, where Fagan stayed**  
(Photograph: H. van der Mescht, 2010)



The next page (the back of the enrolment page) gives complete information about the fees paid with date and some remarks. It mentions that Fagan was “Absent 2 weeks Xmas Term 1922”. The annual *Report* of 1923, encompassing the academic year 1922/1923 in which Fagan enrolled, states that the RCM boasted nearly 700 students and that there were the following concerts in each of the three terms: four Orchestral Concerts, five Chamber Concerts, four Informal Concerts, four Students’ Recitals, two or three Opera Performances, and two or three Patrons’ Fund Rehearsals.<sup>32</sup>

Fagan was reminded of the death of the young and the talented when, on Friday 10 November 1922, six weeks after he started studying at the RCM, the Memorial Tablet commemorating the staff members and students who died during World War I was unveiled in the entrance hall of the RCM. The extremely touching address by Lord Justice Younger would have made a painful impression on Gideon Fagan who had lost his brother, although it is not known whether he attended this occasion. Lord Justice Younger said:

*In the name and on behalf of this House and its Members, I unveil the Tablet here erected to the undying memory of the 38 Students and Staff of the Royal College of Music, who went forth from this Place to the Great War and there gave their lives for their Country and its Cause. May Light Celestial Shine upon them.*<sup>33</sup>

Immediately afterwards, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford’s *Funeral March* from the music to Tennyson’s *Becket* was played in the Concert Hall by the College Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult. Lord Justice Younger addressed the audience with the following words:

*We are assembled here this afternoon to pay our tribute of affection and respect to the memory of those of the Students and Staff of the College who, out of the greater number who flocked to the Field of Duty in the War, made the Supreme Sacrifice and did not return to us again.*

The names were read out by Lord Justice Younger, including those of George Butterworth, Ernest Farrar, Adolphe Goossens and Francis Purcell Warren. The speech included the following words:

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<sup>32</sup> G.A. Macmillan, Report of the Council to the Corporation, *Report of the Council, Statements of Accounts, &c* (London, 1923), p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous, 1914-1918: The unveiling of the Memorial Tablet to Collegians, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(1), 1922, p. 8.

*They have now outsoared the shadows of our night. They have joined the Choir Invisible. They are at rest.*

*But though they have passed from our sight, they yet speak to us. Their constant call to us is a call to higher things.*

*Let us for their sake never be deaf to it. And so shall they have their reward, and their death shall in no wise have been in vain.*<sup>34</sup>

How did Gideon Fagan respond to these challenging words about the death of promising young men, considering the tragic death of his own brother Johannes?

When Gideon started studying at the RCM in 1922, the College Orchestra was under the guidance of the 33-year-old Dr. Adrian Boult (1889-1983), later Sir Adrian Boult, one of the foremost English conductors ever. Boult was on the staff of the RCM from 1919 to 1930.<sup>35</sup> Together with Boult the other teacher for score reading and conducting was Dr. Malcolm Sargent (1895-1967).<sup>36</sup> “Orchestral Practice” was undertaken by Charles Villiers Stanford and Boult.<sup>37</sup> The list of teachers for Composition resembles a who’s who of English composers: Armstrong Gibbs, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, Charles Villiers Stanford, Vaughan Williams and Charles Wood.<sup>38</sup> For “Harmony, Counterpoint, Analysis, &c.” there were added, amongst others, Frederick Bridge, H.C. Colles (whose *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, third edition, was to be published in five volumes in 1927 and 1928), Harold Darke, Charles Herbert Kitson and R.O. Morris.

Fagan’s Study Register is extraordinary in that it does not indicate his teachers for his first term of study. It is possible that these registers were only started in Fagan’s second year of study, 1923/1924.<sup>39</sup> One can therefore not determine whether Gideon Fagan really started with the piano and who his teacher would have been. The Study Register only starts with the Christmas Term of 1923/1924, more than a year after Fagan had started studying at the RCM. At this time he was studying conducting and

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<sup>34</sup> Anonymous, 1914-1918: The Unveiling of the Memorial Tablet to Collegians, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(1), 1922, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> R. Crichton and J. Bowen, Boult, Sir Adrian (Cedric), in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 4 (London, 1980), p. 108.

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the Council, Statement of Accounts, &c., for the year ending 31st August, 1922; and proceedings at the Thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting of the Corporation, 2nd July, 1923* (London, 1923), p. 26. Sargent was appointed at the RCM in 1923. See R. Crichton, Sargent, Sir (Harold Malcolm (Watts), in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd edition) 22 (London, 2001), p. 288.

<sup>37</sup> *Report of the Council...* (London, 1923), p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> *Report of the Council...* (London, 1923), p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> We do not possess this information about Johannes Fagan who started his studies in 1916.

composition as his two main subjects. His teacher for conducting was Adrian Boult until the Easter Term of 1924, when his teacher for the Midsummer Term was Geoffrey Toye (1889-1942).<sup>40</sup> From the Christmas Term of 1924/1925 Fagan's conducting teacher was Malcolm Sargent until the end of his studies in the Midsummer Term of 1926. The Study Register indicates that his teacher for his second study (composition) was Vaughan Williams until the Christmas Term of 1924/1925 when he was enrolled for timpani with Charles Turner for two semesters. See **Figure 4**.

### The context of Fagan's studies and his achievements, 1923-1926

According to Brook, Fagan was a member of the percussion sections of the College Orchestras,<sup>41</sup> but one cannot be sure in which of the different orchestras he participated. Brook also mentions that Fagan sometimes played in other orchestras in and around London.

TERM IN COLLEGE	PRINCIPAL STUDY	TEACHER	SECOND STUDY	TEACHER	EXTRA STUDIES	TEACHER	DATE	REMARKS
1923 CHRISTMAS EASTER	Conducting	Boult	Composition	Vaughan Williams			5	
MIDSUMMER	"	Toye	"	"			6	
CHRISTMAS 1924 EASTER	"	Sargent	"	"				
MIDSUMMER	"	"	Timpani	Turner				
CHRISTMAS 1925 EASTER	"	"						
MIDSUMMER	"	"						
CHRISTMAS 1926 EASTER	"	"						
MIDSUMMER	"	"						

*G. Fagan  
Composition and Timpani  
off later at  
Royal Coll.*

**Figure 4: Gideon Fagan's Study Register**

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal College of Music, London)

<sup>40</sup> See A. Jacobs, Toye, (Edward) Geoffrey, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd edition) 25 (London, 2001), pp. 667-668. Toye was a foremost conductor in London and conducted the first performance of Vaughan Williams's *London Symphony* in 1914.

<sup>41</sup> D. Brook, *Conductors' Gallery: Biographical sketches of well-known orchestral conductors including notes on the leading symphony orchestras, and a short biography of the late Sir Henry Wood* (London, 1946), p. 51.

As a person who had grown up in a proudly South African home, Fagan would probably have been interested in the activities of other South African students, especially those who had won scholarships and therefore had already achieved success. One of Fagan's contemporaries was Hilda Leaman from Durban who had won the prestigious overseas scholarship of the University of South Africa. On Wednesday 24 January 1923, she was the pianist in a performance of Brahms's very demanding Piano Trio in C minor Op. 87.<sup>42</sup> Behind her name is indicated: "Cape Exhibitioner" (meaning the scholarship holder of the University of South Africa).

The first time that Gideon Fagan's name can be found in the copies of *The R.C.M. Magazine* is also in the lists of concerts (compare Hilda Leaman): On Tuesday 6 February 1923, scarcely four months after commencing his studies at the RCM, the 18-year-old Fagan was seen conducting movements from the Suite for Flute and Strings in B minor by Bach. The soloist was a student, Bruce McLay, and the conducting duties were shared with another student, Stanford Robinson.<sup>43</sup> On that day, Fagan was on stage with illustrious men: Other conductors on the programme were Hugh Allen (the Director of the RCM), the student Gordon Jacob (1895-1984, later a well-known composer, professor at the RCM, and writer on orchestration),<sup>44</sup> the student John Hitch and the teacher of conducting Adrian Boult.

The South Africans were excelling, as they often did at the RCM. On Thursday 8 February 1923, Hilda Leaman played Schumann's difficult *Études Symphoniques*.<sup>45</sup> Thursday 22 February was a great day for the South Africans: Lena Traub, another Cape Exhibitioner, started the chamber music concert with the difficult *32 Variations in C minor* by Beethoven, and Hilda Leaman was an accompanist of singers, although one cannot determine which item(s) she accompanied.<sup>46</sup>

Fagan is mentioned as a composer for the first time in an overview of "Informal Concerts" in *The R.C.M. Magazine*. On 7 March 1923 his *Solo for Violoncello* was played together with two pieces by other students.<sup>47</sup> This composition is not in the list of works provided by Malan.<sup>48</sup> One wonders whether Fagan had the opportunity

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(2), 1923, p. 38.

<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(2), 1923, p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> G. Jacob, *Orchestral Technique: A Manual for Students* (London, first edition 1931).

<sup>45</sup> The copy of Leaman's score is in the possession of Heinrich van der Mescht in Pretoria, South Africa: "H. Leaman. R.C.M. 1921."

<sup>46</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(2), 1923, p. 39.

<sup>47</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(2), 1923, p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia* 2 (Cape Town, 1982), p. 50.

to visit the Aeolian Hall on 24 March 1923 when Béla Bartók played his Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano with the violinist Jelly d'Aranyi.<sup>49</sup>

The Director of the RCM, Hugh Allen, addressed the students at the start of each of the three terms. He would usually choose one topic that he would speak on. On 30 April 1923 he discussed being in a hurry and the implications for students who might not have time to think about their work properly.<sup>50</sup> In September 1923 he said:

*If we are not prepared for the pace at which we have to live, nor carry the ballast for safety in strong winds, nor the engine power to make headway against the tides, nor the seaworthy qualities which enable us to ride it out, we shall find ourselves tossed about in a confused sea, and make an uncomfortable voyage of it. We shall be in danger of making a muddle of things.*<sup>51</sup>

It seems as though Gideon Fagan had shown his mettle (unlike his brother Johannes) and heeded Allen's advice, as Gideon was making good progress: He conducted again at the College Concert on Tuesday 29 May 1923, being in charge of the orchestra for Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*. The main conductor was Adrian Boult, and there were, apart from Fagan, three other student conductors.<sup>52</sup>

*Hansel and Gretel* by Humperdinck could have been Fagan's first excursion into opera. On Thursday 12 July 1923 he conducted Acts I and II of the opera with another student taking over for the last act.<sup>53</sup>

Another Cape Exhibitioner who was a contemporary of Fagan was Edna Stanton who played a Prelude and Fugue in E minor by Mendelssohn at a College Concert on Thursday 22 November 1923.<sup>54</sup> Miss Stanton was on the platform again a week later, playing the piano reduction of the orchestral score of Tchaikovsky's *Variations for Violoncello and Piano*. Fagan's final conducting performance of 1923 was on Tuesday 4 December. He conducted a work by a fellow student: *Rhapsody* by William Minay.<sup>55</sup>

Gideon Fagan was again reminded of death at the beginning of the year 1924 which brought with it the death of three very important musicians previously attached to the RCM: Sir Fredrick Bridge, Sir Walter Parratt and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford.

<sup>49</sup> N. Lebrecht, *Music in London* (London, 1992), p. 131.

<sup>50</sup> H. Allen, Director's Address, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(2), 1923, pp. 32-37.

<sup>51</sup> H. Allen, Director's Address, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(3), 1923, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(3), 1923, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> Anonymous, In the Opera Theatre, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 19(3), 1923, p. 72.

<sup>54</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(1), 1923, p. 14. (It is not indicated which of Mendelssohn's Preludes and Fugues in E minor she performed. One would expect the impressive Op. 35 No. 1.)

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(1), 1923, p. 15.

Much of Volume 20 No. 2 of *The R.C.M. Magazine* is dedicated to their memory. It is quite probable that Fagan would have read these eulogies, which would have made a big impression on him. The three men were honoured as persons who had a decisive influence on the development of the RCM. The Director devoted his Director's Address to them.<sup>56</sup>

The annual *Report* concerning the academic year 1923/1924 mentions that a Third Orchestra had been added to the other two,<sup>57</sup> giving two more concerts each term, and creating more opportunities for composers, performers and conductors, including Fagan. In the *Report* printed in 1926 it is mentioned that there were then four orchestras rehearsing every week.<sup>58</sup>

On Tuesday 26 February 1924, Fagan conducted the first movement of the Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor by Saint-Saëns. The conductors for the other two movements were Guy Warrack and Adrian Boult.<sup>59</sup> Typically, there was a work by an English composer on the programme: *On hearing the first cuckoo in spring* (1912) by Delius, conducted by Patrick Hadley.<sup>60</sup>

At the other College Concerts, Fagan could hear an astonishing variety of compositions. Works by English composers were often included. So, for example, on Friday 28 March 1924, Fagan could hear the *London Symphony* of his composition teacher Vaughan Williams (1911-1913, revised 1918 and 1933) performed by the College Orchestra with his conducting teacher Adrian Boult as conductor.<sup>61</sup> The other typical characteristics of these programmes were the inclusion of works by well-known contemporary composers and by students. An example is a student's performance of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1912) by Ravel (1875-1937) on Thursday 20 March 1924.<sup>62</sup> (On 24 April Ravel gave the première of his *Tzigane* for Violin and Piano with Jelly d'Arnyi in London.)<sup>63</sup>

<sup>56</sup> H. Allen, Director's Address, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(2), 1924, pp. 28-33.

<sup>57</sup> *Report of the Council, Statement of Accounts, &c. for the year ending 31st August, 1924; presented to the Forty-first Annual General Meeting of the Corporation, 27th July, 1925* (London, 1925), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Report of the Council, Statement of Accounts, &c. for the year ending 31st August, 1925; presented to the Forty-second Annual General Meeting of the Corporation, 20th July, 1926* (London, 1926), p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(2), 1924, p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> Hadley (1899-1973) had lost his right leg in France during World War I. He was appointed at the RCM in 1925. In 1946 he became professor of music at Cambridge. See E. Wetherell, Hadley, Patrick (Arthur Sheldon), in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, 10 (London, 2001), p. 650.

<sup>61</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(2), 1924, p. 63.

<sup>62</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(2), 1924, p. 62.

<sup>63</sup> N. Lebrecht, *Music in London* (1992), p. 131.

Fagan was the conductor on Tuesday 1 April 1924 of *Nuages* from Debussy's *Nocturnes*.<sup>64</sup> In this programme there were eight student conductors of whom, perhaps surprisingly, two were women. The still 19-year-old Fagan continued on Tuesday 10 June 1924, conducting the first two movements from Bizet's Suite *L'Arlésienne* No. 1.<sup>65</sup> On this programme Mozart's "Prague" Symphony was conducted by Fagan's new conducting teacher Geoffrey Toye. As an ambitious and interested student, Fagan would most probably have attended the performance of his composition teacher Vaughan Williams's opera *Hugh the Drover* which was performed at the RCM on 4 July 1924.<sup>66</sup>

On Tuesday 4 November 1924, a day after his 20th birthday, Fagan was a conductor at a concert of the "Choral Class and Second Orchestra" where, inter alia, Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* for baritone, chorus and orchestra were presented.<sup>67</sup> On this occasion the five songs were sung by four different singers, the most well known later being (Sir) Keith Falkner who sang the last two songs.<sup>68</sup> Fagan conducted the first song, *Sailing at dawn*, followed by three other conductors: Hugh Allen (the director), Patrick Hadley and Harold Davidson. Fagan also conducted the *Siegfried Idyll* by Wagner. Other conductors on the programme were Constant Lambert (1905-1951) and Malcolm Sargent.<sup>69</sup> On Tuesday 9 December 1924 Fagan had the opportunity of conducting the violinist Gwendolen Higham in a performance of the first and fourth movements from the *Symphonie espagnole* for violin and orchestra by Lalo.<sup>70</sup> The same conductors as at the previous concert took part. Fagan was gaining extensive experience of conducting a wide repertory under the guidance of his teachers. At the same time he could learn from his fellow students.

<sup>64</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(2), 1924, p. 63.

<sup>65</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 20(3), 1924, p. 87.

<sup>66</sup> N. Lebrecht, *Music in London* (1992), p. 131.

<sup>67</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(1), 1924, p. 10. Stanford had died on 29 March 1924 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. N. Lebrecht, *Music in London* (London, 1992), p. 131.

<sup>68</sup> Falkner (1900-1994) was a professor of singing at Cornell University in the USA between 1950 and 1960, in which year he was appointed Director of the RCM, a position he held until 1974. See F. Howes, Falkner, Sir (Donald) Keith, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 6 (London, 1980), p. 370. Falkner is not included in the latest edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001).

<sup>69</sup> As an example of the extremely interesting and talented persons with whom Fagan came into contact, one could mention Lambert who later became a well-known conductor, composer and critic. His ballet *Romeo and Juliet* for Diaghileff's *Ballets Russes* caused a scandal in Paris a year and a half later on 19 May 1926 (when Lambert was still only 20 years old) because of the scenery and costumes by Max Ernst and Joan Miró. See Anonymous, The Royal Collegian Abroad, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 22(3), 1926, p. 100. Fagan was still a student at the RCM at this time.

<sup>70</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(1), 1924, p. 11.

Fagan's next appointment was on Tuesday 10 February 1925 when he conducted the second movement of Schubert's so-called "Unfinished" Symphony.<sup>71</sup> For the first movement the conductor was Patrick Hadley. Other conductors on the programme were Harold Davidson, Constant Lambert, Guy Warrack and Fagan's new conducting teacher Malcolm Sargent (1895-1967).

On 4 May 1925, the later famous South African mezzo-soprano Betsy de la Porte (1901-1977), a winner of the University of South Africa's overseas scholarship, enrolled at the RCM and became a fellow student of Gideon Fagan. She later became one of the main interpreters of his Afrikaans songs.

For the term between May and July 1925 there were four orchestral concerts at the RCM, two by the "Second Orchestra". On Tuesday 16 June 1925 Fagan conducted the orchestra in a performance of Debussy's *L'après-midi d'un faune*<sup>72</sup> and on Tuesday 14 July the programme was concluded with Fagan conducting the overture to *The Flying Dutchman* by Wagner.<sup>73</sup> During this term Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) conducted her two short operas *Fête Galante* and *Entente Cordiale* given twice each (on 22 and 23 July) in the RCM's Opera Theatre.<sup>74</sup> It was the world première of *Entente Cordiale*.

It is fortuitous that *The R.C.M. Magazine* contains an article on conducting written by Adrian Boulton in which one can read some of his advice to his students, including Gideon Fagan.<sup>75</sup> The article was originally a speech presented at the Conference of the Competitive Musical Festivals Movement, held in York in September 1925. It contains some very good basic rules for the conductor:

The less energy he uses the more mental control he has got.

The simpler we make our stick action, the quicker will it be intelligible to a strange choir or orchestra.

[I]n the handling of the stick they work much too hard, and come away very hot and tired [...].

With the start of the new academic year of 1925/1926 the Second Orchestra only performed once until December: on Monday 7 December when Gideon Fagan conducted *Eight Russian Folk Songs* by Liadow (sic).<sup>76</sup> On Tuesday 16 February 1926,

<sup>71</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(2), 1925, p. 43.

<sup>72</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(3), 1925, p. 71.

<sup>73</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(3), 1925, p. 72.

<sup>74</sup> J.B.G., Work in the Opera Theatre, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(3), 1925, pp. 74-76.

<sup>75</sup> A. Boulton, Conductors' Classes, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 21(3), 1925, pp. 77-81.

<sup>76</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 22(1), 1925, p. 17.



Fagan conducted *Two Pieces for Orchestra* by the student Frederic Bontoft, which Fagan had orchestrated as *Lament* for strings, and *Cortège*.<sup>77</sup> The main conductor of the Second Orchestra was again Malcolm Sargent. At this time the farewell concert in Covent Garden of the famous singer Nellie Melba (1861-1931) on 8 June 1926 was an auspicious occasion.<sup>78</sup> Fagan's official day of leaving the RCM was 12 June 1926 when he was only 21 years old, but on Tuesday 15 June 1926 he was the conductor of *Fêtes* from Debussy's *Nocturnes*.<sup>79</sup> Apart from Malcolm Sargent, one of the conductors on this programme was Michael Tippett (1905-1998), two months younger than Fagan, who became one of the leading composers of the 20th century.

Fagan's name could not be found on any list of scholarship winners at the RCM. In spite of his great achievements as a student conductor, he was apparently not regarded as worthy of a scholarship.

Gideon Fagan returned to South Africa and received invitations to conduct the Cape Town Orchestra.<sup>80</sup> He appeared with this orchestra in a farewell concert in the Recreations Hall in Stellenbosch before he returned to London in 1927 to resume his conducting career. He was still only 22 years old.

On 23 June 1927, Fagan conducted an orchestral rehearsal with the London Symphony Orchestra.<sup>81</sup> The pieces were two movements from *El amor brujo* by Falla: "Pantomime" and "Danse rituelle de Feu". Although it is stated that he was from the RCM, he was not enrolled there at the time. The reference simply seems to indicate that he was previously a student at the RCM. The rest of the programme for the benefit of composers and performers from the London schools of music was conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Again, Fagan was in illustrious company.

### **The influence of Johannes Fagan's death on his brother Gideon's compositions**

The death of Gideon Fagan's brother Johannes certainly must have had a long lasting effect on Gideon and his compositional activities. Gideon Fagan revised (one is not certain to what extent) some of his brother Johannes's works. One of these is *Die soekende Moeder*, based on a poem by Jan F.E. Celliers (1865-1940), revised by

<sup>77</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 22(2), 1926, p. 45.

<sup>78</sup> N. Lebrecht, *Music in London* (1992), p. 132.

<sup>79</sup> Anonymous, College Concerts, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 22(3), 1926, p. 88.

<sup>80</sup> D. Brook, *Conductors' Gallery: Biographical sketches of well-known orchestral conductors including notes on the leading symphony orchestras, and a short biography of the late Sir Henry Wood* (London, 1946), p. 52.

<sup>81</sup> Anonymous, The R.C.M. Patron's Fund, *The R.C.M. Magazine* 23(3), 1927, p. 88.

Gideon Fagan in London in 1929.<sup>82</sup> It bears the subtitle *A mother wanders 'mong little tombs*.

These are the lyrics as printed in the music of the song and at the end of the copy:

'n Moeder dwaal onder graffies rond:  
 Hier lê haar kindjie al soveel jaar,  
 Hier in Irene's kerkhof-grond,  
 En sy weet nie waar!<sup>83</sup>

Moedertjie droog jou trane tog:  
 Waarom die graffie jou nog te wys?  
 Moeder, jy soek die Dode nog,  
 Waar reeds uit die Dode die Lewe verrys.

Johannes Fagan's own translation is the following:

A Mother wanders 'mong little tombs:  
 Here lies the child that she lov'd so well.  
 Fain would she know where sleeps the maid,  
 But she cannot tell.

Ah! Little Mother, cease thy tears:  
 Seek not the grave where the dead one lies!  
 Seekest thou, Mother, the Sleeping still? ...  
 Behold! from the Dead how the Living arise.

In both Johannes's decision to set this poem, and in Gideon's self-imposed task of revising the song, one can see the reference to their mother's loss of her two young sons (Laurens J. Fagan at five years and Albertus P. Fagan at four years).<sup>84</sup> In Gideon's case it is also a tribute to his late brother. The University of Pretoria's South African Music Collection contains a copy of the song with the following dedication to the famous South African soprano Mimi Coertse written on the cover page:

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<sup>82</sup> Johannes J. Fagan, *Die soekende Moeder* (London, 1931). The copy indicates on the back of the title page that a recording by Betsy de la Porte is available on His master's voice No. FJ 105.

<sup>83</sup> In Irene, close to Pretoria, there is a concentration camp grave-yard where mostly women and children who died during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) were buried.

<sup>84</sup> See footnote 26.

Aan Mimi.

Johannes, my oorlede broer, was die eerste komponis van Suid-Afrikaanse geboorte wat ernstige werke op 'n groot skaal gekomponeer het. Hierdie liedjie is natuurlik een van sy kleiner werke, maar ek hoop jy sal dit tog interessant vind. Johannes is in 1920 op 22-jarige leeftyd oorlede, terwyl hy aan die Royal College of Music in Londen student was.

Gideon.

Translated it would read:

To Mimi.

Johannes, my late brother, was the first composer of South African birth who composed serious compositions on a large scale. This little song is of course one of his smaller works, but I hope you will nevertheless find it interesting. Johannes died in 1920 at the age of 22 while he was a student at the Royal College of Music in London.

Gideon.

The effect that the death of his brother Johannes had on Gideon Fagan can also be observed in the choice of the extremely touching Afrikaans poem Gideon Fagan set in 1930, the year he turned 26. It is *Klein Sonneskyn* on a poem by A.G. Visser (1878-1929). The poem speaks of a mother who has lost her child (her Little Sunshine), asking who will now look after him. Here Gideon Fagan probably thought of his own mother who had lost two young sons in 1895 as well as her son Johannes Fagan in 1920. The poem goes:<sup>85</sup>

**Klein Sonneskyn**

**Little Sunshine**

There is no flock however watched and tended  
But one dead lamb is there. (Longfellow)

Net soos 'n lammetjie so lief,  
So dartel en so bly,  
Het hy aldag om my gespeel  
Gedurig aan my sy.  
Net soos 'n lammetjie verkleum  
In bitt're winternag,

Just like a little lamb so dear,  
So lively and so happily,  
He played around me every day  
Always at my side.  
Just like a little lamb perished  
In the bitter winter's night,

<sup>85</sup> A.G. Visser, *Versamelde gedigte* (Kaapstad, 1981), pp. 166-167. Direct translation by Heinrich van der Mescht.

So kil, so koud was hy oplaas, So stil sy blye lag.	So cold, so frozen was he at the end, So quiet his joyful laughter.
Hulle sê hy sal gelukkig wees: Waar hy is, is geen smart;	They say he will be happy: Where he is, there is no sorrow;
Maar wie sal nou Klein Sonneskyn Sag troetel aan haar hart?	But who will now caress My Little Sunshine softly on her heart?
Ek weet net – deur die lange nag, Totdat die lig weer kom – Ek weet hoe my arms pyn Met ledigheid van hom.	I only know – in the long, long night, Until the light returns – I know how my arms ache With the emptiness of him.
Hoed ook my lam, O Lam van God,  O Kindervriend en Hoeder. Wie kan hom in die Groot Heelal So liefhê soos sy moeder?	Look after my little lamb, O Lamb of God, O Friend of Children and Protector. Who, in the Great Universe, can Love him more than his mother?

In 1954 Gideon Fagan was to compose *Tears* (Walt Whitman), a symphonic poem based on an incomplete work by Johannes Fagan.<sup>86</sup> It uses a baritone soloist, choir and orchestra. An excerpt from an introduction published in the orchestral score of *Tears* goes:<sup>87</sup>

My late brother, Johannes Fagan, was the first serious composer of South African birth and it was generally felt among musicians of his time that South Africa suffered a great loss when, in 1920, death cut short his career at the age of only 22. Among his manuscripts I found a roughly sketched setting of Walt Whitman's 'Tears'. Though the work as a whole was clearly uncompleted and unpolished, the thematic material appealed to me so deeply that I decided to use some of it as principal subjects for this Symphonic Poem.

The text of *Tears* starts with the following words sung by the solo baritone.<sup>88</sup> These words might express Johannes Fagan's feelings in the dark days before his suicide in 1920:

<sup>86</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia* 2 (1982), p. 49.

<sup>87</sup> W.N. Naudé, *Orkestrale tegnieke in geselekteerde werke van Gideon Fagan* (1984), p. 4.

Tears, tears, tears  
 In the night in solitude  
 Tears, tears,  
 On the white shore dripping,  
 Sucked in by the sand.  
 Tears, not a star shining,  
 All dark and desolate.

## Conclusions

Considering his brother Johannes's tragic suicide, it must have been exceptionally difficult for the 17-year-old Gideon Fagan to walk up the steps of the famous Royal College of Music, attend concerts in the same Concert Hall, meet the same people as his brother did, sit in the same classrooms with the same teachers, and walk the same streets. He probably experienced the great responsibility of succeeding where his brother Johannes did not.

But Gideon Fagan did succeed, and excelled as a student conductor in the company of other students who later became famous as conductors or composers, such as Patrick Hadley and Constant Lambert. Gideon Fagan had the opportunity of conducting a wide variety of pieces, ranging from movements of symphonies and concertos to acts of operas. This experience stood him in very good stead in his later career as a conductor in England, where he conducted, inter alia, the Northern Orchestra of the BBC, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hallé Orchestra.

It therefore seems that Johannes Fagan's death was not in vain: It was his brother Gideon Fagan who fulfilled the promise that Johannes showed but was not able to accomplish. In response to Johannes's death Gideon revised some of Johannes's works and set the A.G. Visser poem "Klein Sonneskyn".

With the experience of having been guided by Vaughan Williams for Composition and Adrian Boult and Malcolm Sargent for Conducting, Gideon Fagan became a well-known composer and the first South African born conductor who gained international acclaim. From 1939 he conducted the Northern Orchestra of the BBC in Manchester for three years. On his return to South Africa in 1949, Fagan conducted the Johannesburg City Orchestra, and in 1954 became manager of the SABC's music department. This was followed by his appointment as Head of Music at the SABC in 1964. Between 1967 and 1972, Fagan was a senior lecturer in music at his alma mater, the South African College of Music, in Cape Town. He died in Cape Town in 1980.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> W.N. Naudé, *Orkestrale tegnieke in geselekteerde werke van Gideon Fagan* (1984), p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> J.P. Malan, Fagan, Gideon, in J.P. Malan (ed.), *South African Music Encyclopedia 2* (1982), pp. 48-49.